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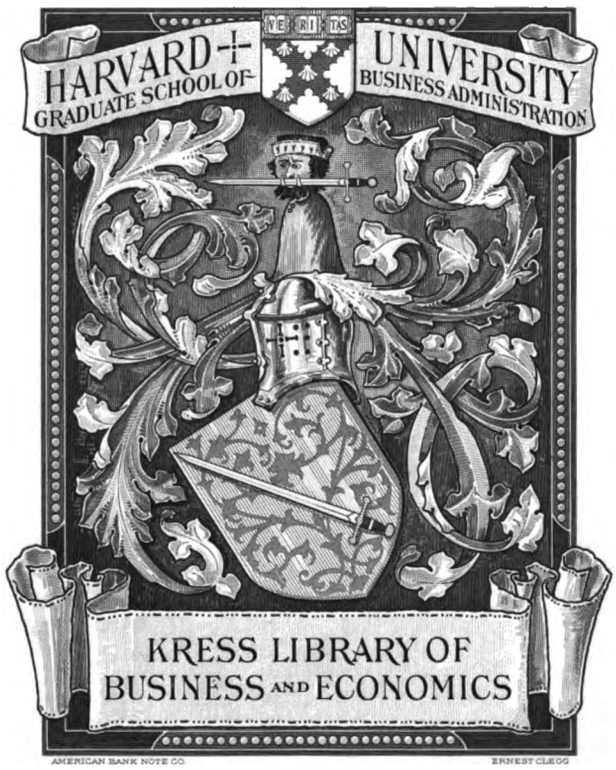

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE

HER MAJESTY'S COMMISSIONERS

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE INTO THE SUBJECT OF

AGRICULTURAL DEPRESSION.

WITH

APPENDICES.

VOLUME IV.

Presented to both Houses of Parliament by Command of Her Majesty.

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I.—WITNESSES EXAMINED.

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1. Cooke, C. W. Radcliffe, 88th day -	M.P., for Hereford; and chairman of the National Association of Cider Makers.	1
2. Spencer, Aubrey, 88th day - -	Assistant Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Berks, and Wilts, the neighbourhood of Taunton, Somerset, and on the Vale of Aylesbury and county of Hertford.	10
3. Speir, John, 89th day - -	Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Ayr, Wigtown, Kirkcudbright and Dumfries.	17
4. Baker, George Frederick, 90th day	Tenant farmer and miller in Northamptonshire - -	33
5. Price, Langford Lovell, 90th day -	Treasurer of Oriel College, Oxford - - -	38
6. Pringle, Robert Hunter, 91st and 92nd days.	Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton; also on South Durham, and North and East Ridings of Yorkshire.	41 & 58
7. Hope, James, 92nd day - -	Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, Selkirk, Peebles, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Banff, Nairn, and Elgin.	68
8. Eyre, George Edward Briscoe, 93rd day.	Landowner in the New Forest - - - -	75
9. Rew, Robert Henry, 93rd and 112th days.	Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the Heathfield District of Sussex; on North Devon, Dorset, Norfolk, and the Salisbury Plain District of Wiltshire.	82 & 430
10. Berry, Walter Wheeler, 94th day	Hop-grower and farmer in Kent. Representative of the Canterbury Farmers' Club and Chamber of Agriculture. A member of the Council and Executive Committees of the Mansion House Association on Railway and Canal Traffic.	93
11. Samson, Ernest, 94th day - -	Secretary of the National Association of Cider Makers -	97
12. Fox, Arthur Wilson, 95th and 111th days.	Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Lincoln, Suffolk, Cumberland, and Cambridge.	104 & 408
13. Taylor, Seth, 96th day - -	Flour merchant, and owner of the Waterloo Mills, London.	120
14. Hughes, Colonel Hugh Robert, 96th and 104th days.	Agent for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and owner of land in Wales.	131 & 270
15. Gillespie, Rev. John, 97th day -	A Director of the Highland and Agricultural Society -	139
16. Kinnear, John Boyd, 97th day -	Landowner in Fifeshire, and formerly M.P. for East Fife	146
17. Davidson, James Inglis, 97th day -	Farmer and land valuator in Scotland, and an Inspector of Estate Improvements under the Board of Agriculture.	148
18. Hannah, J. M., 98th day - -	Tenant-farmer in Ayrshire - - - -	155
19. Munro, William, 98th day -	Assessor of Railways and Canals for Scotland. Formerly Government Assessor of lands and heritages in Lanarkshire, and Inspector of Stamps and Taxes for the northern division of Scotland.	158
20. Black, James, 98th day - -	Tenant-farmer and landowner in the county of Elgin -	163
21. Stuart, A. R., 99th day - -	Tenant-farmer in Banffshire - - - -	172
22. Peile, H. R. B., 99th day - -	Agent for Sir Michael Shaw Stewart in Renfrewshire -	181
23. Dickie, Robert, 99th day - -	Tenant-farmer in Argyllshire - - - -	185
24. Elliot, Walter, 99th day - -	Tenant-farmer in Selkirkshire - - - -	189
25. Gordon, Alexander Moreson, 99th day.	Landowner in Aberdeenshire. Convener of the County of Aberdeen, and Chairman of the Committee of the County Council administering the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Acts. Vice-President of the Royal Northern Agricultural Society, and a Director of the Highland and Agricultural Society.	193

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27. Gilchrist, John, 100th day -	Farmer in Lanarkshire, and lecturer on Agricultural subjects in Scotland.	202
28. Elder, Hugh, 100th day - -	Tenant-farmer in Haddingtonshire, and President of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.	206
29. Dun, John, 100th day - -	Wool merchant and tenant farmer in Selkirkshire -	208
30. Guild, Alexander, 100th and 101st day.	A member of the firm of Reid and Guild, Writers to the Signet, Edinburgh.	212 & 215
31. Gibson, Walter H., 101st day -	Tenant-farmer in East Lothian - - - -	219
32. Drew, James, 101st day - -	Factor of the Galloway Estates - - - -	221
33. Fyshe, James, 102nd day - -	Tenant-farmer in Fifeshire - - - -	225
34. Ballingall, John, 102nd day -	Tenant-farmer in East Fifeshire - - -	231
35. Mitchell, John, 102nd day - -	Tenant-farmer in North Fifeshire - - -	235
36. Smith, Andrew, 102nd day -	Tenant-farmer in East Lothian - - - -	237
37. Riddell, George, 103rd day -	Grazier in East Lothian, formerly tenant farmer in Midlothian.	241
38. Campbell, Alexander, 103rd day -	Tenant-farmer, and representative of the Breadalbane Agricultural Association.	248
39. Rutherford, Walter, 103rd day -	Tenant-farmer in Perthshire, and agent in Roxburghshire	253
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41. Gibb, Dr. R. S., 103rd day - -	Farmer in Berwickshire - - - -	263
42. Russell, Thomas, 103rd day -	Chairman of the Teaching and Staff Committee of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, and Chairman of the County Council of Buteshire.	266
43. Wright, R. Patrick, 103rd day -	Professor of Agriculture in the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College.	267
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47. Finn, George W., 105th day -	Farmer and auctioneer and valuer, Faversham - -	297
48. Jenkins, Blandy, 106th day -	Landowner in Glamorganshire - - - -	302
49. Pennant, Philip Pennant, 106th day.	Landowner and Chairman of Quarter Sessions in Flintshire, Chairman of the Flintshire and Denbighshire Dairy School, late President of the Vale of Clwyd Chamber of Agriculture, and Treasurer and Member of the Agricultural Committee of the North Wales University College.	310
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53. Dutfield, Thomas, 107th day -	Farmer in Monmouthshire; Chairman of the District Council, Member of the County Council, and a Vice-Chairman of the Newport Board of Guardians.	341
54. Davies, William, 107th day -	Tenant-farmer and valuer, and County Councillor in Denbighshire.	348
55. Darby, Alfred, 108th day - -	Land Agent in Essex and a Land Office Inspector under the Board of Agriculture.	353
56. Turnbull, Robert E., 108th day -	A member of the firm Alfred Mansell & Co., Land Agents, Valuers and Auctioneers, Shrewsbury. Formerly Head Agent for the Caworth Castle Estate Cumberland, the Norfolk Estate, Northumberland, and the Castle Howard Estate, Yorkshire.	359
57. Price, Owen, 109th day - -	Farmer and valuer in Breconshire, Chairman of the Craig School Board, Chairman of the Maescar Parish Council, and Secretary of the Dwyrmock Agricultural Society.	368

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60. Drummond, Dudley W., 110th day -	Agent for Lord Cawdor in Carmarthenshire, and an Inspector under the Land Improvement Acts of the Board of Agriculture.	381
61. Kirby, John Gibson, 110th day -	Farmer in Glamorganshire - - - - -	395
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63. Norfolk, Parker, 111th day -	Farmer and Land Agent in the West Riding of Yorkshire -	402
64. Matthews, Christopher, 112th day	Tenant-farmer near Chelmsford - - - -	417
65. Powell, John, 112th day - -	Farmer and valuer in Worcestershire - - -	424
66. Brown, Edward, 113th day -	Lecturer on aviculture at Edinburgh University and at other colleges.	435
67. Lovell, John Cary 113th day -	Member of the firm of Lovell and Christmas, Provision Merchants, West Smithfield.	442
68. Brown, George, 113th day -	Farmer in the County of Caithness - - -	449
69. Little, William Cutlack, 114th and 116th days.	Tenant-farmer, occupying owner and landlord in Cambridgeshire. Assistant-Commissioner under the Duke of Richmond's Commission, and Senior Assistant-Commissioner under the Labour Commission. Chairman of the Cambridgeshire County Council, Chairman of the Highways and Bridges Committee and also of the Standing Joint Committee of the Magistrates and County Council.	456 & 487
70. Milner, K.C.B., Sir Alfred, 115th and 117th day.	Chairman of the Board of Inland Revenue - -	471 & 503

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MINUTES OF EVIDENCE

TAKEN BEFORE THE

ROYAL COMMISSION

ON

AGRICULTURE.

At 23, Great George Street, Westminster, S.W.

Eighty-eighth Day.

Friday, 26th April 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Rt. Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
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WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries*.

Mr. C. W. R. Cooke, M.P. 26 Apr. 1895.

Mr. CHARLES W. RADCLIFFE COOKE, M.P., called and examined.

46,152. (*Chairman.*) You are, as we all know, Member for Hereford, and Chairman of the National Association of Cidermakers?—Yes.

46,153. You have given great attention to the subject of the cider industry?—I have.

Acreage of orchards in England.

46,154. Will you tell us in general terms what are the points which you have to bring before us in connection with that industry?—The principal cider districts of England lie in the west Midland and south-western parts of the island. In the west Midland district the principal cider counties are Hereford, Gloucester, and Worcester; and in the south-western district the counties of Devon and Somerset. These five counties contain, according to the latest agricultural returns under orcharding, exclusive of market gardens and cottage gardens, 114,614 acres. This area in most of these counties would in the main be occupied by vintage apple, and pear trees, and may be considered the cider producing district of England *par excellence*. The counties adjacent to these districts of Cornwall, Dorset, Monmouth, Salop, and Wilts contain in the aggregate 21,118 acres under orcharding, mostly apples and pears, and may be termed a semi-cider producing district. The total area in all these districts under orcharding is therefore 135,732 acres. It has been the practice of writers on this subject to deduct one-sixth of this for land under apples and pears for the table, and for other fruits grown in orchards. Making this deduction the total area under vintage fruits would be 113,110 acres.

46,155. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is your definition of "vintage fruit"?—Fruit exclusively used for the making of cider or perry, though I should say that there are some vintage apples which are good for cooking, but no vintage pears that I know of. I think that this deduction of one-sixth would do fairly well for Herefordshire but would be insufficient for some of the other counties, such as Worcestershire, where there are considerable orchards, outside the market garden districts, of cherries and the like.

46,156. (*Chairman.*) Has the acreage been decreasing, or the reverse, of late years?—It has been increasing mostly, but in some counties, not so much as in others. It has been a little decreasing in some.

46,157. Can you state what the increase has been as compared with 10 or 20 years ago?—There is a table in the last Agricultural Returns which exactly goes into that, and to that I beg to refer the Commissioners. I should prefer to confine my observations in the main to the county of Hereford and the parts adjacent thereto, as that is the district with which I am best acquainted. The situation, climate, and soil of Herefordshire are so well described in the Agricultural Survey of the county made for the Board of Agriculture about 100 years ago, and reprinted with additions by the orders of the Board in 1805, that I need do no more here than refer the Commissioners to that report, and say that both the soil over the greater part of the county, and the climate in all but the extreme westerly and north-westerly parts are admirably suited for the growth of the apple and the pear, the climate being soft and mild, and the soil mostly a rich loam. About Ross, in the county of Hereford, there is a considerable stretch of light rye land which is not now considered so fitted for vintage fruit as the deeper soils in the valleys of the Frome, the Lugg, and the Leddon. But in former years an opposite opinion was held of these ryelands which were then celebrated for the quality of the cider produced on them. I have no doubt.

Orchards in Herefordshir.

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Mr. C. W. R. Cooke, M.P. 26 Apr. 1895.

that with proper attention and suitable sorts of fruit, they would regain their ancient celebrity in this respect. Indeed, there is one orchard near Ross planted with Kingston black apples, an apple very well-known in Devonshire and Somerset, and introduced into Herefordshire from Somersetshire by a Mr. Palmer between 40 and 50 years ago, which is noted for the superior quality of the cider made from it. The total cultivated area of Herefordshire is by the latest published returns 445,608 acres, of which a 17th part or rather more, 16·8, is orcharding, of which there are 26,435 acres, say 26,400. Deducting one-sixth from this would leave 22,000 acres of vintage fruit. I think this an under-estimate on many grounds. It is not compulsory on occupiers to make these returns, and many neglect to do so; and there are throughout the county fruit trees, singly and in clumps, the remains of former orchards, which it is impossible to include in the returns of orchards. I have many such on my own property, and when I farmed part of it I never attempted to include these in the returns, although some are great pear trees yielding in a fair season from 50 to 100 gallons each, and more. Mr. Evelyn, in his "Pomona" says, of some pear trees they will yield three or four hogsheads, and as he almost always speaks of Herefordshire, I presume he means the hogshead of Herefordshire, which consists of 100 to 110 gallons, not the hogshead of Somerset or Devon which holds 54 or 60. But taking the area under vintage fruit to be as above, namely, 22,000 acres, what will be the average annual production of cider and perry? Old writers such as Evelyn, Dr. Beale, Worlidge, and others made, so far as I can judge, a higher estimate of the yield of orchards when in full bearing than we should do now. In their day they computed the yield of an acre of vintage fruit to be from 600 to 1,000 gallons. At this rate the orchards of Herefordshire should yield from 13,200,000 to 22,000,000 gallons a year. The authors of the Herefordshire "Pomona" give 200 gallons per acre as a very low average, and 3*d.* per gallon as a very low price. At this rate the orchards of Herefordshire should yield 4,400,000 gallons a year, of the value of 55,000*l.* or 2*l.* 10*s.* per acre. Mr. Samson, the Secretary of the National Association of Cidermakers, who is acquainted with the county of Somerset, tells me for that part of the cider district this is a very low estimate, and he will give you, if you call him, an estimate of what the total yield there is. I should be disposed to put the average yield at 300 gallons an acre, and the value at 4*d.*, though I should consider this still a low estimate. The total yield for the county would then be 6,600,000 gallons, and the value 110,000*l.*, or at the rate of 5*l.* per acre. I have here some estimates of the yield per acre of small holders whose land I am acquainted with. J. M., 2½ acres of orchard in the parish of Much Marcle, in the county of Hereford—he has over-estimated his acreage, which is really two acres and a quarter, but taking his view he makes on an average six hogsheads of 110 gallons each of cider and perry a year, which sells at an average price of 7*d.* per gallon. This works out at 7*l.* 14*s.* per acre, taking his estimate of the land—it should be more, of course, showing that my estimate of 5*l.* an acre was not a high one. Also six hogsheads a year of 110 gallons each, sold at 7*d.* per gallon, come to 19*l.* 5*s.*; deducting labour, 2*l.* 5*s.*, the return per acre is 6*l.* 16*s.*

Production of cider in Herefordshire.

46,158. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Is that 7*d.* per gallon the retail or wholesale price?—7*d.* per gallon is the retail price. He sells as a retailer. When I say "retailer," of course I do not mean retailing in the legal sense of selling small quantities; I mean that he sells to his customers hogsheads at a time; he sells 110 gallons and gets 7*d.* a gallon for them.

46,159. (*Viscount Cobham.*) He does not sell to the trade, do you mean?—He may sell to the trade. He gives me an account for the last few years of what he has made, and he averages that, and he says he has seldom sold cider below 6*d.*, and he has had as much as 11*d.*

46,160. Partly wholesale and partly retail?—A man having no shop would never sell less than a hogshead or a 60 gallon cask, because he would have no vessels to put the liquor into; and he does not bottle. I buy some cider from him every year lately, and I always give him when good 8*d.* a gallon. He is in my employment.

Orchards in Herefordshire and other counties compared.

46,161. (*Chairman.*) Might I ask you whether these orchards are generally parts of farms?—Yes.

46,162. There are not very many people who cultivate the thing exclusively, and do nothing else?—They are almost invariably part of the farm.

46,163. Every farm has a few acres?—Almost every farm has a few acres.

46,164. How many generally?—It is quite impossible to say.

Mr. C. W. R. Cooke, M.P. 26 Apr. 1895.

46,165. What is the kind of average?—Six, eight, ten, fourteen, fifteen, or twenty acres.

46,166. I see that Hereford has a much larger proportion of this acreage than any other county?—Yes, it has.

46,167. As compared with Devonshire it is three times as much?—Yes, but then a great deal of Devon is moorland.

46,168. As compared with Somersetshire it has twice as much?—Yes, it has.

Condition of Herefordshire orchards.

46,169. What are parts of Herefordshire where they mainly exist—all over the whole county?—Generally all over the whole county. The best orchards, the finest fruits, grow in the valleys of the Leddon, Lugg, and Frome. There is also some very fine cider and perry too, especially good perry, grown in the neighbourhood of Ross. As I mentioned before, the pear tree will flourish where the apple will not. In this particular instance I have given, the land is the man's own property, and it is all he has. It is a little orchard of his own. The present condition of the orchards of vintage fruit is not so good as it might be. Some of the old sorts have not continued to be propagated owing partly to the teaching of Mr. Thomas Andrew Knight, a well-known horticulturist and philanthropist, who flourished at the end of last century and the beginning of this in Herefordshire, whose doctrine was that no sort of fruit lasted longer than the original tree which gave rise to it. This theory has been amply disproved, but for some years it had a vogue, was copied and adopted by writers on fruit culture of the period, and doubtless had its effect in checking the continued grafting of the older sorts. Then the attention of farmers at the end of last century and the first half of this was directed to corn growing, from which more regular returns were received than from fruit. Consequently, the orchards were neglected, and many grubbed up. Moreover, the short-sighted policy of cider dealers and manufacturers in watering the liquor and doctoring inferior stuff brought the liquor into general discredit and lessened the demand for it. Hence neglect to prune and renovate orchards, and carelessness and want of cleanliness in the making of the cider and perry. Some planting has been done of late years, but until quite recently that has been in the direction of planting pot fruit, which is fruit for sale for the table, rather than vintage fruit. Efforts were made under the auspices of the Woolhope Naturalists Field Club, commencing nearly 20 years ago, to revive some of the most celebrated sorts, such as the Fox Whelp and Skyrme's Kernel, amongst apples, and the Taynton Squash among pears, but I do not think that these efforts have met with much success. There have, however, always been persons interested in the industry who have devoted attention to the introduction and propagation of good vintage fruits. To them we owe some excellent sorts, such as the Eggleton Styre, raised by the late Mr. W. Hill, of Lower Eggleton, near Ledbury, Herefordshire, about 1840; the Kingston Black, introduced into Herefordshire by the late Mr. Palmer, of Bollitree, near Ross, about 1820; Pym Square, originating from a pip planted by Mr. Izard, of Eastnor, Ledbury, about 1840; and the Rejuvenated Fox Whelp, restored at Cowarne by Mr. Yeomans, about 80 years ago. Our orchards, besides suffering from neglect, are greatly damaged by destructive insects which in many years occasion the ruin of the crop. Of these the American blight, the winter moth, and the Codlin moth are the most destructive, especially the latter. It is possible, no doubt, by lime washing the trees, applying insecticides, and in other ways, as set out in the report of the Board of Agriculture on Insects, &c., injurious to Crops, issued in 1892, to lessen and perhaps ultimately eradicate these pests; but none of the processes, so far as I know, are certain in their effect, and all are expensive in their application. It is useless for one farmer to adopt these remedies if others in the neighbourhood neglect them, and we cannot expect concerted action unless under the impulse of the Legislature, and with the assistance of the State. This, I consider, one of the most important parts of this subject, as we cannot hope to promote the trade in ciders unless the orchards from which the cider is to be made are in a healthy and productive state. The following are, in my opinion, some of the best sorts of cider fruit. I will take the apples first:—Cider Lady's finger (early, hardy, free bearing); Coccagee, Devon (late, hardy, free bearing); Cowarne Red (very hardy); Cummy Norman (hardy and free bearing); Dymock Red, Eggleton Styre (midseason, hardy, free bearing); Forest Styre, Fox Whelp, Hagloe Crab, Kingston Black (late), Royal Wilding (late, hardy, shy bearer); Skyrne's Kernel (late, hardy, shy bearer); Strawberry

Varieties of cider apples.

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Norman (midseason, free bearer); Tanners Red (hardy, late); White Bache (free bearer); Woodsill (midseason). Then for pears I take the following:—Barland (early); Black Huffcap, Butt pear (late); Longland (late, hardy, free bearer); Moorcroft (early); Oldfield(midseason, free bearer); Pine pear (late, hardy); Red pear (midseason, very hardy); Rockpear (late, hardy); Taynton Squash (very early, hardy free bearer). A gentleman in Hereford, who has a fine taste in cider, and has frequently judged at the Royal and other shows gives me another list in which he to some extent agrees with me. The following is his list:—Apples, Tanner's Red, Red Styre, Yellow Styre, Eggleton Styre, Styre Wilding, Fox Whelp, Skyrme's Kernel, Old Redstreak, Royal Wilding, Cherry Pearmain, Cowarne Red, Burford Red, Black Kingston, Joeby Crab, Dymock Red. Pears:—Barland, Huffcap Oldfield, Taynton Squash. I have been particular in enumerating the best sorts of vintage, apples and pears, because there is, I know, a notion abroad, it is rather a revived notion than a new one, that cider and perry can be made from any apples and pears, no matter what. This is a mistake. Cider can indeed be made from table fruit, but it is poor and thin in quality owing to the absence in such fruit of constituents, the chief of which is tannin, which are essential to the production of cider and perry of prime quality and long keeping. The best authorities on the subject both French and English agree on this head. A pear from which is made one of the most celebrated of all perries, a perry frequently recommended by medical men in nephritic disorders, namely, the Barland pear, is so nauseous to the taste that even pigs will not eat it. I lay some stress on this point, because a recent writer on cider, a gentleman whom I know very well, and whom I have suggested should be called by the Commission, because he is an able, clever, energetic man, engaged in the trade, has in a paper which appeared in last year's Journal of the Bath and West of England Society, advocated the cutting down of all the existing vintage fruit trees, which cover, as I have shown, over 100,000 acres, the planting in their stead of table fruit, and the making of cider from the refuse thereof after the best has been disposed of for culinary and dessert purposes. Such a course, if it were ever adopted, which is not likely, would be ruinous to the English cider trade. The orchards of vintage fruits now in being produce, when the liquor is well made, ciders and perries which for quality are unsurpassed the world over. No cider and perry made in America or on the Continent can for quality touch cider and perry made from the best sorts of vintage apples and pears. We have in this an advantage over our foreign competitors which we should be fools to throw away. Cease to make cider of this class, and make it only from table fruit, and we should place ourselves on an equality with our foreign rivals. Besides, whilst our young orchards were growing up, the Americans would gain possession of our markets, and as we should then have no liquor of superior quality to set against theirs they would indubitably retain that possession. I will, if the Commissioners wish, describe the process of cider making, and the improvements that have been made therein of late years, but I hardly think it essential to this inquiry that I should do so. I will, however, shortly mention the practical changes that have taken place in cider-making. There has been a tendency of late years among farmers to sell their vintage fruit instead of making it into cider themselves—some of the sharper sorts for jam making—making jams called by other names than apple jams—but the bulk of it to manufacturers who make cider and perry on a large scale. Others have the habit, which has long prevailed, of grinding their fruit and pressing it, and selling the juice just as it comes from the press to the dealers in whose hands it undergoes the process of fermentation which makes cider and perry of it. The advantages of this course are that the farmer saves trouble, and that where the manufacturer understands his business, and has acquaintance with the qualities of the various sorts of fruit which he buys can produce a liquor in larger quantities and more uniform in character than a number of different farmers could, and can therefore meet better than they could a demand for a liquor that will not vary much in appearance, strength, and flavour. The disadvantages are that the fruit sold in bulk often contains sorts which mellow at different periods. That is the reason why on farms cider-making lasts over such a long time, from September to December, and even into the new year, because the sorts are not all ready for grinding at once. These often contain sorts which mellow at different periods; the farmer naturally wants to sell all his fruit at the same time, and he knocks them all down, whether ripe or not.

Changes in cider making.

46,170. Why should not the famer sell at different periods?—Because there would be so much more haulage and more expense. To make good liquor these ought to be kept separate, and made at different times. In transit, too, the fruit is liable to be much bruised. For instance, the fruit is gathered and placed in heaps by the grower. It is then loaded in waggons and taken to the railway station, there unloaded, and put into trucks. At the station of destination it is unloaded again and put into waggons, and finally unloaded from these and placed on the premises of the manufacturer. These frequent handlings of the fruit often so knock it about that you would not be able out of thousands of apples to find one without a bruise. There are, I am glad to say, some manufacturers who are as careful as they can be to keep the various sorts separate, who offer a higher price to farmers for bagging their fruit, and who endeavour to grind the sorts at the time when they are fit for the press. On the other hand, there are, I am sorry to say, manufacturers as well as dealers who are far from scrupulous, who, to use a common expression, make five hogsheads out of three by the addition of water, and who do not hesitate in scarce seasons to buy foreign cider, blend it with English, and sell it to the customer as all English. There are also other practices, difficult to discover and detect, which have brought discredit on the cider trade and have given a bad name to the liquor itself, and so in the long run defeated the object of those who follow them by lessening the demand for this drink. Now, whilst I am of opinion that for the production of cider of somewhat low grade but of uniform quality, for which for draught purposes if sound and genuine, there will, I believe, be an increasing demand (I have a letter this morning from Wolverhampton—I have letters every day—asking me why they could not get cider there), it is desirable and convenient that cider should be made on a large scale in manufactories, I nevertheless think that the highest class ciders and perries will always be best made by such of the growers themselves as will give personal care and attention to the subject. It is, I think, a mistake to liken cider and perry solely to beer, of which liquor it may be said that practically only one sort exists. Cider would be more truly likened to the light wines of France. There we have the *vin ordinaire*, a liquor of low alcoholic strength, drunk freely on draught; yet side by side with this we have the richer, choicer, and more highly flavoured clarets, such as Château Lafitte and Leoville, for which there is a large demand, and at a remunerative price. Now we have from our best vintage fruits ciders and perries which exceed in excellence common draught cider as much as the highly flavoured clarets do *vin ordinaire*. If you want to know how good cider was made from the best fruits, and in the best manner, you should read a book which, no doubt, all the Commissioners have heard of, and probably have, that is Evelyn's "Pomona;" there is collected, at any rate in the fifth edition, which I have, many testimonies as to the excellence of the cider then made, and comparisons with the best wines of France—all to the discredit of those wines. These prime ciders and perries we should not, in my judgment, neglect, but, on the contrary, try to increase the quantity of, and the demand for, because, as I have already said, we have in them liquors with which no continental or American rivals can compete. I hope to live to see the day when it shall be as much a matter of pride for a country gentleman to have in his cellar for his friends the finest sorts of Foxwhelp and Styre cider, and Taynton squash and Oldfield perry, as it is now to have choice foreign wines at five or six times the price. That was the feeling at the latter end of the 17th century and the beginning of it, and during the greater part of the 17th century, and I do not see why it should not be renewed. I will not take up the time of the Commission with enlarging on the wholesome qualities of cider and perry, for they are now generally acknowledged. We in the cider districts have long known that for certain kidney complaints they are invaluable, and that cider is a specific against gout; but medical men are now slowly acquiring the knowledge we have long possessed. In Germany and France cider is now prescribed for gout, and a doctor in London, who is a specialist in that disorder, is making, at my request, experiments with cider and perry, with which I have supplied him, and, as far as he has gone, with favourable results. That there will be a considerable demand for good cider I have no manner of doubt, and especially in the North of England. I was at Buxton in the autumn of this last year, and took my own cider up with me, thinking I should not find any. However, I did find some there, and at one public-house to which I went I was told they were out of it, so I could not have any at that time. I was told that in the summer time they sold quite as much cider as beer to the working classes.

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Cider and wines compared.

46,171. How do you account for the neglected state of the orchards?—I thought I partly accounted for it by saying that farmers turned their attention at the latter end of last century and the beginning of this to corn growing,

Neglect of orchards.

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corn was then, as we all know, at a very high price, and from which more regular returns were derived, and also from the fact that the cider dealers at that period were unscrupulous enough, for their own ends, to deteriorate the liquor and render it very distasteful to the general public, and that of course lessened the demand for it. Farmers became therefore careless in the production of a drink for which they could not get so good a price as they had formerly got, and they made their liquor in a very rough way. The result was that in their own neighbourhood the labourers and the people accustomed to it could drink this rough cider and liked it very much, even when it approached vinegar, but no stranger coming into the country could stomach it.

Fall in price of cider.

46,172. Is there any fall in the price of the average produce?—Yes, there is a decided fall, but I cannot say exactly when the fall began or how it proceeded.

46,173. I mean during the last 15 years?—Yes, I think so. That is partly owing to the fact that 20 years ago or more—more than that possibly—farmers used to give their men a great deal of cider at harvest time, and farmers then sold a great deal of cider at 4*d*. or 5*d*. a gallon for harvest work. There is not nearly so much now demanded, and the labourers drink an inferior kind of beer instead. I was told the other day by a farmer in my own parish that, on looking into his father's books of some 60 or 70 years ago, he found that his father used to sell cider straight from the mill, no doubt of good quality, at one shilling a gallon, whereas the price is now 2½*d*. or 3*d*. per gallon, no doubt the quality is not quite so good. Then there were facilities for the disposal of it. At Upton-on-Severn there was a kind of port which they could reach, whence it could be sent to Bristol, but that does not exist now.

46,174. Have the farm hands taken to drinking something else in harvest time, or do they drink less than they used to do?—They do not drink less, I think. They drink inferior beers called farmer's beer. I never tasted it.

46,175. They drink more beer than they did?—I think they drink rather more beer.

46,176. Have they given up cider?—I think to some extent they have.

46,177. And that to some extent has diminished the demand for the lower qualities, I suppose?—It has to some extent.

46,178. Now take the higher qualities of cider, has the price fallen, or has the price been maintained?—The price of that kind of cider is rather a variable quantity, but I think it is fairly well maintained.

Value of cider orchards.

46,179. What is the annual value of a good cider orchard?—Do you mean to rent, or for the occupier?

46,180. Is there any means of ascertaining what the average value of a good cider orchard is?—Those farmers who sell their vintage fruit as a rule never like to sell it under 5*l*. an acre.

46,181. Sell their fruit?—They never like to sell their vintage fruit at less than 5*l*. an acre, and they get more for sometimes.

46,182. What will the superior qualities sell for?—The price varies enormously, according to the quality, and according to the years. In years when there is plenty of fruit you would not get more than 1*l*. a ton at the lowest, and from that you would go to 4*l*. a ton at the highest. Some of the manufacturers give for choice fruits, and fruits carefully selected, 8*s*. or 10*s*. a ton more than they do for inferior fruits or fruits less well handled. I have a letter here from a manufacturer to that effect.

Varieties of cider apples.

46,183. Have any varieties of cider apples disappeared altogether?—Yes, I think so. I think many mentioned by Evelyn, and the old writers have gone entirely. I do not think that you can find the old Red Streak which was very much spoken of by Phillips in his "Cider"—you do not get the true Red Streak now.

46,184. Are there any new varieties?—Yes.

46,185. Of excellence?—Well there are some new ones; I mentioned a few of them. One is the Eggleton Styre, which grew from a pip about 40 or 50 years ago, planted by Mr. Hill, of Eggleton, near Ledbury. Then there is the Kingston Black, which was introduced from Somersetshire into Herefordshire; I do not know how long that has been in existence in Somersetshire. There is another apple called Pym Square, after the name of an apple in Devonshire, but not quite the same apple, it is better known in Herefordshire as Izard's Kernel; it grew from a kernel planted by Mr. Izard, in Eastnor, about 1840, and it is a very good sort.

46,186. How long does it take for an apple orchard to get into good bearing?—They will bear after seven, eight, or nine years.

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46,187. How long does it take them to get into full bearing?—From 15 to 20 years.

Development of an apple orchard.

46,188. Then do they go on for a very great number of years?—They will go on for 50 or 60 years or more.

46,189. Do the landowners generally allow their tenants to increase their orchards, or no?—The subject has hardly come under discussion, because the matter has not been mooted.

Acreage of orchards in Herefordshire.

46,190. I see that in the year 1882 the orchards in Herefordshire were 27,000?—Yes, they have decreased a little.

46,191. 1892 they were 26,000; so there is some reduction?—There is a reduction.

46,192. Then apparently between 1893 they had risen again to 26,400?—Yes.

46,193. Showing a slight increase?—Yes; that is from the planting.

46,194. So that you may say of late years it has been very stationary?—Rather stationary.

46,195. There has been no new planting?—No.

46,196. That is, on any scale?—Not of vintage fruit to any great extent, but there has been some of pot fruit.

46,197. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Apple culture is only a subordinate part of the farmer's business, for the most part, is it not?—Now it is only that, but it might be made a very important part, and was.

46,198. As long as it is only a subordinate part of the business it is not likely to be very much improved, is it?—I think there is a very great opening for the small holders, such as the man I just now mentioned. I dare say the larger farmers will, to save themselves trouble, be inclined to sell their fruit to manufacturers who will establish themselves at more centres in the districts than they have as yet.

Size of holdings.

46,199. In Herefordshire are the holdings held by farmers mostly of 50 to 100 acres or so?—150 acres is about the average, I think, of what we call the big farms.

46,200. Does the possession of an orchard affect the rent of the farm?—Of course it must be taken into consideration.

46,201. But it does not generally make very much difference, does it?—Yes, no doubt of it; unquestionably it does.

Orchards and cider in Vale of Gloucester.

46,202. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you know the vale between Gloucester and Bristol?—Not very well. I know what you mean; I know about it, but I do not know it personally.

46,203. There are very large orchards there, are there not?—Yes, and beautiful fruit.

46,204. And a great deal of what is wrongfully called, as I hold, rough cider is made there?—Yes.

46,205. Do you know the quality of it?—Yes, I know the quality; it is a good strong cider.

46,206. The results are very different from the other cider; I am talking of the best of the rough cider. Have you had any experience in the selling of that?—No, but I have tasted some which was 100 years old.

46,207. Is there any market for that?—There is not the slightest doubt that there is a market for good cider.

Market for cider.

46,208. But where?—I cannot tell you where there is a market for that cider, but I have been told by everyone who produces cider that they find no difficulty of disposing of the cider if it be good.

46,209. I am informed to the contrary as regards this rough cider, which they used formerly to be able to sell to the people in the neighbourhood to drink; I am told that they have a great difficulty now in disposing of it?—When you speak of rough cider, I suppose you mean what we call hard cider, that is, cider so fermented that all the sugar is turned into alcohol.

46,210. Yes?—The general public will not take that cider; they want something a little sweeter. The fermentation ought to be stopped before it gets to the point of turning all the sugar into alcohol.

46,211. Then you do not think there would be very much made out of that cider?—There might be if it was made in a better way. There would be an immense sale for it if the fermentation was stopped at the proper time, and if the farmers were scientifically taught how to stop that fermentation.

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46,212. Then you think it is the fault of the manufacturer?—It is the fault of the manufacturer. The cider itself is extremely good in quality there, or it would not last 100 years as I have mentioned. That rough cider, although it is not so pleasant, is more wholesome than the sweet cider; no doubt of it.

Rent of orchard land.

46,213. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is about the rental of orchard land in Herefordshire?—I could hardly say, because the orchards are let together with the farms; it would be about 2*l.* 10*s.* or 3*l.* an acre, or something like that, if let separately.

46,214. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That would be good grass land?—Grass in an orchard is a great consideration, because it is generally better there than elsewhere.

Extent of orchard land.

46,215. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is there much land that would grow vintage fruits in Herefordshire?—Yes.

46,216. Besides what is already planted?—Yes.

46,217. Then why is not more planted; what is the reason?—I thought I mentioned the causes, and that I said that the deterioration of the orchards, which would be naturally the same as causing them not to be planted, is due to the ceasing of the demand for cider and perry, and to the making of cider of the class described by Sir Nigel Kingscote, which is only consumed within the district by people who like it.

Extent of cider industry.

46,218. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your evidence is confined, I think, mainly to the county of Hereford and the neighbourhood?—Yes. I know somewhat of Worcestershire, where there are a great many fruit trees—pear trees chiefly—and I am on the borders of Gloucestershire.

46,219. In those districts the growing of apples and pears is a very important part of the agricultural industry, is it not?—It undoubtedly is.

46,220. What is its proportion compared with the whole industry?—What is the proportion of the one industry to another?

46,221. I mean what proportion of the agricultural industry is represented by the cider industry in those parts?—I could not answer that question at all.

46,222. But still it is quite sufficient to be a very important element?—It is a very considerable industry.

46,223. I think you said that the demand for cider had been falling off?—The demand for cider fell off a few years ago; now, owing to the efforts that have been made in various directions, it is considerably increasing.

46,224. Efforts in what direction—for the improvement of the cider?—For the improvement of and for drawing the attention of the public to the excellence of the liquor.

Demand for cider.

46,225. Is the demand now so steadily increasing?—The demand now is increasing.

46,226. Therefore you think that with certain assistance the cider industry might be considerably developed?—Very much.

46,227. And that you would regard as very important to the agricultural industry in those parts?—Yes, decidedly so.

46,228. (*Chairman.*) Has the price risen on the average since this increased demand?—I could hardly say that at present.

46,229. At all events there is a better demand for it?—There certainly is a better demand for it.

Cost of orchard planting.

46,230. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What would be the cost of planting an orchard?—We generally reckon that when a tree is entirely out of harm's way the cost for the original purchase, the planting, and the protection (which is the chief thing), does not come very far short of 1*l.* a tree.

46,231. How much does that run to an acre?—It depends upon how close you plant the trees. Evelyn speaks of planting the trees 20 ft. apart, but they must have been very small trees. I do not suppose you can plant an orchard of large trees at the rate of more than 30 or 40 to the acre.

46,232. That would cost about 40*l.* an acre, then?—Ultimately; spread over a large number of years. The trees themselves, if bought from the nursery men, cost about 2*s.* 6*d.* a-piece; then there would be the planting, then bushing, which would have to be renewed about every three years—they would not renew it oftener than that, I daresay.

Improvement in manufacture of cider.

46,233. You look, I presume, to a better method of making cider for an increased demand for it?—I certainly do. A great deal of the cider that is made on the farms is spoilt owing to the ignorance of the maker, of the scientific principles which underlie the practice.

46,234. That is, there is a very large amount of waste, if I may so term it, which goes on now in not bringing the cider already made up to the value that it would attain were it to be made by scientific principles?—If it were made better, of course, it would be more valuable.

46,235. But there is a considerable amount that is not made well, and, therefore, which would have been more valuable if properly made?—Of course.

Co-operative cider manufactories.

46,236. (*Chairman.*) Is it possible that there might be co-operative cider manufactories within the rural districts?—There is at this present moment an association or a company being formed in the neighbourhood of Leominster, with the view of making better cider. I have not heard any more particulars about it, but I daresay the farmers are going to join.

46,237. Is it of a co-operative character?—I do not know the principles on which it is formed, but it is a sort of combination of capital.

46,238. (*Mr. Everett.*) Which pay the most, the pear orchards or the apple orchards for vintage?—They are mixed. The pear, as a rule, bears more regularly and gives more fruit and more liquor, but the liquor is not so valuable as the apple juice is, and farmers do not get so much for the pears, because they sell the pears at about 10*s.* a ton less, except in the case of special sorts.

46,239. Have either cider or perry been taxed, do you happen to know?—Yes.

Cultivation of table fruit.

46,240. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider there is much room for the increase of orchards for table purposes?—Yes, I think there might be, but there is very much pretty fruit brought from abroad and the Colonies, and although it tastes extremely poor its appearance is in its favour, and people will buy it.

46,241. I see there has been a considerable increase in the orchards of Kent, which I presume are wholly for the table?—They are mostly for the table. Formerly they used to make good cider in Kent, and there is a maker of cider in Norfolk, I believe, now, who cannot always procure the apples in Norfolk for his cider, and who buys largely from Kent.

46,242. Practically the Kentish orchards are for the table?—They are.

46,243. The increase in the orchards there would rather indicate a growing demand?—Yes. They are nearer the markets there, and the land is more suitable.

46,244. Do you think, on the whole, that Kent is better suited for the growth of apples for table purposes than other counties?—I do not think that it is better suited; I know that good vintage fruit, if properly selected, will grow in Kent, but at the present time it pays the people better to grow apples and pears for the table, and pot fruit.

Rent of orchard land.

46,245. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the rent of these orchards gone up or down of late years?—It has not varied.

46,246. It has maintained itself?—It has pretty well maintained itself.

Compensation for renovation of orchards.

46,247. (*Chairman.*) Now will you go to the suggestions you have to make?—The first of the suggestions I should make for the promotion of the industry is an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883, by including in Part II. of the Schedule to the Act the renovation of orchards, and the planting of new orchards not exceeding one acre in extent. In the second part of the schedule the tenant is required to give notice to the landlord of his intention, but he does not require the leave of the landlord. This amendment would give the tenant a little more liberty than he now has with regard to renovating orchards where trees are blown down or grubbed up, because they are old, and new ones put in their places.

46,248. You would place orchards to that extent under Part II. of the Schedule?—I would. I would not alter Part I., which contains, as you know, the "planting of "orchards or fruit bushes"; I would keep that in, but I would have this exception as to one acre. I think that would considerably help small holders. I would not extend it beyond one acre, because the larger sort of plantation would be made by a larger farmer, who might come, as many do, in Herefordshire, as there are so many changes now in farms, from Wales, where he would know nothing whatever about orchard planting. He ought to be in communication with his landlord, and ought to get some sort of authority from either his landlord, who does know the land, or from the agent, who knows the land also, as to what sorts of fruit to plant there, or otherwise he might make a botch of it. That is why I think that in cases exceeding one acre the Act ought to be left as it is. The small holders would probably be people who

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live in the neighbourhood and they would know themselves what to do, and the notice to the landlord would put the two into a communication; they would know pretty well what sort of fruit to plant.

46,249. Would you limit it to one acre once for all?—I put down one acre as being a small area.

46,250. Would you limit it to one acre with reference to the farm since there has been any vacancy?—It would apply naturally to farms, but if the farmer was going to plant an orchard on a large scale he would probably apply under Part I, and get the leave of his landlord.

Legislation of compulsory destruction of insect pests.

46,251. Will you go on to your next point, please?—Then I suggest the passing an Act similar to that passed by the Tasmanian Parliament for the destruction of insect pests. I mentioned just now with regard to insect pests, that it is very little use for one farmer to try to get rid of them unless all in the same neighbourhood do so. It is impossible to make farmers combine, and they have not the money to go to the expense individually. There is a great deal of expense connected with this. But if the Legislature passed an Act something on the lines of the Tasmanian Act, which I have here, I do not know whether I need read it ——

46,252. Will you state the general effect of it?—The general effect of it is, as far as I remember, that the country is divided into certain fruit districts, and those districts into subdivisions; and that there is a board appointed from the people in the district, who are responsible for the conduct of the orchards in the district. Then inspectors are sent round at certain seasons to see the state of those orchards, and to order that at certain times, certain things shall be done. There is, I believe, a tax levied upon the owners or occupiers, I suppose, for the payment of expenses, and the farmer is required to do certain things, in the case of infected trees to destroy all the fruit thereof, and there are rules and regulations to that effect. The result, I am told is, that in some of those districts the insect pests are entirely eradicated. A gentleman who was in Tasmania a short time ago, saw me the other day, and told me so. The whole of this Act is summarised in the December number of the Board of Agriculture Journal.

46,253. Has it been very successful there?—So I was told by this gentleman; of course I only know from hearsay, as I have never been there.

46,254. How is the expense of it carried out, by a rate levied?—That appears to be by a rate levied, but in regard to England, we have got into a very bad state naturally, a very much worse state than they could by any possibility be in in Tasmania, because our orchards are older than theirs; we are rated very heavily, and all our other expenses are extremely heavy, and neither landlords nor tenants have any more than they can do with. My suggestion, therefore, would be that the State should be at the expense of this, as it is abroad.

46,255. Have you estimated what the expense would be?—No, I have not gone into that; it is impossible for me to do that.

46,256. Impossible?—Quite impossible.

46,257. What would be the processes they would adopt?—They would order the trees at certain times to be scraped, at certain periods of the year to be lime washed, and at certain other suitable periods when this codlin moth was in evidence to be syringed with such insecticides as are suggested by the Board of Agriculture, or somethink of that sort. The insecticides are rather expensive, and the syringes or engines that would be employed would also be expensive, because although the Board of Agriculture speaks of garden-engines there are not many garden-engines that would syringe our large pear trees, or some of our apple trees with any effect; they would have to be special engines for that purpose.

46,258. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Would that be necessary every year?—Until the pest was eradicated; afterwards, of course, there would be no necessity.

46,259. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Would you have to destroy any trees?—We might; we do now cut down trees that are useless.

46,260. Do they pay compensation in Tasmania for any injury done?—I do not know; it does not say so in the book I have here.

46,261. I suppose the hop growers expend a considerable amount of money in getting rid of the insects?—Yes, they do; but then you see how very different their system is. They have rows, and the plants grow only up to a certain height, and they can pass their engine between the rows and wash them as they go. Besides, there are only about 7,000 acres of hop ground in Herefordshire.

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46,262. If this destruction of insects is to be carried out at the expense of the State for the benefit of the apple growers, might not the hop growers claim that they should share in this beneficial expenditure?—They might ask it I daresay, when they heard what we had been doing.

46,263. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) That would apply to all farmers equally, would it not, who were troubled with insects?—It would, but then there is this to be said with regard to these insects: in the course of time we may hope they will be entirely eradicated, or eradicated to such an extent that the expense yearly would be very small indeed, whereas in the case of hop growing the washing must be pretty nearly every year.

46,264. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Do you not think it would be fair to ask the landlord who gets the rent to do this?—No, because the landlords are so seriously impoverished.

46,265. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do not the Herefordshire fruit growers take precautions against insects now without any State interference?—Yes, some of them do against the winter moth; they grease the trees. I did it in my own little way, and my neighbours did so, and so on. We have caught a great many insects in this way. But that simply, as a rule, catches one or two sorts, and those not the most destructive.

46,266. But it is found to be useful?—It is found to be useful, no doubt.

46,267. Will not others follow the example when they see that it pays them?—Yes, some do.

46,268. Is it not a question of paying?—For that small thing, simply putting grease bands round trees, I should not ask the State to pay; it is quite a different thing to syringe large trees with expensive engines and expensive insecticides.

State experimental fruit farms and nurseries.

46,269. (*Chairman.*) Then what is your next proposal?—The establishment of at least two experimental fruit farms and nurseries supported by the State, one in Herefordshire for the west midland cider districts, and one in Somerset or Devon for the south western cider districts. Attached to these stations should be laboratories in which the scientific principles underlying the practice of cider making could be taught and demonstrated, and where analyses of ciders and perries, fruits and soils could be made free of charge, or at a low rate. Such places would furnish in time trained men to go through the districts and teach farmers. I think this is very important.

46,270. Has anything been done by the county in this direction?—Not in this direction, with the sole exception of sending round lecturers to give lectures on cider making.

Instruction in cider-making.

46,271. I mean in that direction?—They have done a little in that way. In Gloucestershire this very gentleman, whom I spoke of, whose views on the subject of pot fruit and cider are heretical, but who otherwise is an able and clever man when he gets off those views, can give very good advice to farmers as to cleanliness, and so on, and as to the processes of fermentation. In Herefordshire they have not been so successful in finding good teachers.

46,272. They have endeavoured to do it?—They have endeavoured to do it, but the difficulty is to find scientifically trained men.

46,273. Who are competent to teach the farmers?—Men who can teach the scientific principles that underlie the business. The practice of experienced cidermakers is so good from long experience that they know very well what to do, but they do not know the reason why, and when they neglect it, or when a thing goes wrong, they do not know what to be at.

46,274. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Have they endeavoured to teach the proper management of orchards in Herefordshire?—Yes, I think we do know pretty well what we ought to do, only it is rather too expensive in regard to these insecticides. But I regard the two cider districts of the Midlands and Somersetshire as somewhat different, and I think it is desirable, therefore, to establish two experimental fruit farms and nurseries, one for the Midlands and one for Somersetshire. I think a county is rather too small an area, and you could not ask the county council to establish one. I believe that in Hertfordshire Lord Cowper has presented or loaned the county council of that county land for an experimental farm. It would be an extremely good thing if others followed his example, but I am quite sure in our neighbourhood we are not likely to do so. These experimental farms would be valuable in this way: it is extremely desirable to restore, as I have said,

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some of the old and best vintage fruits, and also, where possible, to get new vintage fruits. If you plant a number of apple pips out of perhaps a thousand, you will not get five or six that are worth anything, and during all the time you are waiting for them to grow you have the land occupied by all those trees—10 or 15 years—doing nothing. No farmer—in fact, no one—would undertake that, but the State could at an experimental fruit farm. Then in the case of the grafts of old trees, a friend of mine down in Monmouthshire, who is the technical instructor to the Monmouthshire County Council, has purely out of friendship at a sort of experimental farm there, attached to an industrial school, established a small nursery, and there he has this year grafted for me grafts of three or four of the best sorts of cider and perry fruit; but that, of course, can only be done on a very small scale by an individual. It ought to be done by the State in these experimental nurseries, and then when the trees have been fully established they ought to be given gratis to the farmers and the landowners in the neighbourhood in the same way as they are given abroad. I find that in France there are premiums given by the State on agriculture, that is to say, on silk culture, to the extent of 200,000*l.*, and on the re-constitution of vineyards (which would be a similar thing to what I require now, namely, the re-constitution of the orchards), over 40,000*l.* was spent, and also that in many cases grants of trees to a very great extent were made to the landowners and the occupiers of land by the State free of expense. If they can do those things on the Continent, and help agriculture to a great extent there to compete with us, I think we ought to do the same. With regard to the analysis of cider and perry fruits that is a very expensive process; I asked the people at the Cirencester Agricultural College whether they would analyse for me, and they said, "No, not without being well paid for it, because they had really no "funds but the fees from students." I sent up to a gentleman whom I know very well and hope will be called before this Commission—an analyst—about a handful of pears last year of a particular sort which had made some very good perry the year before, an unnamed sort, in order that they might be analysed. He analysed them and sent me the result, nothing apparently very elaborate, but for this I shall have to pay him 30*s.* No farmer would go in for that to any great extent, but if the State did it it would be extremely valuable. Then the other day the member for South Glamorganshire, Mr. Williams, said he thought in the county of Glamorgan there were soils very well suited for the growth of vintage apples, but he did not know what sorts to recommend, nor did anybody there. If there were an experimental farm or a laboratory situated in the neighbourhood say in Herefordshire or in Somersetshire, specimens of the soil could be analysed, and the results of the experiments at these farms would show what fruit was best suited for those soils, and the farmers could plant with some hope of success. Now it is merely a chance whether the fruit suits the soil, or the soil the fruit.

State assistance for orchard planting.

46,275. (*Chairman.*) What is your next proposal?—The offering of premiums by the State for the planting of orchards with the best kinds of vintage fruits, and the gratuitous distribution by the State of stocks grafted with such fruits. I find in a return which has been made to this Commission, and which consists of reports of Her Majesty's representatives on the Organization of Departments of Agriculture in foreign countries, that abroad they do give premiums to small occupiers and small owners for planting vineyards to the extent sometimes of about 8*l.* apiece; if they can do that there I think they ought to do it in this country.

National Association of cider makers.

46,276. Then I think you further suggest that there should be grants by the State to the National Association for Cider Making?—Yes. The objects of the National Association are stated in a paper which I have here to be the establishment of a central organization, representative of all persons concerned directly or indirectly in the cider-making industry of the United Kingdom in order that when questions which affect their interests arise they may be able to give expression to their views thereon with more force and effect through such an organized body than they could individually. If I state how the association arose that might perhaps sufficiently explain the matter. I wrote a letter to the "Times" more than a year ago I suppose—I do not know exactly the date—on the subject of cider which seemed to have attracted more attention than its merits deserved—at any rate I was flooded with a mass of correspondence, and I saw that there were a great number of persons deeply interested in the industry who wanted to know where they could get this cider. It was impossible for me to deal with it, so I spoke to others interested in it and they all said, "We must combine in some way or another." That was the origin of this association. If this association had a subvention of a moderate amount, say 300*l.* or 400*l.* from the State the members consisting of persons always engaged in the industry and knowing what the industry wants, could give advice to the Board of Agriculture and to these experimental stations and fruit farms, which would be extremely valuable to them because they would know where to go and whom to consult.

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State purchase of canals.

46,277. Your next suggestion, I see, has reference to the purchase of canals by the State?—Yes. You will remember, I daresay, that about five or six months ago one or two very excellent articles appeared in the "Times" newspaper on the acquisition of canals by the State. As far as I recollect—I am sorry that I have not got the pamphlet here, and that I mislaid it, for I could not find it this morning—the proposal was that the best way of dealing with the question of the railway tariffs, which are vexing everybody, without going to law with the railway companies, would be to establish another mode of conveyance in competition with them—a cheaper mode of conveyance in competition with them, and that that might be done by means of the State acquiring the canals, for, I forget the exact sum, but, I think, something like 20 million pounds, which, of course, could be easily got, as a canal stock could be easily formed, for in the present day people all want safe investments, and probably the stock would be in great demand and floated at a premium. The result would be that the canals of the country, a great many of which are now entirely out of order, would be all improved, and that for bulky goods, such as cider, there would be a means of conveyance in competition with the railway companies which would probably lower the rates on that, and on all agricultural produce throughout the country.

46,278. This is rather a general suggestion?—That is a general suggestion, but, of course, we are naturally interested in the question of railway rates as well as other people.

Adulteration of cider.

46,279. Your next suggestion has reference to the adulteration of cider, has it not?—Yes; the adulteration of cider is rather a difficult question. With regard to the Sale of Food and Drugs Act, if that were carried out according to the letter and the spirit of the Act probably that might be sufficient. For example, take the addition of water to cider, Section 6 makes it an offence where an ingredient is added so as to fraudulently increase the weight, bulk, or measure of the food or drug, or of the sale of an inferior quality thereof, that would apply to cider essences and things of that kind added to inferior stuff; but with regard to beer this Act has not been found of any use. There have hardly been any prosecutions under it, and in consequence in a recent Revenue Act, 48 & 49 Vict. c. 51., a clause occurs intended for the suppression of the adulteration of beer. I think some Act containing some such clause would do very well for us in regard to our cider. By Section 8 it is enacted that a "Brewer of beer for sale shall not adulterate beer or add "any matter or thing thereto (except finings for the purpose of classification, or other matter or thing sanctioned "by the Commissioners of Inland Revenue), before the "same is delivered for consumption, and any beer found "to be adulterated or mixed with any other matter or "thing (except as aforesaid) in the possession of a brewer "for sale shall be forfeited," and so on. That would meet the case of cider as well as the case of beer. As it has been found necessary to supplement the Food and Drugs Act by that enactment, I think it may be fairly inferred that the Food and Drugs Act is not applied sufficiently to the case of cider any more than it is to the case of beer. Then with regard to the Merchandise Marks Act, I do not think that applies, because you can hardly speak of "cider" as being a trade description, and what is condemned in the principal section of that Act is a false trade description. What we really aim at and what we want to prevent is, what, I suppose, some will consider a measure of protection, but I do not. We want to prevent people buying American cider blending it with English and selling it as English cider. We want them to say what it is. We think that people who sell a drink that is for consumption should state what it is. In fact, I go as far as to say this, that anything which is consumed by the people, the people ought to know what it is made of. There is such a vogue in favour of adulteration at the present time that the trade adulterators can always appeal to the sympathies of the public. I am afraid there is a large quantity of American cider imported into this country; a great many English cider dealers buy this American cider, they mix it with English cider and sell it altogether as English cider. We do not want at all that

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the customer shall be compelled to ask for English cider, because you could not enforce such a regulation as that. A man asks for cider; if he asks for cider he ought to know whether it is English cider or American cider, or a mixture of English and American cider, and then he can take his choice. If he thinks English cider is better than American, or that American is better than English, he will buy that; if he prefers the mixture he will buy that. In that way we hope that the superior quality of English cider will prevail over the American.

Survey of cider districts by Board of Agriculture.

46,280. Then you desire that the Board of Agriculture should have power to appoint some person or commissioner to survey the cider districts?—Yes. The former Board of Agriculture, I do not know when it terminated its existence, but it was clearly in existence in the early part of this century, issued, I suppose for every county in England, what was called a survey, and I have here the survey for the county of Hereford. It is a very complete and exhaustive survey with regard to the cider industry, and I think now, considering the condition into which that industry has fallen, and the efforts that are going to be made to restore it, that it would be desirable for the Board of Agriculture to justify its existence, if I may use the expression, and make a survey of the kingdom, especially with regard to this industry.

46,281. You have spoken of the importance of stimulating the planting of orchards by small holders?—Yes.

Small holdings in Herefordshire.

46,282. Are there many small holders of land in Herefordshire?—Yes. there are some, and there certainly will be more under the Act of Parliament for which, I suppose I may say, you are responsible.

46,283. What do you consider to be small holdings, as you use the term?—Anything from an acre upwards to 10, or 11, or 12 acres.

46,284. Beyond that there are a great number of small farms of about 50 acres and up to 100?—Yes. I am afraid I have not got the particulars of my own parish; I had them, but I have mislaid them; they are something like that.

46,285. Could you say that the county has a good number of small farms?—There is a fair sprinkling of small farms, I may say, in the county of Hereford, and in consequence of the passing of the Parish Councils Act there are a great many applications for pieces of land. There were at the last meeting of our parish council more than 20 applicants for pieces of land of four acres, one acre, and so on—a great many of them for four acres.

46,286. Those would rather be for allotments?—A four-acre lot may be called an allotment, but it is not an allotment. A man could plant it as an orchard to great advantage if he had the means to do so.

46,287. But those would be held by labouring men, who would be working as labourers, I suppose?—They would be held some by labouring men and some by what we call tradesmen, that is people who are carpenters, sawyers, and so on.

46,288. Now going upwards to the class of small farmers who devote the whole of their time to their farm would you say that Hereford is a county where many such exist?—Yes, there are a good many—"a good few," as we call it.

Demand for farms.

46,289. Where small farms are vacant do they let readily?—They let more readily than large farms.

46,290. At a higher rent relatively?—There is a little more rent, because there is more expense attaching to the letting of small farms.

46,291. Should you say that generally in Herefordshire there is no difficulty in letting land?—I do not think there is any difficulty in letting land.

46,292. Then there is a demand for farms when they are vacant?—A great many Welshmen come.

46,293. A great many Welshmen?—Yes, they leave their country and come to Herefordshire.

46,294. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) They are very good farmers, are they not?—I do not express an opinion on that subject.

Depression in Herefordshire.

46,295. (*Chairman.*) There appear to be some parts of Herefordshire which have suffered very much less from depression than others?—Yes.

46,296. I observe that in the Union of Dore the assessment of land has been maintained to almost the full amount?—Yes.

46,297. The same is the case with the Union of Hereford?—That would be partly fruit and partly hops.

46,298. And Kington?—Hops and cattle there.

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46,299. Ledbury?—That is a great cider country.

46,300. And a hop country too, is it not?—It is a hop country in parts. I do not live very far from there.

46,301. Then the cider industry and the hop industry in those districts probably have kept up the rent of land?—To a great extent they have, but it has not been done this last year in hops.

46,302. In the Union of Ross the fall in the value of land has been very great, namely, from 860,000*l.* to 63,000*l.*?—Yes. Lord Ashburton sold a large property there lately at about 20*l.* an acre.

46,303. Is that a different kind of land?—That is a lighter land altogether; it is what they call "rye land," and is very good for turnips.

46,304. But neither for orchards nor hop growing?—There are some orchards, and there might be more if the sorts of fruit were properly selected, because there are some kinds of fruit that would grow well on that land.

46,305. It is not a hop country, I suppose?—No.

46,306. Then in the Union of Bromyard, the fall in the assessment of the land has been from 76,000*l.* to 62,000*l.*?—That is a much poorer land round there altogether.

46,307. May we say that where land is good, and where the cider industry and hop industry prevail, there the assessment on the value of land has been maintained?—Yes, I think you may say that.

State distribution of plants and seeds.

46,308. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Are you aware that the distribution of plants and trees was adopted by the United States very largely some years ago?—Yes.

46,309. Do you know that they have discontinued that to a great extent?—Yes, because the quantity of seeds was so enormous and people never acknowledged the receipt of them; they did not care about them. But we should acknowledge the receipt of them and care about them very much.

46,310. That distribution was a failure, was it not?—It was a failure because they did not proceed on proper business-like lines at all.

Difficulty in obtaining good trees.

46,311. Cannot you depend at all upon getting good sorts of trees from nurserymen?—No, we cannot. Only the other day a nurseryman at Hereford told me, speaking of the desire now to promote the growth of vintage fruits, that he was asked by a gentleman to supply him with a dozen Barland pear trees, which, as Lord Cobham knows, are good sorts and are grown very much in Worcestershire. He could only supply him with six. I asked him how he managed. He said, "I made up the rest with Blackney Red." That is a very free growing sort, but worth very little as a perry pear. And so that nurseryman had no more than six of the Barland pear trees on his plantation. When it is known that there is a demand they will grow more of these trees.

46,312-3. That would be a nurseryman in a small way of business?—He was in a fairly large way of business.

46,314. Then you think they could not be supplied by local nurserymen?—I do not think they could.

46,315. And that it is necessary to have State intervention in order to supply farmers with proper fruit trees?—Yes.

Compensation for renovation of orchards.

46,316. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You speak of the renovation of orchards, and you propose as an amendment to the Agricultural Holdings Act that that should be included in Part II. of the Schedule; what would be the cost of the renovation of orchards per acre according to your view?—It would depend upon the state of the orchard to be renovated, and, therefore, of course I do not know.

46,317. Supposing it was in a bad condition?—It would cost a good deal.

46,318. What is the utmost cost that you think it would come to?—That is a question I could not possibly answer without seeing the place.

46,319. Could you give the average cost?—No, I could not give the average cost either.

46,320. But surely you have some idea of what would be the cost of renovation?—I have some idea of what the cost of planting a tree is. As I have already said, the cost of planting a tree and the expense of keeping it and fencing it until it is out of harm's way is generally reckoned amongst us to be about 1*l.*; of course, if you had to put 20 trees in the place of 20 old trees it would cost you altogether in the course of time 20*l.*

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46,321. My object in asking is this that if it is included in the second part of the schedule the improvement might be made as, of course, you know without the landlord's consent?—Yes.

46,322. And I want to know how much per acre the landlord may possibly become liable to under those circumstances?—I cannot say that, because there would be a question of what would be renovation. If the acre was completely bare of trees, and it was replanted, then it would not be renovation; if there was a considerable amount of old trees upon it and they were blown down, or cut down, or decayed, and the orchard had to be filled up again, then it would be renovation. My scheme or idea is in general terms, and anyone who wanted to pass an Act on the lines of it would have to be more precise in the wording.

46,323. At all events, it might come to as much as 20*l.* an acre?—I daresay it might, but that would be spread over a number of years. And it would not be out of harm's way until it was nearly 15 years old.

46,324. What is the cost of planting new orchards per acre?—In planting new orchards the cost of the trees would be about 2*s.* 6*d.* apiece, and the labour of a man planting them would not be very much, of course. Suppose you planted 40 trees, that would be 5*l.* for the trees if they were half-a-crown each, and grafted with the best fruits, and then about 5*s.* at a rough guess would have to be paid for the labour, which would bring the cost to about 5*l.* 5*s.* Then, of course, after that there would be fencing, and the cost of that would depend upon the character of the fencing. If the fences were posts and rails, three posts and rails or two posts and rails would be a good deal more expensive than bushing; the bushing would not come to very much, it would be merely the labour in that case.

46,325. At all events, the liability in the case of the planting of a new orchard would not be very serious?—It would not.

Experimental fruit farms.

46,326. With regard to the experimental fruit farms that you suggest, these, I understand, are to be solely for the purpose of cider?—I do not know. If you had got trees there and planted them, I think I should make use of the space if there was room enough for other sorts of fruit. I think it would be just as well.

46,327. You would go in for general experiments?—General experiments in fruit culture; I do not see why, if there was room, other fruit should not be grown.

46,328. They are to be carried on by the State?—They are to be carried on at the expense of the State, the same as they are in other countries.

46,329. And under the control of the State, that is, under the Board of Agriculture?—Under the Board of Agriculture. Then some use might be made of the Botanical Garden at Kew, I should think; I do not know of what use it is now.

State purchase of canals.

46,330. (*Mr. Long.*) You propose that the State should buy up the canals, and make them a competing mode of conveyance as against the railways?—Yes.

46,331. Do you propose to the railways that they shall contribute their share of this purchase money?—No; many of them are owners of the canals, and they would have to be paid for selling them.

46,332. How would the money be found?—By a loan.

46,333. By a guarantee loan?—It would be by canal stock.

46,334. Supposing that the canals did not turn out a profitable venture?—Of course it would be a risk; there is a certain risk in all undertakings.

46,335. You do not propose that there should be any guarantee?—I do not think there need be any guarantee.

46,336. Why should the State step in?—To find the money; and of course it would be done *en bloc* then.

46,337. Then there would be a State guarantee?—In that case there would be naturally a State guarantee as there is in all State loans.

46,338. In the event of failure the State would make good the deficit?—Yes.

46,339. In which case the railway would have to contribute its share of the sum the State would have to make up?—Naturally.

46,340. I put these questions in order that we may understand what the railways have got to anticipate?—The railways would suffer with the rest of us.

46,341. (*Mr. Lambert.*) The general community would benefit very much from having lower railway rates?—Certainly they would benefit very much.

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46,342. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you merely propose that they should buy up existing canals, or that they should make other ones besides?—Making other canals is quite another question. At present I should be satisfied with buying up the existing canals. It is rather a large order in any case.

Importation of foreign cider.

46,343. Is there much American and French cider imported into this country?—In 1893, 558,108 gallons of foreign cider were imported into this country, and of this about 537,000 gallons, so far as I recollect, were American. The importation of American cider has largely increased during the last year—very largely indeed.

46,344. What is the quality of it?—It is in my opinion poor stuff, because it is most of it made from the refuse of table fruit, and not from vintage fruit; that is why it is not of such good quality, but it is a sweet, pleasant stuff which some people might like.

46,345. Is the French cider good?—Yes, it is good, but there is very little imported into this country; it is mostly consumed at home. Only about 20,000 gallons are imported into this country.

46,346. Is there any encouragement given by the State in France to the production of cider?—I do not know about cider, and I will not answer as to that, because I am not quite certain about it. I know that a great deal of instruction has been given by the State, and that prizes have been given to persons who have written books on cider. There is a very good book on cider written by M. Hauchecorne, for which I think he got a money prize.

46,347. Do you think the French cider is better than the English cider?—I do not think it is better than the English cider, but it is much better than the American cider, because it is made from a similar kind of fruit to ours.

Labour.

46,348. To what extent do the orchards give employment to the working classes? Is it only during the time of the gathering of the fruit?—Yes, mainly during the fruit season.

46,349. How large an orchard do you think a working man could manage in addition to doing his ordinary work for a farmer?—He could manage an orchard of three or four acres very well, because there is very little to be done to it.

Rent of orchard land.

46,350. (*Captain Owen Thomae.*) What is the average rent of orchards in Herefordshire?—As I have mentioned before it is difficult to say, because the orchards are let as a rule with the farms; but I might say at 2*l.* 10*s.* or 3*l.* an acre perhaps.

46,351. I believe the planting of these orchards was done formerly by the tenants at their own expense?—It is so long since any planting has been done that it is not in my recollection, but I should think not.

State assistance to cider making.

46,352. You are evidently much in favour of State grants to improve and further develope the industry?—Yes. I am comparing it with what has been done in foreign countries. The report to this Commission, to which I have already referred, shows how very much has been done abroad, and I think we ought not to fall behind-hand in the race. We have got into a low condition, and we must be helped by the State.

46,353. Would you also advocate grants by the State to assist wheat-growers and cattle-breeders and market-gardeners?—No. The market-garden industry is very good. You have had evidence before you to show that it is fairly good.

46,354. And you say the cider industry is fairly good?—I think there is a demand for it, and I say that, in order to improve and renovate our orchards and bring them up to the standard that ought to be attained, would be a very expensive process, therefore we ought to be helped.

46,355. Do you not think that other farmers ought to be helped if they are suffering far more than the cider growers?—If they can show as good a case as the cider farmers can I think they ought to be helped.

46,356. There is hardly an acre of land that lets so high as orchard land; when you come to think of it you will find in England land not worth more, perhaps, than 1*s.* or 2*s.* an acre, and there is no assistance advocated for the landowners, but in the case of the orchards, where the landlord gets 2*l.* 10*s.* an acre do you not think that he ought to assist his tenants?—He only gets that in with

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the rest of the farm. He does not let that land specially at 2*l.* 10*s.* or 3*l.* an acre. It is let with the rest of the farm, and the rest of the farm is very often let at a very low rent, say, 5*s.* or 10*s.*, or something like that.

46,357. You said that the orchards paid 2*l.* 10*s.* if let separately?—If let separately, but, as a matter of fact, and, of course, we are only dealing with matters of fact, they are never let separately.

46,358–9. I think you said in answer to another question that a tenant when he sells his orchard gets 5*l.* an acre for it?—Yes; he thinks he ought to get 5*l.* an acre for the fruit.

Duty on cider.

46,360. (*Mr. Everett.*) There is no tax upon cider or perry now is there?—No.

46,361. It is an alcoholic drink which is free from taxation, and, therefore, an exception to all other drinks?—There is a license for selling it retail.

46,362. But there is no excise duty on it?—No.

46,363. But there was?—Yes.

46,364. How long ago is that?—A great many years ago; as long ago as 80 years ago, perhaps; I do not know.

46,365. I hope it will keep free?—I hope it will; we should be very glad to get beer equally free.

Increased consumption of cider.

46,366. (*Mr. Lambert.*) There is a very great opening for cider drinking in this country, is there not?—There is a very great opening for it. The tendency of the day is for light beverages; and there is also this to be considered that the temperance party require something wholesome that they can drink and they have not got it at present.

46,367. Is cider a temperance beverage?—It is a beverage that you can drink without harm. There are various degrees of cider, but the cider that would be generally sold if the industry was promoted would be draught cider such as cyclists and other people travelling about the roads would take, and that would not be a strong alcoholic beverage, it would not contain nearly so much alcoholic as a great many temperance drinks do now, and therefore, on the ground of temperance, I think it ought to be advocated.

Small holdings.

46,368. (*Mr. Channing.*) You were speaking of the small holdings of four acres, is encouragement given to workmen to plant those now in your neighbourhood?—No encouragement is given to plant them; they never think of planting them with anything.

46,369. I thought you said these small holdings of four acres would be planted with trees?—They would if the State would help them and give them the proper trees. That is what I said. I think they would plant them then.

46,370. Now about the renovation of orchards, is that merely the replacing of the old trees or do you include in it the grubbing up of the ground and the whole renovation of the soil itself?—I do not understand what you mean by the grubbing up of the ground.

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Compensation for renovation of orchards.

46,371. Do you mean the general improvement of the land or merely replacing the trees?—I meant the replacing of the trees.

46,372. Then in your opinion would leases which prohibit a tenant from getting compensation for replacing trees be fair?—I never heard of any such leases.

Consumption of cider by farm labourers.

46,373. (*Chairman.*) You stated that the farm labourers have to some extent given up cider, and taken to beer?—I believe they have, I am sorry to say.

46,374. How do you account for that?—Because I suppose they could get the beer cheaper. I do not know whether it was that or what the reason was; I really cannot say.

46,375. It is rather an unfavourable sign as regards cider that a large number of men should have given up cider and taken to beer?—Perhaps it was too extreme for me to say that a large number of men had given it up.

46,376. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I think in cider drinking counties at any rate the men infinitely prefer good cider to beer?—They certainly do, and if they could get better cider than they can at their public-houses they would invariably take it in preference to the beer, I believe certainly in preference to the class of beer they get there; and they would not get so muddled.

46,377. (*Chairman.*) Do the farmers supply beer now instead of cider at harvest time?—They do not supply so much drink now as they did to the labourers, but in our part of the country, they generally supply cider.

46,378. Cider, not beer?—Yes, I know of none who supply beer about us.

46,379. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is cider cheaper than beer?—Yes, I think it is.

46,380. When you have it of the same alcoholic strength as beer?—Beer varies; what would it be, would it have five per cent. of alcohol?

46,381. I do not know, I am referring to strong cider?—Strong good cider of course is more expensive than wash—than weak stuff.

46,382. Do the labouring men prefer the beer because it is stronger?—I do not know exactly what their preference is, so I cannot say that. The cider that is supplied to them is what we call as a rule family cider, which is cider made a second time over with water.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. A. Spencer.

Mr. Aubrey Spencer called and examined.

Mr. A. Spencer.

Quality of land in counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Berks, and Wilts.

46,383. (*Chairman.*) As we know, you are an Assistant Commissioner appointed to examine into the state of agriculture in the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Wilts, and Berks, and on the neighbourhood of Taunton (Somerset), and also in the Vale of Aylesbury and the county of Hertford?—Yes.

46,384. We will begin with your report upon the counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Wilts and Berks; the districts which you visited in those counties comprise land of very different qualities, do they not?—Yes, very different indeed.

46,385. On the one hand some of the very poorest land in that part of England?—Certainly.

46,386. Such as land at the top of the Cotswold Hills and the poor lands of Berkshire?—Yes.

46,387. And on the other hand, the richer districts of Gloucester and in some parts of Wilts?—In some parts of Wilts there is very good grass land. Then there is first class arable land round Wallingford, for instance, that is in the northern part of Berkshire.

46,388. I presume you found a great difference of condition in these various districts?—Yes, very great.

Demand for farms.

46,389. Take the better land in Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, and Oxfordshire; did you find that the farms there were letting easily or not?—In the grass districts in the Vale of Gloucester, and in North Wilts, the land on the whole seemed to be letting freely; I mean to say there were plenty of applicants for farms in the good pasture districts. Oxfordshire is more of an arable district, but it is not such a poor arable district as the Cotswolds. There, again, the farms seemed to be fully let; but there was some difficulty in letting as I understood.

46,390. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When you speak of the grass districts, are you speaking of districts throughout all these counties that you have examined? Does what you say about the grass districts apply to all of them?—I think that applies to all, but of course, the better grass land is more in demand than the land of poorer quality. As an instance of that I mention that when I was at Trowbridge, I saw some good grass land there; and an agent told me that whenever he had a small farm to let he had men coming to him before breakfast and all through the day, in order to try and get it.

46,391. (*Chairman.*) Should you say that in those districts there was a greater demand for the small farms than for the large ones?—I think so.

46,392. (*Mr. Long.*) May we know what you mean by a small farm?—I mean a farm of about 100 or 200 acres.

46,393. (*Chairman.*) Up to 200 acres would you call it a small farm?—Yes.

46,394. From 50 acres upwards?—Yes.

46,395. And you say that in those districts there is a considerable demand for farms of that size?—Of good quality.

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Reductions of rent.

46,396. Could you form any general estimate as to the comparative reductions of rent on this better land, as compared with the reductions on the worst lands?—The worst land of all has gone down 60 per cent. or more, as far as I could estimate it; but the better land in some cases has not gone down more than 15 per cent. or 20 per cent., and accommodation land has sometimes not gone down at all.

46,397. By accommodation land you mean land in the neighbourhood of the small towns, I presume?—Small towns, or a bit of specially good grass land.

46,398. I suppose in case of the larger towns there would be a larger radius around them of good land?—For instance, around Oxford there are some meadows that let at as much as 7*l.* an acre.

Value of land.

46,399. Has land around Oxford maintained its old value, should you say?—Only just in the very immediate neighbourhood, and then only for accommodation land. When you once get away from Oxford, you find the land has fallen considerably.

46,400. Did you go into the neighbourhood of Gloucester?—Yes, I went to Gloucester and had a meeting there.

46,401. I see that in the Union of Gloucester the rateable value of land, according to a return that I have in my hand, has been reduced only from 57,000*l.* to 54,000*l.*, indicating a very small reduction in the value of land there?—Those figures would bear out what I heard about it. That is all good grass land.

46,402. Were you in the neighbourhood of Dursley?—Yes, I went to Dursley.

46,403. I see that there the rateable value has been reduced from 38,000*l.* to 37,000*l.* only?—Yes, that would be so.

46,404. Is a good deal of that land valuable land?—Yes, a good deal of that would be on Lord Fitzhardinge's estate, the Berkeley estate.

46,405. Then probably the rents are low, and it has not been necessary to reduce them very much?—They have not been reduced to the extent that they have been reduced in other cases, because none of the land about there has been reduced to the same extent as poor arable land has; it is very good pasture land.

46,406. In Cirencester I see the rateable value of the land has been reduced from 90,000*l.* to 62,000*l.*?—Yes, that is poor Cotswold land.

46,407. Then in Northleach the reduction has been from 67,000*l.* to 37,000*l.*?—Yes, I think the land in that union has probably fallen more than in any other part that I have visited.

46,408. (*Mr. Long.*) Northleach has?—I should think so.

46,409. More than Salisbury Plain? I did not go to the poor arable parts of Wiltshire; I did not visit Salisbury Plain.

46,410. You went to Devizes?—I went to North Wilts, but Mr. Rew went into the Salisbury Plain district.

46,411. (*Chairman.*) I see that in Thornbury the land has gone down from 94,000*l.* to 87,000*l.*?—Yes, I was there too.

46,412. That is an inconsiderable drop?—That is more, perhaps, than the best grass land about Gloucester, but not so much as the poorer land.

46,413. Then, coming to the poorer land, did you say that there was any great difficulty in letting farms there?—Very great difficulty indeed, especially in the Cotswold Hill district; there is the greatest difficulty in letting farms.

Land unlet.

46,414. Has much land there been unlet altogether?—A very large quantity indeed. North of Cirencester, in the Cheltenham and Northleach directions, a very large quantity is unlet.

46,415. Is it in the hands of its owners?—Yes, principally.

46,416. Do they cultivate it?—Some cultivate and some have let it go down altogether. There is one fairly large estate I saw where land is given up to producing rabbits.

Condition of tenant farmers.

46,417. I see that at page 30 of your report you speak of a bank manager who took a cheerful view of the present state of things, and said that the farmers' balances in his district were maintained, that they owed less money than they had done, and that their personal expenditure and rentals had been cut down, and that apparently their financial position was not bad?—Yes.

46,418. What district was that in?—That came from a banker at Cirencester. The district round Cirencester includes not only the Cotswold land, but some better grass land on the south side of Cirencester; it does not merely include the poor land. I think I ought to say that another banker in the same town took a less cheerful view of the situation, although he did not take a very poor view of it.

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46,419. Then you say that on the better land or medium class land, where the rents have been reduced, and where the farmers' expenditure, personal and otherwise, has been reduced, the farmers held their own?—Speaking of arable land?

46,420. Yes?—They have generally until the last year or two. The drop in prices which has taken place since last summer might modify the statement.

46,421. Do you refer to the latest fall in the price of wheat?—Yes, up to, say, 1893, I think that might be said; but 1893 was a very crushing year, and 1894 was still more so, owing to the fall in prices.

46,422. In the case of the grass land I suppose they have still maintained their position?—Yes. Of course 1893 was a very trying year for the grass farmers on account of the failure of all pasture crops.

46,423. That was an exceptional year owing to the extraordinary drought?—Yes.

46,424. But I suppose that last year they to some extent regained their position?—Yes. I am afraid that since I have been there dairy produce has rather fallen, but that I do not know of my own knowledge; milk, I understood, fell a good deal this last winter, or did not maintain its price.

Dairying in the Cotswold district.

46,425. Do you think that the farmers in that district have gone too much into milk, and have given up making butter and cheese?—I cannot say that, because I think they have gone in for what they consider pays them best. I was told by several people that if you can sell your milk at 6*d.* per gallon or more it pays better than making butter with it; on the other hand, I think there is room for the development of the butter industry. I think it suffers very much from the fact that a good deal of the butter made is not of a very good quality, and there is the difficulty of the want of uniformity in the quality.

46,426. There is much to be done in the improvement of the general quality of the butter?—There is much to be done in that direction. Of course the technical education schemes are doing, and have done, no doubt, a great deal of good, but then unfortunately the market price of butter, as the farmers have pointed out to me, is usually regulated by the worst quality of butter. If a farmer makes good butter and gets a private customer for it he very often does pretty well, but if he has to send it to market he cannot get such a good price for it.

46,427. Then the whole market is depressed by the bad condition of a certain quantity of butter?—Yes.

46,428. That shows the extreme importance of endeavouring to maintain a uniform quality?—Yes.

Butter factories.

46,429. Is anything being done in the direction of co-operative butter factories?—I did not meet any within my district, but there are butter factories to which the farmers sell their milk. It is not a co-operative system, but at Berkeley, at Melksham, and at Devizes there are butter factories where the company or the private owner, whichever it may be, buys the milk and manufactures the butter and sells it. I believe they all do a pretty good business.

46,430. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Were they started by landowners?—No, I think they are private speculations.

46,431. Commercial speculations?—Generally commercial speculations.

46,432. (*Chairman.*) Has there been a considerable change in the cultivation of the land in those districts that you have been in; has much been laid down to grass?—I think land has been laid down to grass wherever it is suitable for it, but some of the districts I visited are not suitable for laying down to grass. The stone-brash land in Oxfordshire does not lay down well to grass they say. No doubt a certain quantity has been laid down, but I do not think it can proceed very much further because it does not form good grass. It is the same with the Cotswold district.

Judicial rents.

46,433. Did you find among the farmers that you saw that there was any desire for judicial rents?—Very little. There were one or two cases I met, but they were quite exceptional.

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46,434. Should you say that the general view of the farmers in the district has been against it?—Certainly I should say so in those districts that I visited.

46,435. Did you meet the farmers at any considerable number of meetings?—Yes, I held a great many meetings.

46,436. Was the subject discussed then? — It was occasionally suggested but did not meet with the approval of the greater number of the farmers present. I think I heard more about it perhaps at Taunton than at any other place I visited. There are one or two there who have some feelings in that direction, but even there it was not supported by the majority of farmers.

Reduction of rent.

46,437. Was it generally considered then that the landowners had reduced their rents sufficiently?—Complaints were frequently made that rents had not been reduced sufficiently early in some cases; on the other hand it was frequently said to me, "We think the landlords have behaved very liberally to us and have reduced their rents as much as could fairly be expected."

46,438. Perhaps both landlords and tenants did not appreciate soon enough the nature of the difficulty?—I think that there can be no doubt that that was so.

46,439. If the landlords did not make sufficient reductions, on the other hand perhaps the tenants did not sufficiently press them?—Quite so.

46,440. Neither party to the bargain sufficiently early appreciated the change that was coming about?—I do not think they foresaw what was coming.

Immigrant farmers.

46,441. Have you found that there was a considerable number of Cornish farmers and Devonshire farmers who have come into the districts which you visited?—In Oxfordshire there are a good many Cornish and Devonshire farmers, and some from Somersetshire. There are some on Lord Sherborne's Estate in the Cotswold district. I did not hear of them elsewhere there, but in Oxfordshire there is a considerable immigration of Cornishmen.

46,442. What class of farmers are they? — Stock farmers.

46,443. Small farmers or large farmers?—They have farms from 200 to 300 acres.

46,444. Have they brought sufficient capital with them?—Some have capital.

46,445. Do they live in a rather different style to the other farmers or not?—I do not think that is so noticeable as it would be in the case of the Scotch farmers I saw in Hertfordshire. I do not think the Cornish farmer lives very differently. Perhaps he would not spend so much as the old-fashioned Oxfordshire farmer, and he is more thrifty.

46,446. Does he work?—He works, no doubt, himself to some extent.

Low price of feeding stuffs.

46,447. Do you find that the farmers have gained very much by the low price of feeding stuffs?—The farmers on grass land certainly have, and the cheap price of corn has benefitted them.

46,448. It has been of great benefit to them?—Many of the farmers in the Vale of Gloucester said to me: "The cheap price of corn has enabled us to hold out; that is the only thing that enables us to hold on lately"—especially in the year 1893, when the supply of grass was so short.

46,449. It has practically made up for the low price of other things which they sell?—Yes; but then, of course, they are not corn growers.

46,450. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What farmers are those?—Grass farmers, stock raisers, or dairy farmers.

46,451. (*Chairman.*) They have increased their consumption of corn, you think?—I should think so.

Bank loans.

46,452. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You have a paragraph on page 30 to the effect that you are informed "that in days of prosperity there was no difficulty in farmers obtaining loans from bankers, but that no banker would now entertain an application for more than a short temporary advance, except upon the security of a guarantee from some person of approved financial position." Was that statement made to you by a banker?—Yes.

46,453. And he also spoke to you of the serious losses made a few years ago upon farmers' accounts?—Yes, in some cases.

46,454. Should you say from your experience that this is a fact of general application?—That farmers do not get advances now?

46,455. That farmers' accounts have been much restricted, and that there have been great losses made upon them by bankers?—No, I do not think so; but I think that some banks, for some reason or other, had more money outstanding on loans to farmers than others, or, possibly, did not call it in sufficiently soon.

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46,456. Do you mean to say that occasional advances only are made to farmers who are known to be solvent?—Temporary advances would only be made to farmers who are known to be solvent.

46,457. I thought you laid stress on "temporary advances to tide over exceptional necessity such as the getting in of the harvest," which are "occasionally made to farmers who are known to be solvent"; the inference from that is that that is the only class of advance now made to farmers?—Except on good outside security I think that is so. A banker said to me if a customer comes to us and says, "I have not got enough money to get my harvest in," or something of that sort, or "I want it for two or three months for some particular object," they would, unless they knew him to be in a shaky position, probably let him have it.

46,458. Do you not think farmers can get advances in the ordinary course of their business upon the security of their stock?—I do not think they ever do that. That would necessitate a bill of sale, and bankers have told me that they never advance money on a bill of sale on the stock.

Rabbit farming.

46,459. You say that one large estate is given over to rabbit-cultivation?—Yes.

46,460. Is that done systematically?—Yes, I think it is.

46,461. In a commercial way?—Yes.

46,462. Did you see it?—Yes, I went over it. I think the grass land is run over in the summer with sheep to a certain extent, and is otherwise given up to rabbits. There are large plantations, and rabbits are allowed to run over the grass land, and they are trapped.

46,463. About how many acres would there be of this rabbit farm?—This land, which is let go down in this way, is about 2,000 or 3,000 acres. I do not think you can call it exactly a rabbit farm; it is a case of a large estate where there are rabbits, which are not kept down, but are rather encouraged to increase.

46,464. Is it a warren?—It is not an enclosed warren.

46,465. It has not any rabbit fencing?—No.

46,466. The rabbits are not fed artificially?—No, they are simply kept wild; in fact it is rather a complaint amongst some of the neighbouring farmers that the rabbits run over their land.

46,467. You do not know of a regular rabbit-warren?—No, I have not seen that, where I went. The gentleman to whom this land belongs, said he made about 7*s.* 6*d.* an acre from his rabbits.

46,468. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Unenclosed?—Yes. I suppose that would be the grass part of it; I do not suppose that he would reckon in the plantations. There are large plantations there.

46,469. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose he had given up arable farming on that farm?—Yes, except upon the better portion in the valley.

46,470. And the rabbits had to live upon the grass and the trees?—Yes.

46,471. I suppose there would be very great difficulty in the worst parts of the Cotswolds to try any other system than that they are trying now?—I think so.

Laying land down to grass.

46,472. Grass cannot be laid down to any great extent, can it?—No, I think the old grass was good before it was ploughed up, it was a sort of down grass. It has always been a great sheep district. It was a great wool-producing district in the middle ages, I believe. They told me in some of the towns there that they frequently find foreign coins which they attribute to the people who came to England to buy the wool. England was a great wool-exporting country at that time, and no doubt the Cotswolds was a great sheep-producing district, and the Cotswold sheep which produce a heavy class of wool were bred there. In those days I suppose it must have been all grass.

46,473. Long-established down grass?—Yes.

46,474. That is nearly all gone now?—It is nearly all gone, and I suppose the sheep were wintered in the woods. Of course there were in those days no turnips to winter them.

46,475. That grass would take many years to replace, I suppose?—Hundreds of years. In Berkshire they said it

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would take at least 100 years to get old down land after it had once been ploughed.

46,476. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I suppose that in Gloucestershire on the Cotswolds, and in Berkshire and Wiltshire, you saw adjoining the down land an immense quantity of land which had been broken up for the sake of growing corn upon it, which ought never to have been touched?—Yes, certainly in the case of some of that which has gone down to rough grass now, the difference between the grass that it now produces and the old down is very noticeable. You see them side by side sometimes. One is very poor stuff, and the other is beautiful rich sward which is still very valuable.

Deficiency and deterioration of labour.

46,477. Did you hear very much complaint in the Cotswolds of the want of labour or of the deterioration of labour?—I heard that everywhere. I think everywhere that I went there was a certain amount of complaint of deterioration; but opinions differ a good deal on that. I do not think I heard it specially in the Cotswold district.

46,478. But you heard it as rather a universal complaint?—Yes.

Cider making.

46,479. You went through the Vale of Berkeley. I think you were in the room this morning when Mr. Cooke was examined; could I ask you a question or two now about cider-making?—I heard a little about that.

46,480. Did you find in going through that district that they put great store upon their orchards?—They rather complained that they were not as valuable as they used to be.

46,481. Was that because they do not make so much cider, and their trees bore cider apples and not fruit apples?—Yes, I think that is so, and they complained that cider had fallen in price. Perhaps I may mention that one of the reasons that they gave for it was that so many of the public-houses now are tied to breweries, and the breweries discourage the sale of cider in competition with their own beer. They say that has caused a fall in the value of cider.

46,482. And that the farmers do not give the same quantity of cider to their workmen as they used to do?—They cannot give it on account of the Truck Acts. That I have noticed also in Worcestershire, where I went for the Labour Commission. There the cider has been thrown on the farmers' hands owing to their having to discontinue giving it to their men.

46,483. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think that enactment is a dead letter in some counties?—It is in Somersetshire. I went there for the Labour Commission and it is clearly a dead letter there. In Worcestershire there had been prosecutions, and there was a great uncertainty as to whether they could give cider or not.

46,484. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did you find that the orchards in the vale had been filled up with other trees?—I was told that there was a considerable demand for a large-sized apple for the Midland towns, either an eating or a cooking apple, and to a certain extent I believe they are being filled up, but, of course, it is an expensive process; I suppose there is some difficulty in finding money to do it in many cases.

Fruit growing.

46,485. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is fruit-growing increasing at all in that part of the country?—According to the returns the orchards have increased in Gloucestershire, but I think the increase is in the way of fruit not for cider but for eating or cooking purposes.

46,486. And for other kinds of fruit probably bush fruits?—Yes, I think more in the way of apples and pears, but to a certain extent bush fruits too. It is always said that the difficulty of the railway traffic is the great drawback to that.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

46,487. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Did you get any practical suggestions from these farmers or from any others how they propose to prove their consumption of home-grown produce—how it could be checked so as to avoid fraud?—I heard a good deal about the foreign meat.

46,488. I am referring to the home-grown and home-consumed produce; did you get any practical suggestions how that could be carried out so as to prevent fraud?—You mean in the way of giving compensation for home-grown corn?

46,489. Yes; if they claim compensation how are they going to prove it to the satisfaction of the other party?—There was a great difficulty in making any suggestion of that sort. When I suggested that there would be a difficulty in checking it, some farmers said we could show it by our books. Some farmers keep books in which they say they could show it. Another thing which was said was "anybody would know how much corn this farm "ought to produce, and by looking at the books you "could see how much was sold and how much was used "at home." Further than that I did not hear any suggestion. It is acknowledged that the checking of it is rather a difficult question.

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46,490. On the whole it would rather point to this then that it is a very difficult thing to come to a fair way of managing it?—It is very difficult to devise some effectual means of checking it.

Agricultural education.

46,491. Did you hear any suggestions as to the way in which the provisions of technical education should be dealt with in these different counties—for agricultural purposes only I mean?—Farmers do not believe very much in technical education, as a rule, but all county councils are making efforts in that direction. I think in every district I went to there is a dairy school going round or a cheese-making school, or something of that kind.

46,492. But there was nothing very new except what you have mentioned in your report, I take it?—No.

46,493. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Generally speaking you found, I suppose, a great deal of depression in your district?—Yes.

Fall in prices.

46,494. And the agriculturists, I gather from your report, all give pretty much the same cause for it, namely, the fall in prices?—Yes, certainly.

46,495. Do they attribute part of it to the seasons?—Part of it to the seasons but more to the fall in prices.

Land unlet.

46,496. In some parts there is very little land that is let at all, is that not so?—In the Cotswold district I should think the land unlet is more than the land which is let.

46,497. In the Cotswolds?—On the poorer part of the Cotswolds.

46,498. Does that hold good anywhere else?—On the Chiltern Hills district, in Oxfordshire, I think there is very little land that is let.

Uncultivated land.

46,499. Have you found in any parts of the country that you have had to inquire into what land has gone out of cultivation altogether?—A certain amount of land on the Cotswolds has gone out of cultivation—that is where this rabbit breeding that I was speaking of goes on.

46,500. I observe you say in paragraph 77 "on the "Oxfordshire side of the Thames between Caversham and "Wallingford a good deal of land has gone out of cul-"tivation"?—That is on the Chiltern Hills.

46,501. Is that where this land has been devoted to a rabbit farm?—No, the rabbit farm is on the Cotswolds, that is in Gloucestershire. The Chiltern Hills consist of poor land with a great deal of beech woods.

46,502. In both of those parts of your district there is land out of cultivation?—Yes.

Rabbit farming.

46,503. Tell me a little more about the rabbits. From what you say have you any reason to suppose that that system of farming, so to speak, might be extended with advantage; can you believe that land devoted to rabbits in that way would produce 7*s.* 6*d.* an acre?—No, I do not think it would; I am not quite sure that I was right about that figure of 7*s.* 6*d.* I rather think it was 2*s.* 6*d.* when I come to think of it now.

46,504. I think that sounds rather more like it?—I am pretty sure it is 2*s.* 6*d.* now.

46,505. Then you do not see any great opening in that respect?—I do not think there is any great opening with the rabbits.

46,506. You heard a good deal of course from these distressed agriculturists as to the remedies they suggested?—Yes.

Import duties on manufactures.

46,507. Am I right in supposing from what I read of your reports, that they rely mainly upon import duties, upon what they call "manufactured articles"?—That is the favoured remedy of farmers. That is the first thing I heard in the market place of the towns that I went to.

46,508. What do they include in their manufactured articles?—It is rather difficult to get them to define that exactly, but flour is one.

46,509. They are all pretty unanimous there, about flour, are they not?—On flour they are unanimous. Then they think also that imported meat should be included. In Bristol, however, I could not quite make them define whether they merely meant frozen meat, or cattle that were brought over and killed as they are at Avonmouth, but I think most of them would say it is only frozen meat that they would have included.

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46,510. When they spoke of manufactured articles did they mean by that, articles of food only?—No, "We will have it all round" they said.

46,511. All manufactured articles?—Yes.

46,512. Including such food as is manufactured?—Yes, quite so.

Bounty on home-grown corn.

46,513. In paragraph 95 you say, "A bounty on home-grown corn also found supporters"?—Yes.

46,514. There is a scheme in relation to that given in your appendix?—That was one suggestion, that was made occasionally.

Malt tax.

46,515. But not strongly supported?—No, it was thought to be difficult to carry out.

46,516. What are their views with regard to the malt tax?—There is a very general feeling that the abolition of the malt tax was a mistake.

46,517. And they would like to see it restored?—To see that restored, or something equivalent to it.

Duty on foreign barley

46,518. Do they propose a duty upon foreign barley?—That is sometimes suggested, but on the cheaper sorts of barley I do not think they would be in favour of it, because those sorts come in useful for feeding.

46,519. Providing a distinction was made between malt-barley and feeding barley, if that was found practicable they would be unanimous?—Yes.

46,520. (*Chairman.*) Did they say whether it would be possible to make a distinction?—I did not go as far as that.

46,521. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say they did not suggest any material alterations in the law as to the relations between landlord and tenants?—No; except that they thought the Agricultural Holdings Act required some amendment.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

46,522. Then the Agricultural Holdings Act was often complained of?—They generally said We do not care about it at all—it is of no use to us.

46,523. You tell us that you found out that that was very often from ignorance of the Act?—Very often the people who complained of it were not aware what the Act contained, and amendments were suggested that were already part of the Act.

46,524. That is to say, they actually suggested amendments which are already in existence, and are already part of the Act?—Yes. For instance, this was mentioned as a hardship to me. Some particular man would say, "By "my agreement the Act is excluded." He was not aware that the present Act could not be excluded by law, probably he held under an old agreement which purported to exclude the Act of 1875.

46,525. (*Mr. Lambert.*) It may be excluded if an agreement is come to giving substituted compensation?—It was not that they had in mind; they meant excluding the Act altogether, not merely excluding the compensation clauses.

46,526. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The compensation clauses, I understand, cannot be excluded unless equivalent compensation is given in any other way?—Quite so; it is only the procedure for assessing compensation that you could exclude.

Rates.

46,527. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say in paragraph 60 that "the amount paid in rates has, with some exceptions, "not increased very materially; in some places the amount "paid in rates has actually decreased"?—Yes.

46,528. But taking the cases you have given in the appendix of the Northleach Union, the Chippenham Union, and Wootton Bassett Union the amount raised has decreased very considerably in each case I think. Those are the only cases that you give. In the Northleach Union the amount raised has decreased from 8,697*l.* to 7,067*l.*; in the Chippenham Union it has decreased from 17,382*l.* to 16,125*l.*; and in the Wootton Bassett Union it has decreased from 11,411*l.* to 9,783*l.*; so that in the cases which you have given it has decreased in each case—the amount of the rates I am speaking of now, not the rate in the £?—That is so, I think.

46,529. Did you have any cases in which the amount of the rates raised had increased?—In the body of the report, at pages 22 and 23, I give some cases.

46,530. I will come to those, if I may, directly; those are not the amounts of the rates raised, I think?—No; the amounts paid by a farmer annually.

46,531. In the Wheatenhurst Union, that is?—Yes; but I do not think I gave the Wheatenhurst Union in the appendix.

46,532. You have not given the Wheatenhurst Union in the appendix?—I did not get that information.

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46,533. You also give the amounts paid by a farmer in the Wootton Bassett Union, and you find that on that particular farm a larger amount was paid for rates, but on looking to the union itself we find that a very considerably smaller amount was raised taking the whole union?—Yes, his assessment may have been raised.

46,534. I was going to say there must have been something wrong in his assessment comparing one period with the other, because the rateable value of the Wootton Bassett Union went up during that period, and the rates raised went down, and therefore as his rent, instead of going up, went down, he ought certainly to have paid less in the pound, unless there was something at one period or the other wrong in his assessment?—I see the Chipping Norton Union has gone up a little, it is given on page 57.

46,535. Those are not totalled I think there—that is the rate in the pound?—Yes, I beg your pardon.

46,536. The amount of the rates is not given?—No, I did not get that out, in some of the parishes they had not got that.

46,537. Then in the case of the farm in the Headington Union the rates have fallen to a considerably greater extent than the rent has fallen?—Yes.

46,538. But in paragraph 62 you say "Even where there "has been a decrease in the rates they have not generally "fallen in the same proportion that rent has done," but in this case they have fallen in a greater proportion?—They have in that case certainly.

46,539. Did you have any cases in which they had not fallen in as great a proportion as the rent?—It would be so in the Chipping Norton Union. The rents have certainly gone down, and the rate in the £ is more.

46,540. The rate in the £ in the Chipping Norton Union in 1893 was 1*s.* 9*d.*, in 1888 it was 2*s.* 2*d.*, before the passing of the Local Government Act, but in the year 1882 it was 1*s.* 7*d.*, so it has gone up as compared with 1882, but down as compared with 1888?—Yes, slightly up as compared with 1882.

46,541. There was a general complaint that rates had risen and "it was stated at the meeting held at Gloucester "that local rates had considerably increased, and that the "increase was due to the county rates"?—Yes.

46,542. But it was pointed out by Sir John Dorrington, who was the chairman of the County Council, that that was not so, I think?—Yes it was. He gave me a table showing the amounts in the £ of county rates for a series of years, and they are less now than they were 10 years ago.

46,543. No doubt these representations that the rates had been raised were made *bonâ fide*?—Yes.

46,544. But it shows what very wrong impressions the agriculturists sometimes have with regard to the rise in rates?—Yes. One man in particular told me that his rates had more than doubled, but when I came to look at it I found it was anything but that. He asked me to come and look at his books, and he said, "I will show it you."

46,545. I think that is a very general impression which prevails in town and country very frequently; people have very vague ideas as to what they are paying in rates until they examine their accounts?—Yes, that is so.

46,546. (*Chairman.*) There are only about three cases in which you have given the detailed expenditure upon farms spread over a number of years showing the amount of rent, labour, and rates for each year?—Yes.

46,547. On page 71 in the appendix, in respect to a farm in Cirencester which was originally of 329 acres, that acreage seems to have been reduced to 279?—Yes.

46,548. Now turning to page 73, there is a case given there in great detail of a large farm in the Wallingford district of Berkshire, and there the rent and rates per acre are given for each year?—Yes.

46,549. Apparently the rates fell from 7*s.* per acre in 1873 to 5*s.* 9*d.* in 1874, and then by a gradual reduction to 3*s.* 3*d.* in 1893?—Yes.

46,550. Then there is another farm near Wallingford of from 648 to 736 acres where the actual payments fell from 122*l.* in 1881 to so low as 33*l.* in 1893?—Yes.

46,551. Which seems to indicate, as Mr. Dalton was saying, that many farmers seem hardly to be aware what the reduction has been, due partly to reduced expenditure and partly to reduced assessment?—Yes, no doubt that is so. There is a great deal of misapprehension as to what the exact position is.

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46,552. On pages 58 and 59 you give several cases of unions which you visited and the amount of rates actually raised in 1881 and 1891; and in each of the cases there has been a considerable reduction in the actual amount of the rates raised?—Yes.

46,553. May we presume that in all those unions there has been a large reduction in the assessment of land?—No doubt.

46,554. Then the farmers have benefited in all probability, or in all certainty, not merely from the reduction in the assessments, but also from the still further reduction of the rate in the £?—Yes.

Report on the Vale of Aylesbury and Hertfordshire. Immigrant farmers.

46,555. Now we will go on to the other district that you reported upon, namely, the vale of Aylesbury and the county of Hertford; there you state that in the case of Hertfordshire there has been a considerable and remarkable immigration of Scotch and Cornish farmers?—Yes.

46,556. Did you visit many of these people?—Yes; I visited several of them.

46,557. Are they doing fairly well?—I should say certainly as compared with other farmers.

46,558. What is the cause of the difference?—I think they are extremely thrifty, and they are hardworking. To a certain extent they have changed the system.

46,559. In what respect have they changed?—They grow potatoes a good deal; they grow oats more and they grow artificial grasses.

46,560. Have they taken, in many cases, the poorer lands?—They have taken the ordinary class of Hertfordshire land. It is not good land, any of it.

46,561. It is a very depressed district?—It is not so depressed as the Essex district. Still it is a depressed district; but being near London and there being plenty of railway accommodation, I think it has kept up rather better than other districts of a similar character of soil.

46,562. Have these farmers continued to remain there?—Many of them have. I visited one or two who have been there 10 years, and who seemed to be doing very fairly well.

46,563. Did they make any complaints?—No; some of them have introduced dairy farming on arable land where they are near a railway. Where they are near a railway they have almost always, if they can, gone in for milk selling.

46,564. Have the neighbouring farmers learnt anything from them?—I think there is a tendency to change their course something in the same direction. I think they have learnt something.

46,565. Have you found Cornish farmers there too?—Yes. There are more Scotch than Cornish, but there are Cornishmen as well. I think some of them employ rather less labour, both the Scotch and Cornish farmers. That is in a great measure because they and their families work very hard. The female members of their families sometimes work.

46,566. I see you quote one land agent as saying: "Scotchmen seem to do very well. They employ plenty "of labour and work very hard themselves." And you quote another one as saying: "Scotchmen never go "back to their own country from here. I do not think "they run farms out. They farm very highly and use a "great deal of manure"?—I asked those questions specifically because a statement to the contrary effect had been made to me by some people I had met in the market.

46,567. Did you get statements as to their farming accounts from any of those Scotch farmers?—No, I did not.

46,568. Is it difficult to get them?—There is considerable difficulty in getting anything of that sort. I was asking one Scotch farmer how he had been doing and he said, "I should not stay here unless I could make some per-centage on my capital."

46,569. Have they got leases?—No, they have not got leases.

46,570. They have not brought the Scotch system of leases then with them?—No.

46,571. Would the landowners be prepared to give them leases, do you imagine?—It would depend upon the rent. If it was a very greatly reduced rent I doubt whether they would. They always told me that nobody asked for a lease now.

Farms in the Aylesbury district.

46,572. The Aylesbury district is rather a different locality, is it not?—Very different.

46,573. Are the farms there large or small?—They are medium sized farms, about 200 acres; they are not what you call large farms.

46,574. I suppose the rent has not been so much reduced?—Not nearly so much.

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46,575. Is it mostly grass?—Yes, but each farm would have a certain amount of arable with it for the purpose of growing straw.

46,576. But they do not depend at all upon their corn?—No, they do not depend upon their corn.

46,577. Do they generally consume their own corn or do they sell it?—I think they consume it now.

46,578. At present prices, I suppose, they would?—Yes. The great value of arable land there is for the straw. They must have straw for their cattle, and they grow wheat because it produces the best straw for their purposes.

46,579. Then growing wheat for straw will keep up the cultivation of wheat in districts where otherwise it could not be carried on?—In that sort of district it certainly would because wheat straw would be necessary for them there, at least I suppose they would say it was.

Dairy produce in the Aylesbury district.

46,580. How do they make their money in the Aylesbury district mainly—is it by selling milk?—Either by milk or by fattening cattle; it used to be by making butter.

46,581. Has butter-making been given up?—That has been given up to a great extent.

46,582. Do you think it has been given up too much, and that they have gone too much into milk?—They say that the prices for butter are so bad, and I suppose they know their business best. I met one farmer last summer who said, "I made butter hitherto, but I am going "to take to milk after Michaelmas." He said, "I cannot "make butter do."

46,583. Has the price of really the best butter gone down?—I do not expect it has. I think the farmers who make butter now successfully are those who have got private customers and who do not sell through a dealer. There is one farmer near Aylesbury whom I met who has a large number of customers in London; he sends up to private families who know him.

46,584. And he gets a good price?—He gets a good price; he gets the retail price.

46,585. Does the same remark apply to that district as you have made with reference to districts further west, namely, that the price of butter has depreciated by the quantity of bad butter?—I think so, certainly.

46,586. So that it tells against a farmer who makes good butter, and unless he has private customers he cannot get a good price?—Yes. In the case of one or two farmers where I went, where they still make butter, the butter is evidently not of the best quality.

46,587. All this tends to show the extreme importance of having a general uniform level of quality?—Yes. One farmer told me, "Our butter does not keep so well." I said, "Why does the foreign butter sell better than "yours"? He said, "Because ours does not keep so well." I believe it is simply a question of the making; if the English butter is made properly it will keep just as well as any foreign butter.

46,588. Have you found much increase in the cultivation of fruit in the district?—Not in that district. There is to a certain extent near to the Chilterns, but that is rather out of the Vale of Aylesbury. There are a good many plums and cherries grown there, but not in the Vale of Aylesbury itself.

Aylesbury duck industry.

46,589. Has there been much increase in poultry?—There is the duck-breeding industry near Aylesbury.

46,590. Has that increased considerably?—That has increased to a certain extent, I think, but it is very difficult to say how far it has increased or not. As a rule, people who rear ducks told me that they think it has increased, and they say it has increased for this reason, that a good many farmers, owing to these bad times, have taken to doing a little ducking, as it is called, in addition to actual farming. The regular duck rearers are generally people of small means, such as labourers or men of the small tradesmen class.

46,591. Are there any lands unlet in the Aylesbury district?—Not in the Aylesbury district.

Demand farms.

46,592. Is there a demand for farms there?—There is a certain demand for farms there.

46,593. Is there any difficulty in getting a tenant?—I do not think there is much difficulty in getting a tenant there.

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46,594. In the Hertford district, I suppose, there is some difficulty?—Yes, and there is land unlet in Hertfordshire, more especially as you get further from London.

46,595. To some extent, I suppose, the difficulty has been removed by this inroad of Scotch and Cornish farmers?—Yes.

Judicial rents.

46,596. Did you find any demand in either of those districts for judicial rents?—No.

46,597. Was the question mooted?—I do not think it was mooted in the Aylesbury or Hertfordshire district; I did hear it mooted in my other district, as I have said.

46,598. At meetings of farmers which were held was the question discussed at all?—There was an opportunity for discussing it, but they did not give any attention to it.

46,599. Would you say, then, that there is no general demand for it?—In neither of those districts, I should say—certainly it is so.

Scotch farmers in Hertfordshire.

46,600. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Are these Scotch settlers chiefly young men, or are they married people?—I think when they come there they are young men, but some of them have been there some little time and have grown older.

46,601. Ten years I think you said?—There was one man in particular that I am thinking of who was quite a middle-aged man, who has been there 10 years; I should think he is a man of 50 or so.

46,602. Did you find that their families really worked with them pretty regularly?—In many cases, yes, especially on the smaller class of farms.

46,603. That accounted for their wage bills showing that they employed less labour?—Yes. They do the labourers' work themselves, which the old-fashioned English farmer would not do.

46,604. (*Chairman.*) Do they bring a certain amount of capital with them?—Some do, I expect, but I daresay some do not. I do not expect that they would bring so much capital as was formerly considered necessary for an English farm, but they have got enough to get on with somehow or other.

46,605. I notice that one of them objected very much to the manner in which we let farms in Scotland, that is, by advertising them?—Yes, by tender, as they called it.

46,606. Did he say in what way he proposed that proprietors were to let the public know that their farms were to let if they were not to be advertised?—No; I did not question him as to the system there, but he was comparing it rather with the English system, and he said in Scotland they are let by tender, and that keeps the price up.

46,607. How do they get their tenants there; do they not compete against each other in England?—In many places there is no competition, or very little competition. I expect the real thing is that in Scotland there is more competition.

46,608. Is not the price the public will give for an article the proper price to get for it?—I should think so.

46,609. Did that gentleman explain in any way how it is that last year there was a better demand in Scotland for farms than there had been for a good many years previously?—No.

46,610. He did not mention that?—No. I did not question him very much about the Scotch system; I was asking him more particularly how he was getting on in England. He was a man who had come from Scotland some time; he had been in Hertfordshire for some years.

Depression in Hertfordshire.

46,611. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you find depression in Hertfordshire generally as bad as in the other districts?—As in the district I visited first?

46,612. Yes?—Yes, except that Hertfordshire is rather preserved from extreme depression by the nearness to London, and by the railways, and by the possibility of selling hay and straw and getting manure down by railway. Getting the manure down seems to be a very great benefit to the farmers there; many of them get manure from London.

46,613. Being so near to a market is, of course, a great advantage to him?—Yes, and they are also able to sell their meat well. At the surburban towns north of London they can sell their cattle and sheep well; the butchers there buy them.

46,614. But in spite of all that the depression there is severe, I suppose?—Certainly, and especially in the further parts of Hertfordshire, where the land is less good.

46,615. The land has fallen enormously in value for selling purposes according to the instances you have given us?—Yes, it has.

46,616. I suppose you have given us some of the lowest?—I have given what were given me as low ones by a firm of auctioneers. I have no doubt my informants took out those that were rather low instances.

46,617. For instance, one case is given where the land went for 10*l.* 15*s.* per acre; what fall in the selling value of the land would that represent as compared with the better times?—I should think that land would have been worth 20*l.* or 30*l.* an acre. Since 1889 there has been a considerable fall.

46,618. This they attribute again, I suppose, to the fall in prices?—Certainly.

Low prices of dairy produce.

46,619. Could you tell us whether the prices of milk have fallen, too, recently?—Yes.

46,620. What do they attribute that to?—To foreign competition, and also to the increase in the quantity produced in this country. No doubt there are a great many more farmers who produce it than used to.

46,621. They are now turning their attention to the production of milk?—Because they have found that other things have not paid.

46,622. Did they complain of the foreign importation of milk?—No, I did not hear much of that.

46,623. They are not aware at present of how rapidly that is increasing?—No.

46,624. Then with regard to the butter—butter has fallen 30 per cent., you say?—Yes.

46,625. Did they make great complaints of that?—They complain of foreign importation there with regard to butter.

46,626. Did they attribute the fall in the case of the butter to the foreigner?—To foreign butter, certainly.

Uncultivated land.

46,627. With regard to the land itself, is any of the land in Hertfordshire out of cultivation?—I did not hear of any actually out of cultivation, but there was some that seemed to be on the border and very near it, and some that they thought would go very shortly. I did not find a case where land had actually gone out of cultivation at present.

46,628. They were apprehensive, were they, that if there was any further fall in prices that land in Hertfordshire would go out of cultivation?—Yes; and in some parts there is a considerable quantity on the landlords' hands.

46,629. They had not much to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act, I understand?—No, they say there again that they do not think it is much use.

Hertfordshire custom.

46,630. They prefer the custom in Hertfordshire, do they?—I do not think they get much out of the custom in Hertfordshire by itself.

46,631. It is not a good custom there?—I do not think the custom gives them compensation for improvements there; it only gives them tillages, I think.

46,632. Under what conditions usually do they hold their farms, do they hold them by agreement?—A good many farmers in Hertfordshire have no written agreements.

46,633. Then they are under the Agricultural Holdings Act whether they like it or not?—Whether they like it or not, certainly.

46,634. So that for whatever the Agricultural Holdings Act is worth, they get the full benefit of it?—Certainly.

Rateable values in Aylesbury and Hertfordshire.

46,635. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I see you give some particulars as to the rateable values in the appendix to this report too?—Yes.

46,636. You take three unions, the Aylesbury Union, the Hitchin Union, and the Buntingford Union?—Yes.

46,637. In the Aylesbury Union the rateable value has gone up, I think?—Yes.

46,638. And you say that where tenants were formerly rated upon their rentals the assessments have now in all cases been reduced to the amounts of the rents less 20 per cent.?—Yes.

46,639. I suppose they are satisfied with that?—I think they are satisfied with that as the assessment.

46,640. But in that union you give us no particulars as to the amounts of the rates?—I was not able to get them there.

46,641. In the Hitchin Union I see the rateable value has slightly fallen, but very slightly, namely, from 168,000*l.* to 162,000*l.*?—Yes.

46,642. And the amount of common charges has fallen to a far greater extent than that, namely, from 4,128*l.* to 3,294*l.*?—Yes.

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46,643. Therefore the rate in the £ there must have fallen considerably?—Yes.

46,644. In the Buntingford Union although there has been a decrease of 20 per cent. in the rateable value from 41,000*l.* to 32,000*l.*, there has been a somewhat larger fall in the expenditure; taking the whole expenditure for the year 1880–81 it comes to 4,473*l.*, and for the year 1893–94 it is 3,095*l.*?—Yes.

46,645. Therefore there must have been a fall in the rate in the £ there too?—Yes.

46,646. That hardly bears out by itself the impression that the rates in 1894 have gone up so much?—Is that stated?

46,647. It is stated in one of the reports, but I do not know that it is stated in this particular one. On page 19 you give a very interesting statement of one farm, comparing the actual amount paid for rates with the gross returns; that is the only case I think in which, in your reports, you give that comparison?—Yes, that is so.

46,648. In this particular instance the rates seem to have fallen in a larger proportion than, or, at any rate, in very much the same proportion as, the returns, for they were 50*l.* in 1885, and the average for the four years 1890–93 was 44*l.*, whereas the returns fell from 2,074*l.* to 1,691*l.*?—Yes.

46,649. That does not bear out what comes later on in the report "additional force is lent to them at the present "time when the value of the produce of the land has fallen "in, generally speaking, a considerably greater ratio than "the local burdens it has to bear even where those burdens "have fallen"; in this instance that you give us, the rates have certainly fallen to the full extent of the fall in the returns?—Yes. That case you have referred to is the case of a dairy farm; it is a case where the returns would not have fallen so much as if it had been an arable farm.

46,650. You did not get any precise figures in any of the other cases showing what the returns were and what the rates were?—I did not work it out in that form in any other case.

Mr. A. Spencer. 26 Apr. 1895.

46,651. In some cases where the fall in rates has been very considerable, as it was, I think, according to your former report, in which figures were quoted which showed that the rates had enormously decreased, I should have thought that they must have fallen to a greater extent than the returns?—The returns have probably fallen about 50 per cent.

46,652. Yes, but the rates paid by particular farms have fallen to a much greater extent than that I think. In your other report that we had I think there were cases where they had fallen more than that. In the Headington Farm, for instance, the rates had fallen from 97*l.* to 44*l.*; that is more than 50 per cent.?—Yes. I think the rates have fallen more in the Headington Union than in any I came across. I think that is rather an extreme case of the fall in rates.

46,653. At any rate, if the assessment has fallen to the same extent as the rent, and the rate in the £ has also fallen, and if it is the case that the returns have fallen to a greater extent than the rates, it must also be the case that the rent has not fallen to the same extent as the returns?—For the purposes of assessment the temporary abatements of rent are not taken into account.

46,654. I mean in a case where you get no temporary abatements?—Yes, it must be so if that is so.

46,655. Do you think, as a rule, the rents have not fallen in proportion to the returns?—I should think as a rule they have fallen in proportion to the returns.

46,656. Consequently it would follow that if the rates had fallen in the £ and the assessments have been corrected, the rates would have fallen in the same proportion as the returns?—If they get the rent reduced permanently and not by a mere temporary abatement.

46,657. In such a case as we have in the Aylesbury Union, where the rents were taken as the basis of the assessment less 20 per cent.—in that case if the rates in the £ have fallen, should you say the rates have fallen in proportion to the returns?—Yes, I suppose they would have done so.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Eighty-ninth Day.

Thursday, 2nd May 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

The Rt. Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Rt. Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. JOHN SPEIR called and examined.

Mr. J. Speir. 2 May 1895.

46,658. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You are, as we know, an Assistant Commissioner appointed to examine into the present condition of agriculture in the counties of Ayr, Wigtown, Kirkcudbright, and Dumfries?—Yes.

46,659. And you have taken the best means that were open to you of obtaining all the information you could obtain from those counties?—Yes.

Tuberculosis.

46,660. We have your report before us, and also a memorandum which deals in the first place with bovine tuberculosis. I do not know whether you would like to take the subject of tuberculosis first, and give us your opinion upon that?—If it suits you I would, because, as far as my district is concerned, it is certainly the most important point in the whole.

Mr. J. Speir. 2 May 1895.

46,661. What do you wish to communicate to us as regards this disease of tuberculosis, which we know is common to both men and animals, or is supposed to be so?—In the counties on which I have reported, I find that the disease is even much more prevalent than the farmers themselves or the general public are inclined to believe. While making inquiries on the subject, one county especially strongly reported to me that there was no disease of any importance; I refer to Dumfries. Now I have occasion to purchase cows all the year over, and

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since then I have bought somewhere between 60 and 70. Each of these cows I have tested with tuberculin; I bought almost an equal number from each of three counties, and I find that there is just about as much disease in the one county as in the other.

46,662. How many counties do you speak of now?—I have had no opportunity on my own initiative, if I might so express it, of testing the cows from Wigtownshire and Kirkcudbrightshire.

46,663. But have you tested them from the other two counties on which you have reported?—I have tested them from three other counties, and can speak with authority with regard to them. You will be able to have witnesses who can speak more authoritatively than I can with regard to Wigtownshire. I have some information which has been furnished to me in a private manner, from which I am almost prepared to say that there are at least 75 per cent. of all the cows of Wigtownshire that might react under the tuberculin test.

46,664. Therefore it is your opinion that considerable risk of infection is run by human beings through the consumption of the milk or of the meat of these infected animals?—Most decidedly so; more especially the milk.

46,665. Have you any special case or cases that prove your belief in the infectiousness of the disease?—I have one or two which I spoke of before the Commission on Tuberculosis some years ago, but it is scarcely worth while going into the matter just now.

Tuberculin test.

46,666. Have you had experience with Koch's tuberculin, which has been claimed to be a never-failing test for this disease?—I have tested more animals with it than probably any other man in Scotland, and I have been in communication with nearly all the gentlemen in the south-west of Scotland who have been making tests, and I know their results as compared with my own.

46,667. Could you tell us the results?—My own results give in cows from five to seven years old an average of nearly 50 per cent. as reacting. These reacting cows may under ordinary circumstances be always considered to be more or less affected with the disease.

46,668. Have you carried out these experiments yourself, if I may use the word experiments?—I have done all the work myself with the exception of killing a few of the animals, which have been slaughtered for the purpose of proving the test.

46,669. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are those experiments in injecting tuberculin that you are referring to?—Yes.

46,670. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Perhaps you would tell us shortly, if you can, the actual process; it might be as well to have it recorded, I think?—It is a very simple matter. The tuberculin is injected into the animal usually in the afternoon or late in the evening. The temperature is taken then, so that an animal which is probably high in temperature from some other cause may not be put under test. Within, say, from five to ten hours, that animal's temperature will rise from three degrees up to five degrees if there is anything wrong; if there is nothing wrong, and the proper quantity has been used, the temperature will remain normal. If a larger quantity has been used than is absolutely necessary, the temperature may rise one or two degrees. I have never found it rise any higher without something being wrong. Then the following morning from, say, any time after four, five, or six o'clock, the temperature is usually taken every two or three hours; there is then no difficulty in finding what animals are up in temperature and what are down, because they usually remain up from at least three to five or six hours.

46,671. And there is no difficulty in taking that temperature?—No, anyone can do that. It is a simple matter of taking a clinical thermometer and inserting it in the anus and keeping it there for two minutes, then reading it after it is taken out.

46,672. What is the cost of the operation?—Just now tuberculin can be bought in fairly large quantities at a cost of about sevenpence per animal; in larger quantities it may be bought at very much less. What I have been using has cost me that. Then there is the attendance of either a farmer or of a veterinary surgeon to carry out the test afterwards.

46,673. From a practical point of view should the veterinary surgeon be called in, or can the farmer or the owner of the stock do it himself according to his experience?—I have done it myself, and what one man has done surely another man can do also if he takes the same opportunities of learning.

46,674. What would you say about the veterinary surgeon, when would you call him in, at no time at all?—If the farmer was not thoroughly acquainted with the work, by all means have a veterinary surgeon to do it; but if the farmer had been taught how to do it, he could do the whole work quite easily himself.

46,675. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Without any risk to the animal?—There is no harm to the animal at all, unless in a few cases where the animal appears to be badly affected, or where probably rather a heavy dose has been given. Then the animal may be off its feed for it may be an hour, or it may be three or four hours, or it may be a whole day; but the following day it is back to its normal temperature. In the 60 animals or so which I have done in my own stock, I have had only two cases of that kind, but I know that there are some others who have done less than the half of that number, who have had a very large proportion of such cases. So that it is uncertain how many may turn out in that way.

46,676. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) How many cows or heifers do you think one man could manage to apply this test to?—It depends altogether how much time you mean him to devote to it. He can do quite easily from 10 to 20 in an hour, and a sharp man can do even more than that.

46,677. What I am rather pointing out is this: taking one of these counties and the great number of cows and heifers in it, do you think it would be possible or practicable to put the test properly to all these animals?—Yes, I suggest that it should be put into the hands of the veterinary surgeons, and I say that if each man devoted one hour on two or three days a week——

46,678. Each veterinary surgeon?—Each veterinary surgeon—then that he can get over at the very least from two to three thousand cows in a year.

46,679. You would have to remunerate him for this?—Most decidedly so; and I suggest that as it is a matter which concerns the general community, as well as those engaged in farming, the Treasury should provide tuberculin, and that the counties should be at the expense of providing the veterinary attendance for making the test. Then the farmer, as he is the most immediately concerned, might be at the expense of taking the temperatures.

46,680. Taking the four counties you have named, do you think there are a sufficient number of veterinary surgeons in those counties who could carry out this work, and therefore effectually go through all the cows and heifers in 12 months?—Quite easily, without interfering with their ordinary work, or the work they have already in hand.

46,681. By doing it systematically?—By doing it systematically, and devoting from one to three hours per week to it.

46,682. Your idea is that the Government should find the necessary tuberculin, and that the county council, out of the general county rate, should pay the veterinary surgeons?—Yes. The probability is that if the system had a few years' trial, every farmer might do it himself if he thought fit; or some other course might be adopted.

Loss by tuberculosis.

46,683. Have you any means of informing us as to the loss by tuberculosis at the present moment—can you put it at so much per cent.?—The loss cannot be less than five per cent. for the whole district.

46,684. Five per cent in these four counties?—Yes, and it might be very much more. It is almost impossible to get at the actual figures, I can only get at them from particular stocks, where the results have been kept. Then, again, the losses are very much greater than the absolute deaths. There is a great indirect loss in animals that are sold, which have become affected by the disease, and have been put out of the way at a very small price.

46,685. Therefore your calculation or idea would be that the expense of putting your system into operation would be far less than the present loss?—It is just about a tenth of what the actual loss really is just now.

46,686. Besides taking away the fear of infection?—And the risk to the general community, and the risk to animals cohabiting with those that are affected, because if we go on as we are just now we can never hope to get any better, but may even get worse.

Spread of tuberculosis.

46,687. Do you think it is increasing now, or what?—It evidently is increasing. I have no hesitation in saying that I am inclined to believe that it has been a great deal caused within the last 20 years, owing to the winter production of dairy products, milk especially. The houses are kept warm; the ventilation is not so good as it might be, and better houses in one sense have been put up. That is,

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they have been put up with better roofs, and the buildings themselves are tighter all round. Consequently ventilation is worse; the air is more contaminated, and when one diseased animal has been put in contact with others, the disease is very readily communicated to all.

46,688. In fact, the manner in which a larger number of cows are now kept is more conducive to the disease being spread than it was formerly, when they were allowed to go out?—Yes. Then there is another matter which I believe has a very strong influence upon it. That is the system of in-breeding which has been followed in many stocks.

46,689. Are you talking of pedigree stock now, or of a common stock, or of both?—Of pedigree stock especially. Some particular breeders have bred very closely, and in that way they have lowered the stamina of the animals. Of course, under similar circumstances, they would fall more readily under the disease.

Tuberculin test.

46,690. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Does this testing of the cows with tuberculin affect them at the time in regard to their milk supply?—Occasionally, if they go off their food the milk supply drops off also for that particular day; but the following day they are usually back to their normal again. But it is only the ones as a rule which go off their food. If the animal is affected, the milk supply will very likely be lowered.

46,691. What part of the animal do you inject this into?—Almost anywhere. The usual place where I have done it is behind the shoulder blade, more because of the convenience of doing it there than for any other reason. Some people do it in the neck, the skin being a little thinner in the neck, and the syringe being easier to insert there; others do it in the dewlap.

46,692. I suppose this question really, as far as your report goes, is, in your opinion, about the most important question in those counties at the present time?—It is the most important question for the south-west of Scotland, if not an important question for the whole country; which I am inclined to believe it is.

Scheduling of tuberculosis.

46,693. I gather that this disease, in the opinion of those whom you have examined, should be scheduled and treated in the same way that pleuro would be?—No, I cannot suggest that we should do such things; I cannot go so far as that. If we were to attempt to do so, it is too big a question, I believe, for any Government to take up.

Cause of tuberculosis.

46,694. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose the principal cause of tuberculosis that you know of is the close in-breeding?—No, I am inclined to believe that it is caused more by infection than in-breeding. Infection I put as the primary cause, in-breeding as the secondary one, and probably close confinement as the third cause.

46,695. You spoke of the want of sufficient air in the byres?—Yes, I put the want of ventilation as being about the third cause.

46,696. Where does the infection come from?—From any animal that they may come in contact with. It may even come from man. Provided that you have one animal infected, there is very little difficulty with animals that are housed in close buildings, especially, of the contamination going very quickly from one to the other.

46,697. But it is the same as with shorthorn breeding, in which they say by close breeding you weaken the constitution of the animal?—Yes.

46,698. Therefore that animal would be more liable to this disease than a stronger animal?—Most decidedly. That is why I put it as being the second cause.

Compulsory slaughter.

46,699. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) What I referred to was this. On page 13 of your Report, in which you give the evidence which you received of tuberculosis, you say, "Certainly, "there never was the same unanimity among ordinary "stockholders in favour of compulsory slaughter of "animals affected with pleuro-pneumonia that there is "among the farmers of Ayrshire and Wigtownshire, in "favour of slaughtering those affected by tuberculosis"?—That is the farmers' opinions, not exactly mine. I have given these views as their opinions. They are quite unanimous that something should be done, and I believe that they would agree to almost anything.

46,700. So as to practically try to eradicate it?—Yes, that is what is wanted.

Prevalence of tuberculosis.

46,701. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say it is enormously prevalent?—I have done for my own satisfaction a good many stocks over Ayrshire and Lanarkshire, more for information and to satisfy the people, who own the stocks than anything else, and I find you will get one farm with, in some cases, three-fourths and, in others, nine-tenths of the cows wrong. In only one case have I found every animal free.

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46,702. In some cases you find nine-tenths of the stock affected?—Yes.

46,703. What is the proportion, are there many deaths from the disease among the cattle?—It depends altogether upon the class of farm you take. If it is a rearing-farm they might have considerable loss in the year-olds; after that they have, comparatively speaking, little, because those that are strong enough to withstand the disease to a great extent are passed on to users of stock at four and five and six years old, and it is there that the loss falls.

46,704. Where those stock are very much affected what proportions would they lose of year-olds?—It is so irregular that it would be utterly impossible for me to put a figure on it.

46,705. The deaths occur later in life?—Yes, at least the losses are principally later in life.

Compulsory slaughter.

46,706. Do I understand that you recommend the process of stamping out?—No, because I say it is too great a work—it is too big a work. I do not think you can at any rate adopt it at once. By adopting something of the system that I have suggested you can limit it within three or four years; because the ordinary life of a cow is so short that if all affected animals were prevented from coming in contact with the bull, they would immediately naturally be killed off.

46,707. Let us take the question of stamping-out first, because I understand that in your district into which you have examined, it is the universal view almost of the farmers that the stamping-out proceedings should be adopted; is that not so?—Yes, they would be quite agreeable to that.

46,708. It would not be possible to stamp it out, would it?—It is possible; but I say there is no Government that I know of prepared, I think, to undertake it.

46,709. Is it not the case that this disease is communicable and, as a matter of fact, sometimes is communicated by mankind to the animal?—I believe so.

46,710. Of course, if that is so, it would be impossible to stamp it out unless you proceed to slaughter the human beings too?—Well, the communication only is supposed to exist where you get into very close contact. It is much closer among animals themselves than what it is between men and animals.

46,711. At all events, you look upon the practical difficulties of stamping it out as so great and involving such large operations that you do not recommend it?—I do not recommend it in the usual acceptation of the term.

Tuberculin test for tuberculosis.

46,712. Now your proposal is to limit this disease by the use of tuberculin?—Yes.

46,713. Have you read the report that is just issued by the Tuberculosis Commission?—No, I have not had an opportunity of doing so.

46,714. Because there I find that in experiments that have been made by Professor McFadyean, he records as the total outcome of his experiments that he received wrong indications from tuberculin about the presence or absence of tubercle in cattle in the case of 24 animals out of 75. Now that is not borne out by your experience?—He used a larger number of animals than it has been possible for me to test myself. As to what has been done by others within the last two months, I have a return of the results obtained by Professor Bang in Copenhagen during 1892, 1893, and 1894, during which years he has tested 16,676 animals; and it is only a very small percentage that turned out different from what the test has indicated that it should have been.

46,715. Now when this test is applied, or when this test would be applied in your plan if it were adopted, and you find the animal to be diseased, what is the next step?—I am prepared to suggest that you should allow it to go into commerce the same as it is just now. If the local authorities think that the animal is so bad that it is not suitable for human food, by all means put it aside; if it has only a very small proportion of the disease on, say, the lungs, the liver, or the kidneys, or some of the glands, then it may go into consumption presently.

46,716. Supposing you had detected disease by the application of this tuberculin, you cannot tell, I suppose, until the animal is killed what parts of it are actually affected with tuberculous matter?—No.

Disposal of tuberculous animals.

46,717. Having detected the fact of the disease, what do you propose to do with the animal then?—Put it out of the dairy especially, and stop it on the spot for that purpose.

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46,718. Put it out of the dairy?—Yes; that is the great point that is necessary.

46,719. Then, what is the next point?—Feed it, if you can, or at least kill it within a reasonable time.

46,720. That is to say, if its health admits of it you would prepare it for the butcher?—Yes.

46,721. And then sell it?—And then sell it.

46,722. And then leave it to the local authorities to decide whether it is fit to be sold for food or not?—Yes.

Tuberculin test.

46,723. At all events, by this process of applying tuberculin you think that the disease in course of time can be immensely limited?—I think it could be limited to very small proportions in from three up to five years, provided that you do one thing which has not yet been touched upon—that the affected animals or reacting animals be separated from the others. That is a *sine quâ non* of the success of the test.

46,724. In these cases that you speak of, some of which you have referred to, the great majority of the animals are infected, are they not?—Yes.

Disposal of tuberculous animals.

46,725. Where you find a dairy which practically contains five-sixths of diseased animals do you propose to get rid of them altogether?—Yes.

46,726. Get them out of the dairy?—Out of the dairy as far as these five-sixths are concerned. There is no difficulty in doing that, because these animals do not exist in the dairy above four or five years at the longest.

46,727. At the outside?—In some cases not so long. There is almost a sufficiency of animals, young ones, coming in to take the place of those that go out.

Compulsory slaughter.

46,728. You do not recommend slaughter in any case?—In no case just now. I might recommend slaughter two years or three years hence; presently I am not prepared to do so.

Action by Board of Agriculture.

46,729. Do you recommend any legislative action at all?—Yes, I suggest that the Board of Agriculture should take in hand the testing of all these animals, and do this at least once every year.

46,730. Are they to exclude them from the dairies?—Yes.

46,731. They have not power to do that at present, I suppose?—The local authorities have power; if they consider an animal is affected with any disease likely to be detrimental to the health of the public they may do so.

46,732. The local authorities have power to do it on the ground of the health of human beings?—Yes.

46,733. But their powers are limited to that?—Yes.

46,734. When you say the Board of Agriculture should be called upon to act, is it not the case that it would require further legislative powers?—It would; to do it effectively, at any rate.

46,735. At all events you ground your faith in your hopes of remedial action in regard to this matter mainly upon the use of tuberculin and upon proper steps being taken after the disease has been detected?—Yes; tuberculin itself, without the proper steps being taken, would serve no good purpose at all.

Effect of tuberculin test.

46,736. The effect of tuberculin, I understand you, is to enable you to detect the disease?—That is all.

46,737. And then it must be for the authorities to act afterwards in the most effective manner they can, so as to limit it to the degree that you think is possible?—Yes, that is it.

Sale of milk from tuberculous cows.

46,738. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Would you make the sale of milk knowingly by a dairyman from a tuberculous cow liable to penalty?—Not presently, but within a very limited time I certainly would.

46,739. That has been done, I think, in one or two places by means of local Acts; sooner or later you would do that generally?—I would do that as soon as the public and the farmers become thoroughly alive to the risk they are running by the use of this milk. Presently, I may say, they are not—neither the one nor the other.

46,740. But at present no local authority, even if it was aware that milk came from a tuberculous cow in the greater part of the country, would have the power to prohibit the same?—I think they have.

46,741. I think not?—They have been attempting it occasionally, I think, in one or two cases.

46,742. In what part of the country would that be?—I think Paisley attempted it a year ago.

46,743. Do you know whether they have a local Act there?—I cannot say for that.

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Disposal of tuberculous animals.

46,744. In any of these cases that you have mentioned where a very large quantity of the cows are infected, it would mean, I suppose, a very heavy loss to the dairyman if he were to fatten them up on the chance of selling them?—No, the loss is not so much as you would at first expect. These animals would go out in the usual way, and the moment we put such a system as this into operation, there would very likely be a rise in the price of cows coming to calving for at least one year—it would, probably, to a certain extent even to the second year; after that I think it would be about normal.

46,745. You propose that these cows should be branded, I understand?—Yes.

46,746. Will the butchers be very willing to pay a good price for a cow branded as suffering from tuberculosis?—I do not think it will make so very much difference.

46,747. Not although they run the risk when it is dead of finding it condemned by the medical officer?—It depends altogether upon what they have been accustomed to in the district just now.

46,748. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is it not the case that some cows suffering from tuberculosis can be fattened up and the meat is good, but that others become what we call wasters almost?—Yes. They would all become wasters provided you keep them long enough, but if animals show under the test just now that they have the disease, and yet to all appearances seem quite healthy, in, probably, 9 cases out of 10, these animals might be fattened in the usual course, and it might turn out when they were slaughtered that you would even have a difficulty in finding where the disease was located.

46,749. (*Mr. Dalton.*) We had some evidence from one part of the country that a man did not know when he sent his cow to the market that it was infected; he thought it was a very good cow; then, when it was killed it was condemned, and he got nothing for it. Do you know of any such cases?—Yes, that is quite a common thing.

46,750. Under those circumstances will people be willing to buy cows that are branded as suffering from tuberculosis when they know that when the animal is killed, it may be condemned—that they run that risk?—They will have a certain amount of risk to run, and the owner will run the risk of getting a little less price for it; but in districts where cows are sold butchers are meeting with this class of animal every day, and those animals are passing through every market in the country without a single word being said about them.

46,751. You do not think that the loss will be so great that you will have to compensate the owners of cows if you adopt this system?—No, I do not think so.

Tuberculin test.

46,752. Can you tell at all from your tests whether the animal is suffering severely or only suffering slightly from tuberculosis?—I have been able to draw no conclusion from my own tests; some few people think they can, but, as far as my experience goes, I cannot.

Disposal of tuberculous animals.

46,753. I am not sure, but I rather think that the recent report on tuberculosis seems to imply that the meat of a tuberculous cow is dangerous for consumption?—I believe it would be dangerous for consumption providing the cooking is not thorough. If the cooking is anything like sufficient I think there would be almost no danger, but a large joint will most decidedly, under ordinary circumstances of cooking, not in any way have the germs of disease killed in the centre of it.

46,754. Under those circumstances it is rather difficult to advocate the wholesale sale of the meat of tuberculous animals?—If you want to get clear of that and be thoroughly safe, you can adopt the system which, I understand, has been tried in Berlin. There, all carcases which show symptoms of the disease are taken possession of and subjected to extreme heat so as to kill the disease throughout the whole extent of the carcase. In that way the owner might receive a, comparatively speaking, small price for his animal, and the authorities would get for it what they could by selling it at a cheaper rate.

Veterinary treatment of tuberculous animals.

46,755. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is there any medical relief that you have found of advantage?—As far as my information goes, there is nothing in that way. There appear to be a few animals which do recover from tuberculosis after they have been infected, but the number is, comparatively speaking, small. I might refer again to the tests which have been made in Denmark. There they have found that about 5 per cent. of the animals which showed no reaction were seen, on being slaughtered, to have had the disease. But it was in something of the style which we talk about

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in connexion with pleuro-pneumonia; it was in an encysted form, and to all appearance it was an old sore, and dead, pointing apparently to the fact that these animals had had a slight touch of the disease at one time, but had been able to localise or throw it off.

Disposal of tuberculous animals.

46,756. So, when the disease is comparatively in its infancy, as regards the animal, the best cure is to put him into the feeding-box and sell him for beef?—If we were to adopt a scheme something of the style suggested by me, we would have a lot of very old animals the first year. They would be thrown aside, and might not feed well; but the second year, when we started with our three-year-olds, and in all other years, we would be able to pick up every animal at two or three years old, and there would then be no difficulty in feeding at least nine out of every 10 of the animals that reacted.

46,757. I think you said that you would have to clear a byre out of, perhaps, half the cows that are giving milk?—Only in particular instances. I have no hesitation in saying that there will be any number of byres that will show no trace of it. You will find others in which you will have very few sound animals.

46,758. And you would bring the young stock in to take their place, would you?—Decidedly so.

Transmission of tuberculosis to calves.

46,759. Would the young stock not be infected by the same disease from their mothers?—Yes, if the calves were fed with the milk of the infected animals there is, assuredly, a very great risk of communicating it. That is one point on which Denmark again has given us a very good lesson. In 1892 they took a stock of 200 cows, and in testing these there were, I think, the half, or rather more than the half, which reacted. They then kept the calves of all the stock, from both infected and healthy animals, and they boiled the milk for a few moments before giving it to the calves. It now turns out that very few of them have ever taken the disease, and they have never been near their mothers from the beginning up to the present time.

46,760. So that, in that way, the young stock might either go to healthy byres, or to places where they have been reared by the boiling of the milk in order to prevent the spread of the disease by infection?—The easiest way in the ordinary farm would be to only give to the calves the milk of the healthy animals, and to put the unhealthy animals into some separate building, or, as was done in this farm that I referred to, near Copenhagen, to make a division in the byre with boards and tar-cloth, which would be quite sufficient in most ordinary cases, and might be done at a very small cost.

46,761. Do you think by that means you would bring the minimum of disease to a very small ratio?—Yes, I think that in a very few years we could considerably reduce it; but it would altogether depend on the accuracy with which the restrictions were carried out afterwards how far it was limited.

46,762. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Now we will turn to the other parts of your report which, I think, you sent in last November, or some time like that; is there anything which you wish to say first of all specially with reference to them?—After tuberculosis, or the most important point that was brought prominently before me, was some alterations that were necessary in the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Evidence of agricultural depression.

46,763. Taking your report generally, I gather from it that there is evidence of agricultural depression in all the districts you have visited?—Yes, more or less.

46,764. But nothing at all like a collapse of cultivation?—No, nothing of that kind at all.

46,765. And that no farms are lying on the landlord's hands, and no land is idle?—There is no land idle, and no farm is on the hands of those landowners who wish to get clear of it.

46,766. At the same time land has fallen considerably in value?—Yes, and I have given instances of that in my report.

46,767. But there are, in many cases, arrears of rent except where reductions have been made, or abatements given?—Yes, and the arrears are now on the increase.

Reduction of rent.

46,768. Taking it generally, do the people in the districts you have visited say that the rents have not fallen sufficiently?—That is the general impression. Farmers apparently have a difficulty in reconciling themselves to the prices that presently exist. They are of a very hopeful temperament, and they always think they will get back to the old prices within the next year or two.

Bad seasons.

46,769. I suppose they also regard the bad seasons as having affected the situation?—To some extent.

46,770. And I conclude that the distress has been felt by landlords as well as by tenants?—Equally as much.

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46,771. As regards the sheep-farming districts, have there been very heavy falls of rent there?—The falls have been much more heavy there than in any of the other districts.

Reduction of rent on sheep-farms district.

46,772. As the price of sheep and mutton has rather kept up, I should like to know why that has been the case; I notice that you do express an opinion that the distress has been felt more in the sheep-farming districts than in most places?—The principal cause of that has been the great fall in the price of wool, which bulks pretty largely in a sheep-farmer's income.

46,773. Not from losses through bad seasons?—Not so generally. Seasons have also had an effect here; but wool, probably more than anything else, has done the mischief.

46,774. How does that affect the landlord almost worse than depression on other lands—than lands devoted to sheep farming; is there a difficulty in letting those farms when one becomes empty?—There never have been the same number of competitors for sheep farms that there have been for others, owing to the heavy capital that is requisite in proportion to the rent. Then another cause has been that the sheep stocks are usually carried over from the one tenant to the other, and a sort of tenant-right has gradually crept in in connexion with that. While commercial stock might, say, realise 2*l.* apiece, these stocks, when handed over from the one tenant to the other, are probably put up 10, 20, or even 30 per cent. above the commercial value, because they remain healthier while kept in that particular district than if they were turned off and a new stock brought on.

46,775. That is what you may call an increasing tenant right?—I say it has assumed almost, as it were, a sort of phase of tenant right.

Outlay by landlords.

46,776. I think I learnt from your report that, although there has been a very great reduction of rent and abatements, still that the landlords have spent large sums of money in keeping up their estates?—In the south-western counties the landlords have spent a very large proportion of their income in many cases, and I have no hesitation in saying that it is in great part owing to that that the land in the south-west of Scotland has kept up its rent when compared with the rest of the country.

Demand for farms.

46,777. But, at the same time, if there are any vacant farms, you seem to intimate that there are always plenty of tenants bidding for them?—There is more than sufficient. I have occasion to know the number of offers that were in for one the week before last, and there were 21.

46,778. Probably that farm was on exceptionally good land, and well situated?—It was well situated, although not on exceptionally good land.

Deteriorated cultivation.

46,779. Has the cultivation of the land deteriorated at all; do you think as much money is put into it as used to be?—I think there is nothing less, but rather more one way and another. There are districts where the cultivation is supposed to be getting slightly worse, but there are also new systems of farming getting up in some of the districts, which is causing a greater outlay.

Consumption of home grown corn.

46,780. I suppose a much larger quantity of home-grown grain is used upon the farm instead of purchasing?—Yes. Where 15 or 20 years ago there was almost no home-grown grain used they are now using a very large proportion, and also buying a greater proportion of imported feeding stuffs.

Deteriorated pastures.

46,781. In the dairy districts—and I think you tell us in your report that dairying has very much increased—do you find that there is any deterioration of the pastures?—The Kirkcudbrightshire people are of opinion that there has been a deterioration of pastures, and to some extent the same is said to apply to Dumfries, but I cannot say that it is very marked. If it does exist it would be more because of the individual farming than because of the system of farming, because there are some districts where dairying is more prevalent than even in these two counties where the pastures have most decidedly improved instead of going the other way.

Co-operative factories.

46,782. Has co-operation in dairying increased at all or taken any root in either of those counties?—Very little. There are somewhere about four or five dairies or creameries of one kind or another; but there is only one, as far as I remember just now, which is co-operative.

46,783. Those that are not co-operative but which are speculations, are they answering?—They are serving, at least, a purpose.

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46,784. And a valuable purpose, do you think, to the farmers in the neighbourhood?—They are consuming a quantity which would be otherwise thrown on the market, and probably not in such good condition; but at the present time there are more complaints than there ever have been with regard to prices.

Milking machines.

46,785. For dairy products?—Yes. I am almost looking forward to this, that if we have the milking machine in proper use, we might have about as big a drop in dairy prices as we have had in grain prices, if you compare the prices of 10 or 20 years ago with what they may be later on.

46,786. Do you mean to say that the trade will be overdone; is that your impression?—It will be overdone to such an extent that the prices will become very much less than what they are just now.

46,787. That is, the trade will be overdone by the farmers in Scotland and in England—we will say Great Britain—putting aside foreign competition?—No, it is quite the reverse of that. I say it will be overdone through the milking machine being adopted in foreign countries. They will be able to get over the scarcity of labour for milking, through this machine, in a way which they cannot do just now. The supply of labour we have here fences us round, and prevents the outsiders from adopting dairying to anything like the extent that they otherwise would if they were able to get over that difficulty. When they have got over that difficulty they will then give us a proportion of dairy products which will be, I am sure, very much greater than ever they have done in the past.

46,788. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is it your idea that the milking machine, if it is properly developed in foreign countries, will play the very same game as the self-binder has done?—It is almost identical. I am prepared to say that the self-binder, along with big steamships, has done more to reduce the price of grain than all other causes put together.

46,789. That is, owing to its introduction in grain growing countries?—Yes; and with the proper introduction of the milking machine something very similar will be sure to happen.

Co-operative dairying.

46,790. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) As regards the co-operative system, I think you said there is only one instance of that?—Just one, as far as I remember.

46,791. From what you learn concerning it, what would your own opinion be as to a co-operative system for cheese and butter, say?—If these are to be adopted at all in our districts where they are suitable, by all means I consider this the best system that can be followed. If the product is to be made into butter I would then suggest that every farmer provide himself with a centrifugal machine equal to the size of the stock that he keeps, and only send away the cream. He can then keep the skim milk, and he can make more of it on the farm than it is possible for any public or private company to make of it anywhere else.

46,792. You think it would be a very valuable part of the system for the farmer to be able to keep the skim milk?—Yes. He can then use it fresh, whereas if it is hauled from two to five miles, and re-hauled back again, it is, to a great extent, deteriorated; besides, there is the extra cost of taking such a large quantity away, and bringing it back.

State loans.

46,793. Had you any complaints of the want of money for building and drainage, and general improvements?—I had a good many complaints of that kind.

46,794. From the tenant farmers?—From the tenant farmers on estates which were heavily mortgaged.

46,795. On which the landlord could not lay out money?—On which he did not lay out money.

46,796. He had not got the money to lay out?—No, he had not.

46,797. Was there any expression of opinion as to whether money for that purpose should be lent by the Government by loans at certain rates, or what?—Yes, there was a strong expression of opinion that money, under a somewhat similar scheme to what was done under the Drainage Acts, might be provided for that purpose.

46,798. That the money might be lent by Government, and not by special companies?—No, by the Government, at a, comparatively speaking, small rate, spread over, probably, 30, 40, or 50 years.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Official valuers.

46,799. As regards the Agricultural Holdings Act, which you think was the next important subject on which suggestions were made, what was the general feeling about that?—The general feeling was that the procedure under which claims were insisted upon must be made very much simpler than it is just now. Then, in order to carry that out, almost everyone was of opinion that you must have an official valuator, no direct suggestions were given to me in connexion with it, but that was insisted upon.

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46,800. You mean, I presume, that the state of the farm at the time of taking it should be put on record?—Not necessarily, though I believe it will follow as a secondary effect. What was wanted was that the procedure should be cheapened that you might have a public official or officials to whom both landlord and tenant might apply for the purpose of getting a valuation of what might be considered the tenant's improvements, if he had improvements.

46,801. Who would appoint those valuers or assessors?—There were not any very decided opinions amongst the farmers themselves as to how that should be done. My own idea is that it should be left ultimately with the Board of Agriculture with the names to be suggested, say, by the County Council or something like that.

46,802. In each county?—In each county, or it may be, groups of counties, it does not necessarily mean by one county or even by two, you may have it in one, or, if it is thought fit, it might be spread over three or four or five.

Security for tenants' improvements.

46,803. Was there a strong feeling for a greater security for tenants' improvements?—A very strong feeling, but the great difficulty appeared to be as to how to divide these improvements between landlord and tenant.

46,804. Was there a great diversity of opinion upon that?—Yes.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

46,805. Was there any expression of opinion in favour of a greater freedom in cropping and selling what was produced upon a farm?—Yes, they almost invariably asked that.

46,806. With no restrictions as to cropping?—The farmers were not so decided upon that. Some of them said, "We do not require any restrictions," but the landlords said, "We would decidedly object to being "obliged to take every man and to give him that "permission."

46,807. They consider at the end of the lease, or at the end of the tenancy certain restrictions of cropping should be kept to?—Yes, that was more the general feeling, let them have as much freedom as they desire during the currency of the lease, but when the tenancy comes to an end the farm should be left in a certain rotation previously agreed upon.

Tenure.

46,808. Are most of the farms let on lease or by yearly tenure?—Nearly all are let on lease.

46,809. For 19 years?—For 19 years generally, occasionally for 15 years. On one or two estates they have no leases at all.

Damage by game.

46,810. I see you make some remarks upon game, and especially upon rabbits on hill land, did you hear general complaints as to that?—In the districts where there is hill land, or where plantations joined hill land, or where the hill districts came down to the arable land, there was almost a general complaint of that—principally of rabbits.

46,811. That is, I suppose, because although they could kill the rabbits in their own land, the rabbits came down in such numbers from the waste ground or from the wild ground, that they affected the crops—was that it?—No, not exactly that, but the farmers are not allowed to kill the rabbits on the hill land during the time of the year when they do most damage. There is a close season from December to March, and by that time the keepers and the shooting tenant have very often so thinned them down that the tenant farmer could not recoup himself the expense of killing them.

46,812. What was suggested generally?—It was suggested that the farmer should have the power of killing them, under certain restrictions, during the whole year; it was suggested, in fact, to kill them without the use of a gun.

46,813. Trapping by wires?—Trapping by any means that may be thought fit, but so that he would not interfere with the shooting tenant's right.

46,814. Are there any complaints as regards pheasants or other game?—There were a good many complaints with regard to pheasants, but they were principally on arable land adjoining plantations. One or two shooting tenants have been in the habit of importing a very large number of pheasant's eggs, and as soon as the pheasants were able to thoroughly take care of themselves, they were carried out to the nearest arable land and put down on any plantation quite close at hand. The consequence was they were fed for the months of July and August, usually on the farmers' crops, and not only consumed a very large

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proportion of them, but in many cases destroyed probably the double or the triple of what was actually consumed, and the occupants of these farms were quite powerless in the matter. They could do nothing to help themselves.

46,815. Was that general, or only in a few cases?—It was not general, it was only in an isolated case here and there.

Heather burning.

46,816. You also make some observations on heather burning; is that a source of dispute between tenants and shooting tenants?—That is a continual source of dispute on almost all the hill farms.

46,817. On account of the sheep?—The shooting tenants have the idea, rightly or wrongly, I am not exactly in a position to say, that the longer the heather the better the grouse. The hill tenants—that is, the sheep farmers—say that the shooting tenants are under a mistake with regard to that, and that a fair proportion of both old and young heather will certainly give the best class of birds; they insist upon burning a little piece, more than the shooting tenant is agreeable to, and owing to that there are a good many cases of ill-feeling arising now and again.

46,818. I should like to ask you a few questions as regards taxation. Is there a strong expression of feeling that the land is overtaxed?—There was a general feeling to that extent, not only with the landlords but also with the tenants, both were of that opinion.

Nationalisation of poor rate.

46,819. Was there an expression of opinion that the poor-rate should be a national or a county tax?—There was a general opinion that it should be spread over a greater area than it is just now. It might be made either a county or national tax if thought fit.

46,820. Was that expression pretty general in the four counties?—It was general all over the counties.

46,821. Did you find there was a great irregularity in the poor-rate in these counties?—It was most irregular. You would find adjoining parishes double and triple what other ones were; in fact, in some parishes there is no poor-rate at all, and probably in one within half-a-dozen miles you will find the poor-rate up to 6*d*. and 1*s*. or something of that kind.

Railway rates.

46,822. As regards railway rates, were there also complaints of the inequality of the rates charged?—Yes, that was not very general, but still there were considerable complaints of that. There is an inequality of rates of which everybody knows at the present time.

46,823. Especially, I think you say, in your report as regards small consignments?—More particularly with regard to the small consignments.

Condition of sheep farmers.

46,824. (*Mr. Clay.*) In one part of your evidence, referring to sheep farming in Dumfriesshire and other places, you say that the sheep farmer has been more severely hit than the arable or dairy farmer?—Yes. That applies not only to the sheep farmer of Dumfries, but to the sheep farmer all over as compared with the arable farmer.

46,825. You have also said that it takes more capital to enter into a sheep farm than an arable farm?—In proportion to the rent, I mean.

46,826. Do you know that the reason the sheep are often tied upon a farm is that stock which is hired on a farm is more valuable than new and unaccustomed stock brought on to the farm?—Yes. It is generally considered that it would have been more profitable for new tenants to take these old stocks over at the high valuations which are usually put on them, rather than to take in a new stock on the basis of a commercial valuation. On some of the estates there are very serious complaints just now, that, with a lease drawn out exactly similar to what was done, say 20 years ago, when the tenants were compelled to take over the stocks, now when they want to hand them over to the landlord for a new tenant the landlord refuses to do it.

46,827. (*Mr. Little.*) You mean, to give the extra price?—Yes, presuming there were 10 per cent. put on, the outgoing tenant loses that 10 per cent. on his stock. In order to combat that, or, at least, to remunerate the tenant to a considerable extent, two very strong associations have existed for a good number of years in the south-west of Scotland which bind all the members to take over the stocks of every tenant whose landlord refuses to take them at the usual valuation, and then they divide that stock amongst the members in proportion to the rents that they are presently paying,

46,828. (*Mr. Clay.*) If you were to enter a hill farm would you not rather pay 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. more for the stock that is bred upon the farm than have it scattered and buy in a new stock?—My own personal experience does not warrant me in giving an opinion upon that, but if I am to be led by those who have had more experience in hill farming than I have had. I certainly would agree to it at once.

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46,829. I believe there is a great deal more of home-grown corn now used upon the farm than there was 20 or 30 years ago?—It must be double or treble; in some cases very much more.

Consumption of home-grown corn.

46,830. So there are more cases in which home-grown corn should be taken into account when a tenant leaves a farm?—Most decidedly so.

46,831. In the sheep department, regarding the heather burning, I think you have given it as your opinion that gamekeepers and game tenants are rather inclined to keep the old heather rough for the sake of game?—Yes.

Heather burning.

46,832. Do you think that is not a very great disadvantage for the game as well as for the sheep?—I have hesitation in saying that it is, because the young heather which will probably be the best food for the sheep might not be the best for aught I know for the grouse, while the old heather may be food for the grouse, but it is certainly not very good for the sheep. It is there where the difference of opinion comes in.

46,833. Did not the game tenants and gamekeepers make a great mistake in not having a certain rotation of young heather for the grouse the same as for the sheep?—Yes, I think they should have it.

46,834. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) May I be allowed to interpose for a moment, as I know a great deal about this question. I think the general feeling both of sporting tenants and of game tenants is, that a proper proportion of both is the best arrangement. The chief difficulty which has always been found is this, that fires are set a going without proper attention, and the result is that whole hill-sides are simply swept of heather by these fires, and, therefore, the sporting tenant loses really the benefit of that country for, perhaps, half of his lease. That is a thing which has caused a great deal of difficulty. Heather burning ought to be conducted as it is on some estates under proper care, and with squads of men to see to it, where both tenant and landlord or sporting tenant and tenant, can agree to do that; and it should be burnt either in circles or in strips. But too often fires are set, sometimes with the connivance, very probably sometimes without the knowledge, of the tenant and the whole hill-side, thousands of acres, perhaps, are swept away, and that part of the country is entirely lost. Is that not what sometimes occurs?—Yes, I admit so. The difficulty appears to be to have an arrangement between the sporting and the agricultural tenant as to what is the proper proportion which should be burned every year, and then to carry that out under the supervision of those responsible for both parties.

46,835. Of course, as regards the food of the grouse, the old heather is no use in the world for that, but it is for shelter and also for the carrying on of the sport; the food is entirely the young heather. Is it not a fact that a certain amount of that old heather is also in hard winters most valuable for the sheep farmer, because at the root of the old heather you will find in hard winters in the shelter of it a great deal of herbage which you will not find in the exposed young heather?—It will all depend upon whether the old heather is growing close or not. If it is growing comparatively speaking thin you will find a considerable amount of herbage at the bottom, but if it is growing close, as you often find it, there will be nothing there at all.

46,836. (*Mr. Clay.*) I am very glad Mr. Gilmour has asked you these questions about the heather, knowing that it is a burning question. I speak from experience of hill farming, where there is a good deal of heather which we are actually prohibited from burning at all. The experience I have had—and I do not know whether you can corroborate me—is that since the heather has been prevented from being burnt, there has been a gradual decrease of grouse upon the land?—I have not the persona experience which would enable me to give an opinion upon that; I can only repeat what has been told me.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

46,837. Regarding the Agricultural Holdings Act, you have paid considerable attention to that in your report, I think?—Yes. The report in great part gives the opinions that were expressed to me—not exactly my own opinions. I may say that they differ slightly in several particulars.

46,838. Regarding the opinions which you have stated in paragraph 56, we all know that the Act of 1883 has not wrought well, and I think that view has been corroborated by the evidence you produce?—Yes.

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46,839. The farmers in your districts do not object to the principle of the Act, do they?—Everybody, both landlord, factor, and tenant, agree that the principle of the Act is quite just.

46,840. But they object to the procedure and expense of working the Act?—Principally to the procedure and the expense, with the addition of a few other items which might be shifted from one schedule into another.

46,841. And perhaps that very important point which you have just mentioned that home-grown corn which is used upon the farm should be taken in as developing the fertility of the land?—Yes. Also another point which is not mentioned in the present Act at all is that accumulated fertility and cleanliness of cultivation should be taken particular note of.

46,842. Over and above the opinions that have been expressed to you, what is your own opinion about the amendments which have been proposed in order to put the Act into proper working order?—I would suggest that, as a beginning, Scotland be divided into three districts; if you like you may have more, but at the very least three. If it is wanted to be done at the cheapest rate, you might appoint a single valuator for each of these districts, or you might have a number of gentlemen on a list in these same districts, and let the whole work in connexion with the working of this Act be referred either to the gentlemen whose names are on the list or to the particular one who might be appointed for any district.

46,843. Would you read paragraph 56 of your report, so that we might get it on the notes?—Yes. "The "principal amendments suggested are, a reduction of the "cost of procedure under the Act"; that would get clear of a great many of the difficulties which presently exist. "The date of sending in notice of claim to be the same for "landlord and tenant; one or more valuators or assessors "for each district, county, or block of counties; freedom "to manure, clean, and seed down as may be thought fit; "more liberty to crop and dispose of the produce if the "grower should find it advantageous; compensation for "the consumption of home-grown foods; more liberty to "drain and build; penal clauses to be entirely done away "with; and contracting out of the Act to be rendered "impossible."

Contracting out of Act.

46,844. Did you find that some of the people were very apt to contract out of the Act by putting, as you say in paragraph 63 of your report, a clause into the lease which contained an obligation which they could not carry out in any part of the country, to use 70 yards of manure per acre?—Yes. That clause exists on one very large estate in every lease, and on several other estates, to a small extent, there is a clause resembling this in some way.

46,845. Do you consider that that is an infringement of the Act?—I consider that it is a most iniquitous thing altogether, because the tenant, if he agrees to it, binds himself to do what is an utter impossibility if he is removed from a large town; he might do it if close to a large town and if a large supply of manure was available, but it is an utter impossibility under any system of farming adopted either in this country or anywhere else.

46,846. So you may say that is unfair?—Most decidedly it is unfair.

46,847. Should you look upon it as a grave infringement of the principle of the Act?—It is put in simply because it was known by the drafter of the clause that it could not be carried out, so that he might have an excessive counter claim against the tenant.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

46,848. And to kill out the benefits from the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Most decidedly so.

Suggested amendments.

46,849. You have read out paragraph 56 to us; what is your opinion upon it; do you coincide with that paragraph, or do you go further or stop short of it in regard to the remedies there suggested for the improvement of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I coincide with it very closely.

46,850. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Does that paragraph represent the general feeling of the district and your own opinion as well?—It represents the general feeling of the district. I have thought out the details a little more than ever was given to me or than any one was prepared to give them to me. They only suggested general principles.

46,851. (*Mr. Clay.*) Could you give us your own opinion upon that paragraph?—My own opinion is that you might have for Scotland a list, say, for each of the three or four districts, or you might have, say, a single person for each of the districts. The former plan has a good deal to recommend it, but against it there is this, that if you have a great many people doing the work, you are sure to get a great many carrying it out that are not properly suited for it, and then you will have a decision to-day which may be probably quite contrary to some other decision given to-morrow. You never will have any continuity or uniformity of opinions or courses to be followed. Whereas if you appointed one single man in a certain district, approaching in some respects, say, to a sheriff in a county, or to what would be a sheriff, say, 200 years ago, you would then have one decision bearing a certain resemblance to every one else, and we would get into more uniform working.

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Official valuers.

46,852. Is that the reason why you would like to have official referees appointed—that is, men that were experts and that were acquainted with the work—so that there would be not very much difference of opinion in dealing with the Act?—Decidedly so.

46,853. These men would, in consequence of their appointments, study the question, and there would be a sort of regular mode of dealing with the Act?—They might be applied to by either landlord or tenant in connection with any dispute which might arise, or which was likely to arise. A new tenant going into a farm might say, I wish to put on record the condition in which this farm is, or he proposes to do something, and the landlord considers that it is injudicious, the parties might then apply, say, to these gentlemen, or to the particular gentleman, and bind themselves either to agree to his decision or anything else that they may arrange upon.

46,854. It may come to be, and it looks as if it is coming to be, that, as in the labour question, there will be conciliation boards or arbitration boards, so in connection with agriculture there may be, I do not say a land court, but might not these men form some sort of court, which would decide any difference between, say, an old tenant and a landlord about the rent?—They might, but only in this way, if the gentlemen you had on the list were entirely independent of either landlord or tenant. There is a difficulty, with a large list, of getting gentlemen who would have the requisite experience, and be independent of either the one party or the other. With one gentleman there would be a greater chance of getting that if he had an appointment which would keep him entirely independent; you would then, I think, have very little cause to complain of partiality towards the one or the other. In connection with our ordinary courts, it is a thing almost unheard of in this country to have, say, a sheriff who is considered to be biassed in favour of either litigant, and I think the same thing might happen with the official assessor in this case, if you made him independent. If you give him a position and allow him to draw for work upon either the one or the other class, you will most decidedly have people who will be biassed.

46,855. But would not men of that kind, who are unbiassed, be very suitable as a consulting board, to which both landlord and tenant could apply to settle any difference? Do not many tenants lose a good landlord, and many landlords lose a good tenant because of the want of a sort of medium person to come in between them to settle differences, and say who is right and who is wrong?—That is happening, I think, almost every day. I know of a good many cases myself, where had both parties only known where they could have got an unbiassed opinion they would have gone and asked it, and abided by it. Several landlords and factors during my enquiries said, "If you could only get a person in whom we had confidence "we would be only too glad in case of little differences to "apply to him and be guided by his advice."

46,856. A third person coming in would save a good deal of heart-burning and the losing of a good landlord on the one hand, and of a good tenant on the other?—Precisely so.

46,857. If the principle is adopted of a conciliation board as we have in the country just now in the matter of wages, there would be no great difficulty in applying it to the settlement of disputes between landlord and tenant; I do not say compulsorily, but that it might form a good basis for settling many burning disputes?—I think it could be done, but I am decidedly against giving any special legislation or special favour, to either tenant or landlord in connexion with this. If it is to be done it must be done at their own expense. I say, if you appoint one official to do this work the cost of that gentleman's salary must come out of the work which is being done, in something the same way as the registration of deeds just now; let a stamp duty be paid on all the work which he does, and then it might pay for itself.

46,858. The gentleman who does that is to be paid by results, is that it?—No, not exactly that; he will be paid

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from results; he will be independent of the work which he does.

46,859. Would he have a fixed salary from Government, the same as you pay the men who conduct the Board of Agriculture and the Commissioners of Drainage and all these other things?—Something like that. All his work would be charged to the parties who employed him, and it would then go into some general fund which would pay the cost of keeping up either the one or the dozen or 20 who might be employed.

46,860. But if such a board could be properly constituted of unbiassed people, do you not think it would be a great advantage to keep landlord and tenant together?—I am quite convinced of that. It would not be only that, but it would form, you might say, a court which might be applied to in appeal cases. For instance, if you have gentlemen in this position in several parts of the country there might be a decision given in one district which was considered wrong in principle; you might then summons all the gentlemen holding a similar position in the different districts, lay the matter before them, and let their decision be final. I think you might simplify matters in that way.

Scheduling condition of farms.

46,861. In regard to the compensation question, in order to help tenants and landlords, do you think it would be a good system, as has been advocated sometimes here, to have, when the incoming tenant comes in, the farm looked over and to schedule the different fields and the different conditions of the fields, such schedule to be placed at the end of the lease so that when the incoming tenant becomes the outgoing tenant the arbiter would have a good line to go upon in judging whether the farm has been improved in condition or whether it has gone back?—Decidedly so, but you must always keep in view that it is very difficult to put in writing the state of a farm from one man's point of view in such a way that another one, 20 years afterwards it may be, will interpret it in exactly the same light as the first man did. You can approximate pretty closely to what has been the state, but you must always allow a considerable variation for difference of opinion.

46,862. But a plan like that would give you some sort of idea?—It would give you a very good idea.

46,863. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In this paragraph 56, which has been talked about by Mr. Clay so much, I see that you put first the cost of procedure as being the great complaint?—That is the great complaint.

Contracting out of Agricultural Holdings Act.

46,864. I see that you are dead against the landlord and tenant being able to contract themselves out of the Act; do you know some of the schedules for compensation on some of the large estates?—Yes.

46,865. Do you think they are fair?—On estates where schedules have been generally adopted they are usually pretty fair. Some of them are quite ample as far as they go.

46,866. Then if tenants and landlords have acted in that way and thereby contracted themselves out, as you may call it, have the tenants not in the end been very much better off than tenants claiming under the Act?—Yes, a good deal better, but principally owing to the cost of procedure.

46,867. Does that not point to the fact that if a fair scale of compensation is laid down between man and man that is quite sufficient?—Yes, if you could compel it to be put into operation, but I think you cannot do that. That is left to the individual temperament of both parties—principally of the landlord.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

46,868. Then, with regard to this question of giving them freedom, I suppose you admit that it would be impossible with many men for the future well-being of the land that the landlord should give them freedom of cropping without restrictions, to bring on a certain amount to make up for what they were taking off the land?—It would be with a very small percentage. In most of the cases the land of the country would be farmed very much as it has been, and even a tenant would be doing himself an injury if he attempted to do very great injury to the land by selling too much off. But what I put more stress on is this, that if you adopt, say, the first suggestion I have made, of an official valuator, the landlord might then, in the case to which you refer, have the power of asking that the tenant be stopped from such a procedure, and there could be an appeal then to the independent official to say whether he should or whether he should not.

46,869. In that part of the country on which you have reported, a good many own their farms I fancy—I mean throughout Ayrshire?—Only in a few districts.

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46,870. In those districts do these men that have an entirely free hand to do as they like, deal with their land in any way differently from their neighbours who are under lease?—There is not very much difference, they are very much the same unless it comes to an occasion when they want to sell any particular crop off when prices happen to be high. They then do it, whereas a tenant may have first to go and ask permission from his landlord, and, according to circumstances, he may get it or he may not.

46,871. But as a rule, in cases like that, I suppose he does get it?—He generally gets it, at any rate I will not say he always does.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

46,872. Now, with reference to the home-grown produce, about which so much has been said; I want to know if you had thought out for yourself, after all you have heard and all your experience, any practical way in which this could be carried out in fairness to both parties?—I am quite convinced that it can be carried out in fairness to both parties, but you must put the whole responsibility upon the tenant of proving that he has first grown this food and has then used it.

46,873. What is the procedure that you propose to bring that to a point?—If a tenant approaching the end of his lease has, say, a certain quantity of food on hand, grain of any particular kind, let him send notice to the proprietor or his agent that he means to use this at home in the state in which it presently is. The agent might then satisfy himself that that quantity existed and was not likely to be tampered with later on; or the tenant might send it to the nearest grist mill and have it ground, if it was necessary to do so, and keep the receipt for that as a proof that the material had gone through, and he would then have to rely on either the miller's servants or his own servants to see that the material was brought home and used at home.

Claims and counter-claims.

46,874. You agree, I think, in saying that the notices of claim for compensation should be sent in simultaneously?—Yes.

46,875. Would that not be likely to tend to an extravagant claim on perhaps the landlord's part, owing to a want of knowledge as to what the tenant was claiming?—No, I think it would tend in quite the reverse way. Both parties just now are inclined to put in extravagant claims, and I think that if neither knew what the other was doing they would be likely to keep more to the medium. I certainly would give the one who is further off the actual facts of the case the largest proportion of the expenses to bear, whatever these were. That would help to keep things nearer the mark.

Improvements by landlords and tenants.

46,876. You also say in your report—I do not know whether it is your own statement, I think it is though—that in Scotland the idea is that most of the improvements have been done by the landlords, but that that is not really so; do you refer to the whole of Scotland in saying that?—What I referred to were the improvements on the land, not the buildings. The buildings, exclusive of cartages, with few exceptions, have all been done by the landlords.

State loans.

46,877. Then, also, there is a proposal in regard to this loan of money by the Government both to landlords and to tenants, of which you, I think, have indicated your approval; what security upon these estates, that really require it most, would you have for the Government?—I am not in favour of giving the tenant any money. You would interfere too much with the property of the proprietor if you did it. You would need to have a security over his property to which he might not altogether agree, and it would be better that the money should be given to him in the first place.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Amendments to schedules.

46,878. Then you have referred to the schedules of the Act; what changes in these schedules do you propose?—The improving of roads, the laying down of permanent pasture, the making of irrigation meadows, water-courses, fences, and the reclamation of waste land especially, might all be put into part 2, under the same conditions as drainage is at present, which I consider are very good.

46,879. (*Mr. Channing.*) Including permanent pasture?—Including the laying down to permanent pasture.

46,880. You would not put that into part 3?—It is one of those disputed points you might have in part 3 quite easily if thought fit.

Maintenance of land in clean condition.

46,881. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You lay a great deal of stress upon cleaning the land; does not good husbandry entail keeping the land clean?—It does, you can scarcely have good husbandry without keeping the land clean.

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46,882. So that really is part of a farmer's business in carrying on the land?—It is; but presently no acknowledgment is taken of it at all. The same claims might quite justly be put on two similar farms, the one as dirty as possible, and the other as clean as you can possibly have it.

Milking machines.

46,883. You referred to these milking machines just now; are they likely to be successful in your part of the country?—I have no hesitation in saying that they are pretty nearly successful already. Where there is a difficulty in obtaining labour they can be utilised quite easily and quite freely.

46,884. Then one of the great expenses which the dairy people are put to in those parts of the country is the difficulty, of course, and the expense of dairymaids at the present time; it is difficult to get milkers, is it not?—Yes.

46,885. I think you said that with the extension of these milking machines the competition from abroad would increase immensely?—I expect so.

Wages of dairy maids.

46,886. Are the wages abroad just now not very much lower than the wages here for these women?—No, they are usually higher, but it is not so much a matter of wage, it is simply that they cannot be got.

46,887. Abroad?—Yes.

46,888. What countries do you refer to?—Australia, Canada, and the United States.

46,889. Are the milking machines getting introduced there, do you know?—There are a few in Australia, and at least one has been sent to Canada.

Agricultural education.

46,890. In regard to the most practical way of extending technical education to the agricultural community generally, have the ordinary agricultural classes under the County Councils been with you successful or failures?—They have not been as successful as it was presumed they would have been. The difficulty is to suggest what should be the way that should be adopted. In the south-western counties there was, however, with me a general opinion that a little more of general agriculture should be taught to the boys in the rural districts.

46,891. You mean in the elementary schools?—Yes.

Experimental stations.

46,892. And perhaps added to that might be experimental stations, I notice you say?—Yes, it was thought, and I am inclined to believe that experimental stations would interest the farmers of every district more than almost anything that has hitherto been done in connexion with technical education, from the farmer's point of view.

46,893. I suppose, at present, there is a considerable difficulty in getting practical men that you can rely on as being really very sensible, and able to come and hold their own in the different districts?—It is very difficult to get the ordinary farmer to carry out even a comparatively simple experiment accurately, and it is, of course, much more difficult if you go to an intricate experiment; in fact, I think experiments cannot be well carried out unless under the supervision of a proper staff.

Infringement of Agricultural Holdings Act.

46,894. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In paragraph 47 you say that there are great complaints of the want of security under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that farmers complain that "factors in too many instances have done everything "in their power to break this Act, and to render its "working null and void." How can they break the Act?—By the insertion of these clauses.

46,895. But if the clauses that they insert are contrary to the Act, they are null and void?—The difficulty then comes in that you have to put a private agreement as against an Act of Parliament, and it is a legal point which has to be upheld. It is difficult to know what to do, if the two parties make a private arrangement between themselves contrary to what is in an Act of Parliament.

46,896. Is it not the case that the Act is quite clear upon this, that it can only be set aside by an instrument giving equivalent compensation?—Then if it is disputed whether it is an equivalent or not you get into a very intricate question. It may be nearly an equivalent and just as much as keeps clear of dispute and yet may not really be so.

46,897. But under those circumstances supposing that it was not equivalent, would the tenant be so foolish as to sign it, whereas if he did not sign it he would hold the farm under the Act; does that not rest with him?—You would think so, but if you have a district where you have from 5 to 10 or 20 competitors for every farm a great deal is sacrificed that would not happen where there are only two or three.

46,898. Is this what I understand from you now that the farmers mean; that where there is great competition, and a number of men trying to get the same farm they are willing to take it under an agreement, although in their view that agreement does not give the same compensation as the Act?—They have done so at any rate.

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46,899. And done so willingly?—No, not willingly. They all sign these clauses to a certain extent, it might be called, under protest; I know of any number of cases.

46,900. But they have done it with their eyes open?—They have done it certainly with their eyes open.

46,901. That is what I want—with their eyes open?—That is a fact.

46,902. Can you give us any instances of the clauses to which you refer which set aside the Act, or are they clauses dealing with matters which are not specified in the Act?—If you refer to page 33 of my report you will find several there. The very first one is a common one in a very great number of leases, purposely saying that the Act is set aside altogether.

46,903. Can you tell me with regard to that clause which you have called my attention to, and which I understand is sometimes inserted in leases, whether the legality of that clause has ever been tested; it appears to me to be a perfectly plain breach of the law?—My business is that of a farmer, not of a lawyer. I am not prepared to express an opinion upon it here. That is a point for a lawyer.

46,904. As a matter of fact has it ever been tried?—I cannot say that it has.

46,905. Then, probably, if it had been tried it would have been found that the Act would have given perfect protection, and that this clause was illegal. You never put that question when these complaints were made to you?—The same question was put, not exactly with regard to this clause, but with regard to some of the others, and it was usually considered that it was illegal. Then the difficulty came to be that the tenants said: we prefer in most cases to suffer rather than to go to the Court of Session and fight it, because supposing we gained our case we would lose far more than we are losing just now.

46,906. Yes; I understand that. I am asking you some of these questions rather with a view of ascertaining whether, perhaps, some of the numerous complaints that have been made to you about the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act are not, as we have found in the case of a good many others, really founded upon ignorance of the Act itself?—In some cases they are.

46,907. We have had cases frequently put before us of amendments which have been recommended in the Act which it has been found that the Act itself already contains?—I could believe so.

46,908. You could believe that from your own experience as a sub-commissioner?—Yes.

Fall in price of dairy produce.

46,909. You tell us that you have had a great many more complaints recently of the fall in prices of dairying?—Yes, the fall in dairy products has been more within the last two years than it has been, probably, in the ten before that—five at any rate.

46,910. In the last two years?—Yes.

46,911. Are those complaints very general?—The prices are pretty uniform all over the south-west of Scotland, taking distance into account.

46,912. That, I suppose, is regarded as a very serious matter?—It is serious for both landlord and tenant in that district.

46,913. That is one of the great causes of depression, then?—Yes.

Readjustment of rent.

46,914. Now, in paragraph 53, I see you say there is a great desire for readjustment of rents?—That only exists in cases where landlords have not already given a readjustment. I am pleased to say that the most of the landlords, at least nine-tenths of them all over these counties when they were satisfied that prices had got below the paying point, made a readjustment of the rent. That is one very strong reason why the Act has not been put into force as much as it might have been, because when the rearrangement of rent was arrived at the landlord in nearly every case said: You agree to make no claim on consideration that I change your rent from, say, 1,000*l.* down to, it may be, 800*l.*, or something of that kind.

46,915. (*Mr. Channing.*) Those readjustments were during the course of a lease?—Yes; they were voluntary.

46,916. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When you say, then, in this paragraph that "Everybody is of opinion that nothing can

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" rid agriculture of the millstone which hangs about its " neck, so much as a readjustment of rents in accordance " with present prices " that applies, I understand, to those cases where no readjustments have been made?—Where no readjustment has been made, or where the readjustment is not equivalent to the present values.

46,917. Then you, I am afraid, if I heard you correctly, anticipate a very considerable further fall in prices?—I anticipate, or rather, have anticipated it, for it has already arrived. There, at least in dairy products, has been a fall of 10 per cent within the last six months—since this report has been written.

46,918. Then where it has not been done already even if a proper readjustment of rents was made, I suppose, if this fall which you anticipate occurs, the difficulty would arise again?—It depends altogether how far the fall goes.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Suggested amendments.

46,919. Now, with regard to the suggested amendments to the Act, there was one thing I did not quite understand in paragraph 56. You speak of " Freedom to Manure." Surely there is no restriction upon manuring is there, I thought that liberal manuring was a thing which every landlord would desire to encourage?—One or two of the restrictive clauses to which I have referred you already on page 33 limit the compensation to particular classes of manures.

46,920. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are the quantities limited too?—I think so in some cases. The quantities given are in one particular lease.

46,921. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Which is the clause that you refer to?—On page 33 you will find it, it is the one where reference is made to the 70 yards of manure per acre. Then there is also the clause referring to the nitrate of soda, but I am not prepared to say there is much in that.

46,922. The first section of the clause, as I read it, provides that there shall be a certain quantity of manure of a certain description used, but it does not in the least preclude compensation for all other manures used in accordance with the terms of the Act?—No, but then if that quantity of manure was not used what is likely to happen with regard to the tenant's claim? Would it not give the landlord a counterclaim of a very enormous size because it had not been used. Seventy yards are mentioned here; presuming only that 30 had been used, which is a pretty big quantity, the landlord would say, my land would have been better to the extent of 40 yards per acre or so many years had you kept up to your bargain.

46,923. Then I observe it goes on to say in the following clause " and no payment shall be made for any grass seeds, " nor for any unexhausted manures excepting any such as " should have been applied in excess of what is stipulated " above." Upon that clause again, as a matter of fact, are you aware whether it has ever been tried in a Court of Law?—It has not been tried.

46,924. Then I suppose it is quite possible we might expect a similar result and that that is also contrary to law?—My own opinion with regard to that is, that it would; but, as I said before, I am not a lawyer and do not desire to give my opinion on it.

46,925. Did you point that out to any of your informants?—I did, and the tenants pointed it out to me also; but, as I said before, they said to me, we are not going to settle the point for the general community.

46,926. When these extracts from current leases are given do I understand from you that these are exceptional cases or that they are common?—There is any number of them.

46,927. Do you mean to say that it is the ordinary lease?—Not the ordinary lease. You do not get all these clauses in every lease, but in the most of leases you will get one or probably, in some cases, more. You have no idea of the number. At the time this enquiry was going on I had a great pile of leases sent in to me without any enquiry, most of which contained objectionable clauses.

46,928. And there is so much competition for the farms that, whether they are willing or unwilling, they do, as a matter of fact, take the farms upon these leases, with their eyes open?—They take them on the footing that we are on good terms just now and we will be able to carry on on good terms, and if prices, as they probably will, get better, nothing will arise, but when anything does go wrong, then the row kicks up.

46,929. They ask for more liberty to drain, you say, and more liberty to build; what is the liberty that they require with regard to drainage—that it should be without notice?—No, I am not inclined to believe that they should be allowed to do it without notice. I think the liberty they have for draining just now is quite sufficient under ordinary purposes.

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46,930. That is your opinion?—That is my own opinion.

46,931. Their opinion is that they ask for more liberty to drain?—They want money to do it; that is principally what is asked for there, and power to carry it out just as they thought fit by giving notice—not that the landlord should step in and do it after they give notice. The complaints in connection with that are more, that the landlord does it in too thorough a way. He does it in such a way that the estate would benefit as a whole; whereas they would only do it, if they did it themselves, to benefit, say, their own time.

46,932. The complaint then, I understand to be this, that when the landlord does it, he does it thoroughly well?—Yes.

46,933. And they would like to do it themselves not quite so well?—Yes.

46,934. I mean at not so much cost?—At less cost.

46,935. More liberty to drain then, according to your interpretation, means more liberty to drain in rather an inferior way?—It might be sufficient for the present purposes but it would not guarantee the work being done thoroughly. I am not prepared to give the liberty that the tenants ask for in these cases.

46,936. You disapprove of that?—Yes.

46,937. Then with regard to building, they require more liberty to build: does that mean to build without the consent of the landlord?—Yes. Now I am very much of the same opinion with regard to that as I was with regard to the drainage, that if you had an official valuator to whom you could apply, both landlord and tenant, I think, would be quite agreeable either to do the work or not do it, if such an independent gentleman expressed the opinion that it was necessary or that it was not necessary.

46,938. (*Mr. Channing.*) And as to the way in which it might be best done?—And also as to the way in which it might be best done.

Land courts.

46,939. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) As regards a Land Court for the purpose of deciding rents, there you find the number in favor of that comparatively small?—It is, comparatively speaking, small, but I may say that it is very much on the increase. I happened to be through that same district ten years ago, making an independent inquiry for another purpose, and while I came across very few people who held these ideas then, it came more prominently before me on the last occasion.

46,940. Since the depression has been so much worse, I think?—Yes, I expect that has been the cause of it.

Demand for farms.

46,941. (*Chairman.*) You have stated in your evidence that you find that in most parts of the districts that you have visited there is no great difficulty in letting farms?—No difficulty at all.

46,942. Is that the case in all the counties you have visited?—They are not all alike but nearly alike.

46,943. In some cases there is a greater demand or farms than in others?—Yes.

46,944. I think you said that is the case in Ayrshire?—More especially in Ayrshire.

Farmers in Ayrshire.

46,945. I think you state in one part of your report that Ayrshire seems to be rather a congested district as regards farmers; that they have more young men of that character than the county can provide for, and that those young men are spread over into other districts?—Yes.

46,946. And that they largely add to the demand for farms in other counties that you have visited?—Yes.

46,947. Do these farmers from Ayrshire bring capital with them?—A moderate amount of capital.

46,948. A sufficiency?—A sufficiency for the farms that they are on. Some of them occasionally have been taking larger farms than they ought.

46,949. Larger farms than they have been accustomed to, and more than they have been educated to?—Yes.

46,950. For if I understood you rightly the farms in Ayrshire are small ones?—Yes, mostly.

46,951. Of from 50 acres up to 200 or 300?—Yes.

46,952. You call these small ones?—There is only a comparatively small number with over 300 acres of arable land.

46,953. The farmers that you speak of who go into the other districts are mainly small farmers then?—Mainly.

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46,954. Who either farmed themselves farms of from 50 to 200 acres, or who are the sons of farmers?—Yes.

46,955. And they generally bring with them capital sufficient for farms of that size?—Yes.

46,956. I suppose that money has been made upon farming, then?—In most of the cases there has been no other way of making it.

46,957. Therefore that would rather indicate that among the farming class in Ayrshire there is a considerable body of people who have got a fair amount of means?—There is not the least doubt about that. They have not probably been making much in the last year or two, but they have all been in a fairly good way.

46,958. They have not made much in the last year or two, but in best times they must have done fairly well?—They have done well; that is, previous to ten years ago.

46,959. And they have laid by money?—A great many of them.

46,960. Enough to furnish their younger sons with money to go and take farms elsewhere?—In many cases.

46,961. That is the way you account for this?—I cannot account for it in any other other way.

Scotch farmers in England.

46,962. Apparently in some districts, farmers have already spread over into England?—Decidedly so.

46,963. And have gone down to Hereford and Essex?—Yes, these west countrymen.

46,964. The number of these men rather tend to keep up the rents?—Most decidedly so.

Reduction of rent.

46,965. Then you have said, in the districts that you have been in, that the rents have not been seriously reduced as compared with other parts of Scotland?—No, much less.

46,966. If I recollect aright, in North Ayrshire you have said that the rents were reduced from 5 per cent. to 10 per cent., and in South Ayrshire from 10 per cent. to 15 or 20 per cent.?—Yes, about that.

46,967. In Wigtonshire and Kirkcudbrightshire the reductions in rent have not been more than 10 per cent.?—In Wigtonshire, I think it is a little more—15 or 20 per cent.

46,968. In Kirkcudbrightshire, how much would you say; rather less than in Wigtonshire?—Yes, it is less than in Wigtonshire. In fact, I might say that in Kirkcudbrightshire, there is almost a tendency to rise in some cases.

46,969. Owing to the change in the farming?—It is getting more into dairying, whereas previously it was altogether rearing and feeding.

46,970. The effect of the conversion of the cultivation from arable into dairying in that part of the country has rather tended to raise rents then?—It is probably too strong to say it has been to raise rent, it certainly has prevented the rent from going down.

46,971. It has prevented a fall?—Yes, or at least it has lessened the fall.

46,972. When you speak of the reduction of rents do you speak of the reduction as compared with 10 or 12 years ago?—I mean with regard to 1880, I think that is the year I have taken.

46,973. In the few years previous to that there had been a considerable rise of rent?—There had been almost as quick a rise as there has been a fall.

46,974. Then the fall of rents now has not been more than sufficient to bring things back to what they were 6 or 8 or 10 years before 1880?—You need to go a little further back than that; you need to go about 30 years back to get to equal what farms are letting at just now. There are many farms where temporary reductions have been given during the currency of the lease and these are being held on. The tenant can get on as matters are. He may probably be doing no good, but his landlord does not feel justified in letting him go off and taking the chance of re-letting.

46,975. Throughout the whole of that district are the leases of 14 years or 19 years?—15 years' or 19 years' leases are the usual length—generally 19 years.

46,976. Have the landlords as a rule made these reductions of rent in the case of leases?—Mostly voluntarily, during the currency of the lease.

46,977. They were not under any obligation to do so, but they made these reductions in spite of the fact that there were leases?—Yes.

46,978. Where the leases have fallen in have the reductions in rent been much arger, or about the same as those which the landlords had voluntarily conceded?—It depends altogether on how much had been previously conceded.

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46,979. I mean taking the average of cases, should you say that the reductions when the farms have been let again under lease have been much more?—They were generally a little more.

46,980. What should you say the difference is?—Probably from 5 to 10 per cent.; some few estates have given none.

46,981. That would probably indicate that the landlords have not reduced the rents pending the leases quite so much as they might have done, because on re-letting the land again they have had to concede a further reduction?—Yes, that has nearly always been the case.

Dairying in Ayrshire.

46,982. What is the character of the Ayrshire farms, are they mainly dairy farms?—Unless along the coast they are entirely so.

46,983. The dairy farms are increasing in number all through the district I understand?—They have increased for the last 40 years. Fifty years ago there were scarcely any in the other counties.

46,984. For the last five or six years have they increased?—Yes; the tables given show this.

46,985. Has there been a great deal of conversion of arable farms into dairying?—No. The increase has been no greater within the last five years than what it had been for probably 20 years previous to that.

46,986. I suppose in Ayrshire, on these small farms, the number of labourers employed is not large?—Generally about two or three or four on each farm.

Wages.

46,987. What has been the course of wages in that district?—They are nearly the highest in the west of Scotland, but that is regulated by the nearness to the manufacturing district.

46,988. What has been the rate of wages?—About 1*l.* a week and a free house for the married men.

46,989. Has that wage been maintained all through the period of depression?—There is very little difference.

46,990. Very little difference?—A little, but very little.

46,991. What should you say has been the difference?—About 1*s.* out of 20*s.*

46,992. Five per cent.?—Yes.

46,993. Then the labourers have had the enormous advantage of the reduction in prices?—Most decidedly so.

46,994. Then they are very much better off?—Yes.

46,995. The tenants have got the advantage of some reduction of rent of from 10 to 15 per cent.?—Yes.

46,996. And also they save a little upon the wages—5 per cent.?—The saving on the wages is infinitesimal.

46,997. Still you have stated that the reduction is 5 per cent.?—Yes, it will amount to at least 5 per cent.

Economy in labour employment.

46,998. Have the farmers economised labour at all?—Yes, as far as they reasonably could, in the way of employing labour-saving machines.

46,999. Do they employ less labour at present than they did?—There is no difference in that, unless where it can be done by machinery instead of hand-labour.

47,000. Taking a broad view, should you say as many labourers are employed as there were?—There would not be any more; it must if anything be a trifle less owing to a more efficient class of machinery being used.

Farmers in Ayrshire.

47,001. I suppose the farmers there are a very frugal, thrifty lot of people?—Yes, every family or most of them, and in fact they are by far too hard working.

47,002. There is very little saving to be made in reducing their personal expenditure then?—The expenditure of nearly all is reduced to about the lowest limit, in fact lower in my opinion than it should be. The farmers in most of the cases do a great proportion of the work; even the wives in many cases do the bulk of the cheese-making.

47,003. They work themselves?—They work, and work very hard.

47,004. Do you not think that is the explanation of the fact that the Ayrshire farmers have been able to lay by money, and to send their families into other districts?—That is the principal explanation.

47,005. I suppose they carry with them these habits of working themselves, and these very thrifty habits and they

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are likely to do better than other people—is that so?—If they carry the habits to the same extent in a new district, they certainly will.

47,006. Apparently under those conditions they are able to compete with other people, and somewhat keep up the rents, or even to increase the rents in some districts owing to this competition?—They have certainly helped to keep up the rents in any district where they have gone.

Depression in the west of Scotland.

47,007-8. Then, taking a broad view of the district you have been in, it has not suffered very severely from agricultural depression?—Nothing to the extent of the grain growing districts, but that has been brought about by the lower price of feeding stuffs.

Fall in price of feeding stuffs.

47,009. Part of the adjustment they have been able to make has been in the lower price they have paid for feeding stuffs—they have gained in that direction?—They have gained in that, and in the lower price of manures also.

47,010. And I suppose in the lower price of all other things that they buy, machinery and everything, whatever it may be?—Yes.

47,011. Therefore they have had a good deal of adjustment to make up for the fall of prices?—Yes, but the fall of prices in dairy products up to two years ago, unless just an odd year now and then, has been small in proportion to any other farm produce.

Fall in price of dairy produce.

47,012. What should you say, taking it broadly—taking all the products of dairy farming—has been the reduction? Has it been 20 per cent.?—No, it has not been half that.

47,013. Not more than 10 per cent.?—There has been a fall of 10 per cent. in the last six months.

47,014. That may be temporary, I suppose?—I am rather inclined to think it will go further instead of being temporary, as far as I can see.

47,015. Of course we must take the evidence of the time you were making your inquiry; at that time the average reduction of dairy produce had not been much more than 10 per cent.?—If you were to take the average of 10 or 15 years ago.

47,016. Against that they have had about the same reduction of rent on the average, or perhaps rather more?—Yes.

47,017. And they have had the benefit of the reduced price for manures and for feeding stuffs?—Yes. I would direct your attention to page 23 of my report. I have given there for 30 years the average prices at which cheese was sold at Baldoon—that is the original farm of Sir James Caird after he left it—and you will see there that the difference is, comparatively speaking, trifling, with the exception of the 10 years from 1872 to 1882.

Effect of low prices.

47,018. Taking the whole population of the district, I suppose a very large proportion of it are labouring men; would you say the larger proportion?—In the northern half of Ayr they are.

47,019. Looking at the fact that wages have been maintained, or very slightly reduced, and that all the articles which they buy—food and what not—have been greatly reduced in value, should you not say that the country, as a whole, has gained by these low prices?—I am prepared to say that the country, as a whole, has very much improved from what it was, even since I remember it. The status of the population has considerably risen, not only from the agricultural labourer's point of view but even from the farmer's point of view.

47,020. Even from the farmer's point of view?—Yes.

47,021. How do you explain that?—I expect it is due to the general progression of the country—they are following others outside to a certain extent.

47,022. Even the farmers have raised their standard?—Their standard has also been raised and it might even go a little further.

47,023. In spite of the fact that they are complaining of depression?—Yes.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

47,024. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you any experience of the class of Scotchmen who go into Essex, a good many of them have come from Ayrshire, I believe? The question I want to ask you about them is, whether they are as a rule successful men or unsuccessful men in Ayrshire?—The first few who came were quite successful men in their own district, but after that most of them were pretty nearly unsuccessful men, who were not succeeding at all.

47,025. Who were not succeeding in Scotland?—They were quite the reverse in fact.

47,026. They are all leaseholders I suppose; are they not practically?—Yes, in Ayrshire.

47,027. Have many of them been broken up and give up their leases in the last 10 or 12 years?—Yes.

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47,028. Many of those who came to England?—Off a few estates, where the farms are considered to be much higher rented than others, they have nearly all gone. One estate has sent 20 per cent., probably, of all those who have gone to Essex from Ayrshire.

Temporary reductions of rent.

47,029. Temporary reductions, you find, have had a demoralising effect?—I believe they have.

47,030. They raise rents artificially, do they not?—Not so much that, as that a tenant has not the inducement to make the most out of his farm. He rather looks upon it in this way: that provided he grumbles plenty, he will get the rent reduced without making an effort himself to make the most out of his holding.

Judicial rents and fixity of tenure.

47,031. Are you in favour of having any statutory revision of rents of land held on lease?—Not personally.

47,032. Do you find a certain number of farmers in favour of that?—There are a few.

47,033. What protection to the leasehold tenant would you give with regard to obtaining an adequate reduction of rent; would you give him any protection at all?—If he wishes to have a lease of 19 years, there is no necessity why he should have any protection. If he wants to have a lease of his holding he may arrange in his bargain to have a break every three or five years, as he thinks fit.

47,034. In the case of the holders of leases which have been entered into for 19 years, say eight or nine years before the serious fall in prices, would you give those men any remedy?—I do not see that it is possible to do it without breaking a contract. Personally I may say I am against a lease at all, if you ask me that question.

47,035. You prefer a yearly tenancy?—I prefer to be clear of a lease altogether, and to have full compensation for anything that might be done to add to the value of the farm.

47,036. Is that opinion growing in Scotland?—It is growing, but very slowly.

47,037. Are the number of cases increasing where men in taking leases insist on having breaks?—Most of the leases that have been taken within the last five years have breaks of either three or five years.

47,038. That would rather point to the disapproval of the idea of fixity of tenure in Scotland?—Decidedly so.

47,039. They would sooner remain free?—They want to remain free. There is not the least doubt about that.

Produce rents.

47,040. Is that associated with a desire to have something like produce rents?—No, they are not much in favour of produce rents. Since I can remember, I could name 50 produce rents for one that I could do at the present time.

47,041. I see you refer to produce rents in a part of your report; on the Eglinton Estate has the plan been at all successful?—It has scarcely been a success. The tenants have taken it where it has been almost forced upon them, but in most cases they prefer to have a little gamble and to have the chance of prices probably getting better, and relying upon the landlord to reduce their rents if prices do not get better.

47,042. But they have not found it a favourable plan?—The tenants certainly do not look upon it very favourably. I may say the system only exists to the extent of half the rent. The one half is a produce rent, the other half is a money rent.

47,043. Is that in the dairy district, the grazing district entirely, or is it partly in the arable district?—It is principally in the dairy district.

Fall in price of dairy produce.

47,044. Now about this 10 per cent. fall in dairy products during the last six months; to what cause do you attribute that? Do you attribute it partly to increasing adulteration or to any causes of that kind, or to a general fall in prices?—It is almost entirely caused by the increased production or importation, if I might rather say so, of butter from Australia and from Canada.

47,045. That is responsible for the whole of it, you think, or the greater part of it?—Butter in most cases regulates the prices of both cheese and milk.

47,046. Speaking of the carrying out of improvements like drainage and things of that kind, you said that tenants would prefer to carry them out in their own way and in a way suitable rather to their own special holding than perhaps to the general convenience of the estate?—Yes.

Tenants' improvements.

47,047. Do you give that opinion because the interest charged on improvements by landlords and their agents is

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too high in Scotland, or what?—There are two reasons—the one is that the interest charged was certainly too high, and another is that the tenants think that if they were allowed to carry them out on their own responsibility they would only do the drainage on land where it was absolutely needed. The complaint in regard to the previous system was that a great deal of land was drained that might quite as well have been left alone, and what was done was done in too expensive a manner.

47,048. Is there a complaint that the drainage has been carried out, and other improvements have been carried out on some system which was rather too costly, and probably rather an engineering system than a farmer's system?—That was exactly it. The line was too hard and fast. The drains were all made of one width and one depth, irrespective of the strata.

47,049. In some cases too deep?—In nearly every case they were too deep.

47,050. The point was rather, not as Mr. Chaplin put it, that the farmers want to do it in an inferior way, but that they want to do it in a way more practically useful for the operations of their holding?—It might occasionally be done in a rather inferior way, but they desire it given such a manner that they certainly might limit the expense to what they consider purely and simply at least would pay and nothing more.

47,051. I understood you to be perfectly willing to have that referred to arbitration to see that it was done in a proper way?—If we had an official such as we have been talking about, matters of that kind I am quite convinced would be referred by both landlord and tenant. From what I could hear through conversation with both parties they would take quite kindly to it where they have disputes of that kind to settle.

47,052. With regard to this question of improvements, I understand your position to be, that you want about the amount of freedom to improve and to carry out improvements by the tenant that was demanded by the Scotch Chamber of Agriculture in their draft Bill, that is, that the tenants should give notice of improvements, and that they should practically be in the same position as on drainage?—Much the same position.

47,053. Is that generally demanded in Scotland?—That is about the general demand.

Compensation for improvements.

47,054. About compensation for improvements generally, do you take the same view that a good many English witnesses have, that the principle of the Agricultural Holdings Act, that is, that the outgoing tenant should get the full value of what he has done for the farm is sound, and that the practice of the valuers has rather over-ridden it; or what view do you take of the situation?—We nearly all take the view that the principle is quite sound. Personally I do take the view that the details are quite sound.

47,055. And that the practice of the valuers rather upsets it?—The valuers' practice has been so varied that that they have never got into one steady groove at all.

47,056. Is it the case in Scotland, as it is said to be very largely in England, that the compensation is given almost entirely for what is done at the last moment, and in the last year or two, and that the general high cultivation of the farm for a long number of years is not sufficiently attended to?—General high cultivation is scarcely ever taken any notice of.

47,057. You think it ought to be?—I think it should. That is a point that I would lay full stress on.

47,058. Do you not think that a point of that kind, namely, that the increased fertility is due to really good, continuous farming, is about the most important point you could reward the farmer for?—Most decidedly so.

47,059. If you did reward him for it you would give the greatest encouragement to farmers to do their duty by the land?—Certainly.

47,060. I have only one more question to ask you, and you can answer it or not, just as you like. I think I had the advantage of your opinion on a Bill which I had drawn, and I should like to know whether, leaving out compensation for disturbance, which I think you dissented from, the general effect of that Bill met your views?—As a whole I am thoroughly pleased with the different clauses of the Bill, with the exception of the one referring to disturbance. I mean to say that I have no sympathy with it at all. The remainder of the Bill requires a little alteration to suit it to the requirements of Scotland; but, with that exception, I quite agree with it.

47,061. You would approve of the general principle of freedom to improve, subject to reference, compensation for continuous high cultivation, the appointment of official valuers, and so on?—Exactly. *Mr. J. Speir.* 2 May 1895.

47,062. You think that would be a practical Bill for farmers?—I am quite convinced that it would.

Condition of farmers.

47,063. (*Mr. Little.*) The effect of your answers to the Chairman's later questions seemed almost to suggest that the farmers in the counties you visited were in a prosperous condition; that was not your intention, was it?—Certainly not. I say they have been saving a little money in many cases up till a year or two, but they have done that out of what might and should have been their own personal expenses.

47,064. The questions of the Chairman and your answers almost seem to imply that they had got a reduction of rent, and a reduction in the cost of production, which put them on pretty much the same footing as they were before?—No; it has not put them on the same footing.

47,065. You do not mean that?—No, it has not put them on the same footing. It has only limited what has been a loss very materially.

47,066. Then you would say that farmers are nothing like as prosperous as they were in past years?—Most decidedly not.

Farm accounts.

47,067. You have shown some farm accounts in your report which bears that out, I think. On page 24 there is an account which shows the balance in favour of the farmer for two years—1880–81 and 1882–83. Then that account is continued for 1887–88, 1888–89, 1889–90, 1890–91, 1891–92, and 1892–93. Comparing these balances we find for the first two years there was an average profit of 140*l.* to the tenant, but for the last six years there has only been an average profit of 41*l.*?—That is right.

47,068. So that there has been a reduction of profit for the farmer from 140*l.* to 40*l.* a year?—I may say that I had an opportunity of verifying the whole of those figures from the gentleman's books. It is an average sized farm.

47,069. In the last year 1892-93 I might have stated that there was a positive loss of 18*l.* An average profit of 40*l.* is not a very satisfactory condition for a hard-working farmer is it?—With many of them the profits may be no greater.

47,070. Then there is this note to these accounts. "No "produce that is consumed on the farm appears in the "sales. The above detailed statements refer strictly to the "farm as distinguished from any domestic or household "expenses; the latter are kept entirely separate." Therefore that 40*l.* a year is a tenant's profit, and as a payment for his labour it is very poor remuneration. Do you suppose he charges for his own labour?—There is no charge, I think, for his own labour—it is the outside labour which appears in the accounts.

47,071. Then he is really getting less than the labourer?—Yes, and I may say that nine out of every ten of Ayrshire farmers are working for less than labourer's wage.

47,072. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the exact meaning of the note "No produce that is consumed on the farm appears in the sales"; does it mean that the farmer takes the produce himself?—What was used for his own household was not entered there.

47,073. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Should the farm not be credited with that?—It should.

47,074. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I suppose in those accounts he has the produce over and above the profit that is stated here?—Are you not looking at separate balance-sheets; there are two accounts on page 25.

47,075. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In neither is there anything credited to the farm for potatoes used in his house and milk, but these people live to a great extent you know upon that, they get their living out of the farm besides?—In the account on the top of page 25 those were all credited the same as if they had been sold; in the one at the bottom of page 25 no notice has been taken at all of anything used in the house.

47,076. Then why should that note appear at the bottom saying that "No produce that is consumed on the farm appears in the sales"? Everything that a man takes off the farm in the way of feeding his family ought to be credited to the farm?—This might be put in a slightly different way. That note refers to the produce consumed by the farm stock, not to what has been consumed by the farmer and his family. That is where the difference lies.

47,077. (*Mr. Little.*) If it did refer to what was consumed in the house it would be inconsistent with Note 4

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which is to this effect. "The above detailed statements "refer strictly to the farm as distinguished from my "domestic or household expenses—the latter are kept "entirely separate"?—Yes.

47,078. The chairman asked you about those who took up the farms to be let, and you give us, on page 9, some particulars of the classes of persons who have taken farms in Nithsdale, from which I find that a very considerable proportion were those who had no connection with agriculture, and that 19 out of 172 were dairymen, ploughmen, shepherds, or other farm labourers, and only 90 out of 172, or a little more than half, were actual farmers?—Yes.

47,079. That modifies a little the idea that the farmers have been making fortunes which have enabled them to put out their sons and that that has caused the competition for farms?—You can scarcely get over the fact that even dairymen, ploughmen, and shepherds, are all more or less belonging to the same class.

47,080. To the labouring classes who, by general consent, have prospered?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

47,081. Then with regard to the reductions of rent, the Chairman asked you if the present state of things was not something like that of 1872?—Excuse me, I think that question was not asked with regard to 1872.

47,082. I think it was put in this way, that you had taken the fall since 1880, and the chairman asked you about the rise in the 10 years before?—I said they went back to about the figures of 30 years before.

47,083. I know you said so. I was going to refer to your own figures on page 4, paragraph 14. There you say, "One of the largest estates, the rental of which for "1880–81–82, was only 5 per cent. over that of 1872–73, "but which in 1891–92 is 15·8 less than in 1880–81–82, "although having only 4 per cent. of arrears of rent in "1880–81–82 had, in 1891–92, an average of 15 per cent. "On another small estate, having a rental of from 2,500*l.* "to 3,000*l.* the rents of 1872 were 16·4 per cent. under "those of 1880, while those of 1892 were 27·3 per cent. "under those of the same year, yet there were no arrears "in 1880, and in 1892 they amounted to 10·5 per cent." Therefore you must go further back than 1872 to bring the rental to the same point at which it is now?—In 1872 the rentals were pretty nearly at the highest; 1872 was about the turning point.

Official valuers.

47,084. You complain of the procedure under the Agricultural Holdings Act being expensive?—Yes.

47,085. What is the principal cause of expense?—It is rather difficult to say what is the principal cause; there are a great many causes.

47,086. What are the causes of expense which would be avoided by the appointment of an official valuer?—He could limit the amount of evidence that is likely to be brought before him.

47,087. In what way would he limit it?—He would have more power of saying whether or not a whole string of witnesses were to be examined either on one side or the other.

47,088. You think he would be more likely than an ordinary umpire to exercise the power of cutting short evidence and the employment of skilled witnesses?—Yes, in fact the skilled witness, or the apparent skilled witnesses, in many cases has nearly killed the Act altogether.

47,089. Of course, expensive procedure is not a necessary consequence of the Act; you can proceed in a very inexpensive way if your Act is similar to ours?—The Act is in many cases similar.

47,090. The landlord and tenant can agree without the intervention of any third party?—The one can compel the other to agree even to a single arbiter.

47,091. The fact that either party can compel the reference to be to a single arbitrator is an advantage which you have over us?—Yes.

47,092. There is no such power in England. The landlord and tenant therefore without any valuer can agree; if they cannot agree the matter can be referred to one arbitrator at the option of either party?—Yes, but as a rule they have scarcely ever done so. With ideal landlords and ideal tenants you could probably work an ideal Act, but till you get that length it is, I believe, an utter impossibility to do it.

47,093. With an official valuator do you suppose men would be content to represent their own causes; that the landlord would appear personally or by his factor and without employing an advocate or a valuer?—I think both parties would confine themselves more to producing such evidence as the official valuator demanded.

47,094. Then, for the practical working, do you think the one valuator could do a whole county or a batch of counties?—He might do even several counties for some years.

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47,095. Then you would not propose to refer all cases to him, but only those where an agreement could not be arrived at?—I would propose to refer no cases at all. I would allow the people who are interested to refer the cases to him—if they wanted his experience good and well.

47,096. How are they to settle it? I do not quite understand. Are they first of all to see if they can agree?—Decidedly so.

47,097. Without an arbitrator at all?—Without an arbitrator at all.

47,098. I thought you said that was the case of an ideal tenant and an ideal landlord?—Well, we do have ideal tenants, and we do have ideal landlords also.

47,099. What percentage of them would agree without going to a referee?—It is utterly impossible at the present time to say.

47,100. Do you think there would be a large proportion?—I am quite convinced that, after a certain number of years, a very large proportion would.

47,101. You mean that when a number of official decisions had been given which settled the principles, then a landlord and tenant would agree without going into court?—They would drift gradually into seeing where the advantage of it lay. Several of the very largest land agents have said to me repeatedly, "there are often little differences "between our tenants and ourselves which we would like "very well for a thoroughly independent man just to say "what is to be done and what is not to be done."

47,102. I see that you have about 2,000 holdings in Ayrshire and the statements that you have given as to the changes of tenancy show from 4 to 5 per cent of the whole number changing per annum; that would give you at least a hundred cases which might require settlement in one county alone?—Yes, if they were all referred to this one gentleman.

47,103. That would take a considerable time, for they all occur at the same season of the year, do they not?—Mostly.

47,104. And most of them would necessitate a view of the farm?—They would all be the better for it whether he was asked in afterwards or not, both in the interest of the landlord and in the interest of the tenant.

47,105. I think Mr. Channing asked you one or two questions that I had intended to put; you are aware that the Act imposes no limitation as to the time during which compensation shall be given for accumulated fertility?—I am quite aware that it does.

47,106. But in practice the time is limited?—Various gentlemen who have been employed as valuators have occasionally given it; but in most of the other cases no notice has been taken of it at all, it has been shunted aside.

Compensation for cleanliness of farms.

47,107. I think you said that cleanliness has not been taken into account, and you admitted, in answer to Mr. Gilmour, that it was the duty of the farmer to observe the rules of good husbandry?—Yes.

47,108. Still you think he should be compensated if he leaves his farm clean?—Yes, he should.

47,109. Because another man is not fined, or because he has done something more than his duty, or because he has done his duty?—It is not so much in the pure and simple meaning of the word duty.

47,110. When a man is under an obligation—an implied obligation always, and generally an obligation by contract, to farm in a good and husbandlike manner—— ?—I will take it exactly on that footing—presuming now that good husbandry is the average of the district you will grant me that much?

47,111. You mean that you will put it at anything over the average of the district?—I would put it that he is entitled to everything over the average.

47,112. Would you fine him if he was below the average?—I would not be inclined to fine him, as you express it. I would rather refer the matter to an official arbiter.

47,113. Would you allow a counter-claim to stand on account of the farm being less cleanly than the average of the district?—Decidedly so.

47,114. That would be a fair counter-claim, fair, that is, to both parties?—Yes

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Official valuers.

47,115. I think you suggested that an appeal should be made to an official valuator where a tenant during the currency of his lease was selling off too much, or cropping too much?—Yes.

47,116. Do you not think that would create a good deal of irritation between landlord and tenant?—No; I think it would cause less irritation than at present, when a little matter is probably allowed to go on for a year or two, and then, when it has accumulated to a considerable extent, it is summed up against the tenant and that causes a great deal of ill-feeling.

47,117. Would you observe any difference in the case of a tenant continuing? A tenant who is continuing may amend his acts, he may take a crop this year, postpone the fallow, but make the fallow next year, in which case nobody is injured; the quitting tenant has lost his chance of improving or putting the land back into its proper state, and there is a difference between the two, is there not?—There is a little.

47,118. Sometimes it might be difficult for the landlord or the factor to say when the time had come to intervene?—I think it should be his duty to intervene.

47,119. When?—When the tenant is breaking through what is his contract.

47,120. But I thought he was to be allowed to farm as he pleased?—Yes; but if he is doing what is considered bad husbandry as you express it——

47,121. The view of the factor and of the farmer might differ very considerably on that point; the farmer might say I have got this liberty, and I am only exercising it, I have done no harm; next year I shall fallow this land, and I shall put it all right. Do you not think he would feel annoyed if the case was referred to an official to decide whether he was farming badly or not?—I cannot say that he would; it might happen, I will not say would not happen.

Farm accounts.

47,122. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Coming back to the accounts of this Ayrshire farm on pages 24 and 25, do you feel quite sure that the produce consumed by the tenant is shown in those accounts?—It is in the ordinary sales, he kept a separate account.

47,123. Does not the note require some alteration then. "The above detailed statements refer strictly to the farm, "as distinguished from my domestic or household "expenses—the latter are kept entirely separate;" then there is the other note: "No produce that is consumed "on the farm appears in the sales." Taking these two statements together, if they are accurate, surely the produce consumed by the farmer is not entered in these accounts?—I am quite positive with regard to that because I made special inquiry. The gentleman is unmarried; his housekeeper is strictly methodical, much more so than ninety-nine out of a hundred; and those accounts can be produced if wanted.

47,124. I only ask the question because I think the notes upon the subject are at any rate not very clear?—I am responsible for the notes; if they want alteration I can manage to do that.

47,125. I notice that on this farm, on which the profits have been diminishing, the rent and rates have not diminished; apparently the rent and rates charged in the first year 1880–81, are 362*l.*, and they are 357*l.* 11 years afterwards?—He is still running the one lease.

47,126. At the same rent?—I think so.

47,127. Then there being no reduction in the rent in that case accounts or the fact that he is not making the same profit that he did at the commencement. I see that in the first year he had an excess of revenue over expenditure of 123*l.*, and that that has gradually dwindled down to 18*l.* on the other side of the account, but in the meanwhile you say the rent had stood quite still?—Yes; that is the principal reason of it.

Reduction of rent.

47,128. I think you said that generally speaking the rents have been reduced?—Very often; "generally" in fact expresses it more accurately than any other word can.

47,129. If this is a good sample of the ordinary farm in your district profits would not have diminished here if the rents had been reduced?—It depends altogether how much the reduction would have been.

47,130. In the year 1891–2, there was a profit of 69*l.*, as compared with a profit of 123*l.* in 1880–1; that is after 10 years it had fallen to the extent of 54*l.*, and therefore a reduction of 54*l.* in the rental would have made the thing good?—But on a farm of that size the probability is that he would have great difficulty, even supposing the lease goes out this year or the next year, in getting that amount of reduction. The farm is not a very large one and 54*l.* means a very big reduction on the whole.

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47,131. What is his rent?—The rent is about 300*l.*, or 320*l.*, or something like that.

47,132. A reduction of 50*l.* on 320*l.* is about 15 per cent is it not?—There is a difficulty in getting 15 per cent in his district, I may tell you that the farm is in the district where I have said that the average fall in rents is from 5 to 10 per cent.

Infringement of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,133. Now, going to the restrictive clauses from current leases, which you give on page 33, I see you say after the first three paragraphs "duplicates from the book "of C. M. Johnstone, M.A., Advocate, showing how to "evade the Act"; does that apply to the subsequent clauses, or to the clauses in front of it, or to the whole of them?—I forget exactly at the present time which it applies to; that is the fact of the matter.

47,134. Are these clauses taken from the book, or are they taken from leases?—They were taken from leases and compared with the book.

47,135. Does the book purport to be a book to enable men to evade the Act?—It does not state that on the outside of it. It is a book on the Agricultural Holdings Act; but each section is taken up, and it is specially said that this section may be evaded by putting such and such a clause in the lease.

Parochial rates.

47,136. Then you give, on page 34 in Appendix XIII., very valuable tables as to the rate in the pound on all the parochial rates levied in the four counties to which your report relates; these parochial rates do not cover the whole of the local rates do they; what do they exclude? Do they include the county rate?—Not the county rate.

47,137. What other rate do they exclude besides the county rate?—The local rate for public health and often the rate for cemeteries and registration, but those are small things, and are all included in the column marked "Other Local Rates."

47,138. But the county rate is not a small thing, is it?—No.

47,139. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it included in "other rates"?—No, it is not included in those. The county rates are pretty near equal all over the district.

47,140. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What do they come to, do you know at all?—I think it is about 6*d.* or 7*d.*

47,141. That would make a considerable difference because here, in one parish, these rates together only come to 3½*d.* in the pound, in the lowest rated parish in Ayrshire; but would you add to that 6*d.* for the county rate?—There will be that.

47,142. Is the county rate shared between the owner and the occupier in the same way?—The same amount of money is raised from both parties.

47,143. For the county rate as well as for the parochial rates?—Yes. It is occasionally slightly different by the pound, but the same sum must be raised from the landlord as from the tenant.

47,144. Where did you get these four tables from, were they furnished by the local authorities?—I think Mr. Giffen put them out.

47,145. Have you taken them from any book of reference? Yes, they are published already; was it not Skelton who did it?

47,146. Are you referring to the Scotch Local Taxation Return?—I think so. There was a return published. This return was prepared for the Secretary for Scotland by Colin Scott-Moncrieff, and presented to the House of Commons on May 4th, 1894.

47,147. A return giving the rates in every parish in Scotland?—Yes.

47,148. These rates seem by themselves to be exceedingly low; the maximum rate I think here in any of these 130 odd parishes is 2*s.*, and you would add to that a 6*d.* county rate; that is the maximum rate, but in another one I have referred to the rate is 3½*d.* and there are several 4*d.*, 5*d.*, 6*d.*, and so on in the pound, which seem to be very low rates in the pound?—You can see how much the other rates are. The poor law and education rates are given separate, and then the whole of the other rates for registration and sanitation, which are given in many cases, are frequently a halfpenny and one-eighth of a penny.

47,149. Lower than they are in England?—I am not prepared to say how you stand.

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47,150. What is the reason why the rates for the poor law purposes vary so very much? Do you think you should have larger areas for your poor law administration than the parish?—Decidedly so. One reason for the variation is the nearness to probably a mining district, or the fact that a public work is being started. I can give one notable example. You may remember that a harbour was built by Government money at Portpatrick; that parish previous to the building of the harbour was very low rated for the poor rate, since then it has been one of the highest in the whole of the country owing to the number of births that were there during the time the harbour was being made. These people were traced back to Portpatrick always since that. Nearly every other parish which has a high rate is accounted for in something the same way.

47,151. What is the reason why you should not throw your parishes into unions as they do in England?—I see no reason why it should not be done, but as the working man moves so quickly from one district to another now, I almost think it should be made a national tax rather than even a union one.

47,152. Supposing it remains a local charge would you agree that you should throw some of these parishes together, and not have these 134 parishes in the different counties each separately maintaining their own poor?—The wider the area can be made, I think, it would be the more just for all.

47,153. So long as you can have good administration?—Yes.

47,154. But what is the size of these parishes as a rule; are they very much larger than English parishes?—I do not know what is the size of English parishes.

47,155. What would be the length of the ordinary parish; how many miles long would it be?—The parishes would run in population probably from 1,000 up to 10,000, and they may run over an area of from probably 5 square miles to 10 square miles.

47,156. Would 10 square miles be the largest?—In some of the hill districts, of course, they might be much larger, but the population there would be very small.

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47,157. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) On this question of increasing the areas, do you approve of continuing the classification whereby land and other properties are placed in certain classes for the purpose of assessment?—Yes, I should like that it should even be made more general than it is. A great many of the districts in Scotland have not adopted it, and the farmer paying, say a thousand a year in rent, pays on his full 1,000*l.* the same as if he was occupying a factory which might be rated at 1,000*l.*, whereas the income of a farmer paying 1,000*l.* rent would be very much different from that of the occupier of a factory rated at 1,000*l.*

47,158. Would you be opposed to putting all properties upon the same basis, although you are in favour of increasing the area for public health and for poor law purposes?—Most decidedly so. I would only take the rent which appeared in the valuation roll as a basis upon which the person should be assessed.

47,159. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Where you have classification, what proportion do you allow off the land?—Generally the farmer will be assessed on from 25*l.* per cent., which is the lowest, I think, up to even 97*l.* or 100*l.*

47,160. Does it give satisfaction?—It certainly gives satisfaction, more especially in the mixed districts. If you have an entirely rural district it makes no difference whether you have classification or not.

47,161. I want to be clear as to what is done; where you get a mixed district and you have the 25*l.* per cent., a farmer paying 400*l.* a year for his rent would pay the same rates as an occupier of a house paying a rent of 100*l.*?—Where we have classification, he would.

47,162. But the owner of each would pay the same?—He would pay the same.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Ninetieth Day.

Friday, 3rd May 1895.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

Viscount Cobham.
The Right Hon. Baron Rendel.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.
Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., Alan Mackinnon, Esq., } *Assistant Secretaries.*

Mr. George Frederick Baker called and examined.

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47,163. (*Chairman.*) I understand that you are a tenant farmer and a miller, holding under the Duke of Buccleuch and Mr. Deacon, in Northamptonshire?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' holding.

47,164. What is the extent of your holding?—The Barnwell Mill Farm is 327 acres, and the Oundle Lodge Farm is about 230.

47,165. Have you held that land for some time?—I have held the Barnwell Mill Farm since 1859, and the Oundle Lodge Farm only for four years next Michaelmas; I have held it from 1891.

47,166. What was your original rent?—In 1880 the Barnwell Mill Farm was 732*l.*

47,167. Has the rent been considerably reduced?—It was reduced last year to 450*l.* I wished a roller plant to be erected in the mill, and the Duke agreed to spend the requisite amount, and I then agreed to pay 50*l.* more; the rent would have been reduced to 400*l.* if he had not put that in.

47,168. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Are you speaking of a farm or of a mill?—The reason the rent was raised was on account of the outlay on the mill; the mill and the farm go together.

47,169. What is the value of the mill, and what is the value of the farm?—You must take the mill at 100*l.* a year.

47,170. (*Mr. Everett.*) What power is it driven by?—Water power.

System of cultivation.

47,171. (*Chairman.*) What is the general system of cultivation in your district; is it an arable district or a pasture district?—Both; it is mixed.

Reduction of rent.

47,172. What should you say has been the reduction per pound in the rent?—In the neighbourhood it has been from 20 per cent. to 60 per cent.

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47,173. Varying according to the condition of the soil?—Yes.

47,174. On grass land much less, I suppose, than on arable land?—Some of it.

47,175. With those reductions have the landlords been able to keep their tenants?—There were several changes before the deductions were made.

47,176. But at present, as now reduced, have the landlords been able to let their land?—At the present time some of the tenants are still wanting further reductions—even at the present time

Uncultivated land.

47,177. Has any land gone out of cultivation?—Very little in our neighbourhood.

47,178. I suppose a good deal has been laid down to grass?—In certain districts, but not so much as in some districts.

Demand for farms.

47,179. When farms become vacant can they be let or not?—Yes, they can at the present reduced rents if they are in anything like a fair condition.

47,180. Is there a fair demand for farms in the neighbourhood?—Yes, a useful farm can be let.

47,181. If the farm is vacant is there more than one applicant for it?—Of course it depends a good deal on what it is. If it is a useful farm it can be let now at the reduced rent, or rather, I should say, at a rent.

Tenants' capital.

47,182. Are there men with capital ready to take the farms?—You would hardly call them men of capital, perhaps.

47,183. But men with a sufficiency?—With sufficient capital, yes.

47,184. I suppose it requires much less capital than it used to to go into a farm in consequence of the fall in prices; is that so?—No, I do not think that there is much difference now.

47,185. Not much?—Not much.

Effect of depression on landlords.

47,186. Have the landlords in the neighbourhood suffered a good deal from the depression?—Yes, no doubt about it.

47,187. Are they mostly large owners in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

47,188. With other means, I suppose?—Most of them.

47,189. Those who have not other means have been in great difficulty, have they not?—Very much so.

Reduction of rent.

47,190. You say in your notes that tenants can easily be found for farms in a good condition—more so than a few years ago?—Yes; I mean by that before the rents were reduced.

47,191. When did the reduction begin?—They have been reduced, I should say, within the last 10 years; the reductions began 10 to 12 years ago; of course there have been several reductions.

Land in hand.

47,192. Is much land in the hands of the owners or not?—Not so much as there was three or four or five years ago.

47,193. Have they gradually let their land?—They seem more inclined to let the land.

47,194. I suppose they took the land in hand very often because they did not wish to lower the rent?—That is so.

47,195. Then they have bided their time and let the farms again?—They have tried it and they have found it does not answer even to have it in their own hands.

47,196. They found it was worse than letting at a low rent?—Yes, that has been the case.

47,197. And consequently they have been obliged to reduce the rents all round and now they can let their land?—Just so.

Position of tenants.

47,198. What is the condition of the tenant farmers?—I am afraid I cannot give a very good report of them; they have certainly been losing money for some years.

Bad seasons.

47,199. Have they suffered much from the bad seasons?—They suffered in the year before last from the dry season, but I do not know that it was any worse than the last season; I believe last season was the worst we have experienced on the whole.

47,200. You have had two very bad seasons then?—We have had two bad seasons; one was too dry and the other was too showery.

47,201. In one there was an excess of drought and in the other a deficiency of heat?—Yes.

47,202. I suppose there was good grass last year?—The grass was better, but the stock paid but very little for grazing; they paid worse almost last year than they did in 1893, as far as my experience went.

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47,203. Then the corn crops were very deficient?—Yes, the barley especially.

47,204. The year 1892 was a bad year also, was it not—that was a wet year, was it not?—We had rather more sun, I think, in 1892; it was the continual showery weather in 1894 that hurt us.

47,205. At all events the farmers in the district have suffered heavily from the seasons as well as from the low prices?—Yes, no doubt they have.

47,206–7. Then last year the rains damaged the corn and you got a very low price in consequence?—A very low price.

47,208. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you sell or do you buy mostly?—I buy as a miller and sell as a farmer.

47,209. (*Chairman.*) From the combined operation of the bad seasons and low prices the tenants have been losing money?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

47,210. How do you account for it that the land will let at the present reductions of rent if the tenants have been losing so much?—There are people willing to try. Of course they change from one farm to another and they change into another district sometimes. We have one farm in our neighbourhood let now to a tenant from Devonshire.

47,211. Have there been any tenants coming in from Cornwall and Devonshire?—This is the first we have in our neighbourhood. We have had two or three from the North Country.

Condition of the labourers.

47,212. Then with regard to the agricultural labourers, how are they off in your district?—They are well off I consider—better off than they have been for some time.

Wages.

47,213. Have wages been maintained or have they fallen?—They have been reduced by a shilling a week during the past winter.

47,214. Is that a permanent reduction?—No, it is put on again now. We had been paying 11*s.* now we are paying 12*s.*

47,215. The wages have gone up again then?—Yes.

47,216. But for the winter the wages were lowered?—Yes.

47,217. I suppose that 12*s.* a week does not indicate what they get spread over the year?—No, that is the regular wages.

47,218. Is piece-work often given?—Yes.

47,219. What is it reckoned that the labourers can earn at piece-work in the week?—They can earn from 2*s.* 9*d.* a day; it ranges from 15*s.* to 17*s.* or 18*s.* a week; it just depends how they work.

47,220. I suppose they have gained by the low prices?—Yes.

Unemployed labourers.

47,221. During the late severe weather were there more of them out of employment than usual?—There were a few more.

47,222. Was that due to the exceptional weather?—That was due to the exceptionally cold weather this winter.

47,223. Not so much to the difficulties of the farmers?—No, I do not think it was.

47,224. Do you rather fear that the labourers will suffer if things go on as they do now?—Yes, I fancy they will in a great many districts, if prices do not alter.

Pauperism.

47,225. The want of employment this last winter resulted, I suppose, in an increase in the out-door relief?—Yes. That was the first for three years. I have a statement here from the Oundle Union, showing the amount of out-door relief that has been given for the last 15 years. You will see there is a very great reduction in the amount of out-door relief in the 15 years, and not much increase in the amount of the indoor relief (*handing in statement*).

47,226. I see that the number of out-door paupers relieved has gone down from 871 in 1871 to 127 in 1894, and that the indoor pauperism has somewhat diminished also, having gone down from 90 in 1871 to 77 in 1894, although it rose to 130 in 1880, and 124 in 1881; I see, also, that the totals have been reduced from 961 in 1871, and 829 in 1872, to 230 in 1893, and 204 in 1894, showing a very considerable reduction of expenditure on

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the poor. The total expenditure upon the Poor Law appears to have gone from 7,701*l.* in 1871, and 7,875*l.* in 1872, to 3,360*l.* and 3,323*l.* in the last two years, so that there has been a considerable reduction?—Yes.

47,227. Then the average price of the 4 lb. loaf appears to gone down from 7*d.* in 1874, to 3½*d.* in 1894?—That is it; it is still lower this season.

47,228. Then I see that the rate in the £ for Poor Law expenditure has gone down from 1*s.* 5½*d.* in 1871, and 1*s.* 6*d.* in 1872, to 9*d.* in 1893, and 9½*d.* in 1894—about one-half?—Yes.

Assessment to rates.

47,229. Have the assessments of the land in the union been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent?—Yes.

47,230. Just in proportion?—Yes, they take the rent as the basis.

Rates.

47,231. What you have now told us has reference to the Poor Law rating; taking all the rates, has the rate in the £ been reduced?—No, the rate in the £ has not been reduced, because the amount of the assessment has been so much reduced. I have a statement here showing the amount required for four parishes. In 1880, in one parish, it was 319*l.*, and in 1894 it was 241*l.* In another parish it was 500*l.* in 1880, and 378*l.* in 1894.

47,232. That shows a considerable reduction?—Yes.

47,233. Now tell us the rate in the £?—I have not the rate for the poor in those parishes. The highway rate and poor rate, and the county rate are all collected together now.

47,234. Have you not got the rate in the £ for the whole of them?—The amount in 1880 was 2*s.* 4½*d.*

47,235. What was it last year?—About 1*s.* 6*d.*

47,236. Then there has been a considerable reduction in the rate in the £, namely, a reduction of 8½*d.*?—That would be without the county rate.

47,237. Apart from the county rate there has been a reduction of 8½*d* in the £?—Yes.

47,238. Therefore there has also been a considerable reduction in the assessments, and the farmers have got the benefit of that too; is not that so?—Yes.

47,239. Perhaps you can supply that information later, and let us know what has been the difference in the rate in the £ for the whole of the rates in 1880 as compared with the present time?—Yes. The poor rate is about the same; there is a difference in the highway rate and the county rate.

47,240. According to the statement you have laid before me the rate in the £ on the poor rate has been reduced one half; however, perhaps you will supply these figures later?—Yes. *The witness subsequently furnished the following figures:—*

Parishes.	Rates in £ 1880.	Rates in £ 1894.	
	s. d.	*s. d.*	
Barnwell St. Andrew -	2 4½	2 1	These are the actual rates levied in the parishes for all purposes.
Fotheringhay - -	2 1	2 3	
Nassington - - -	2 3	2 6	
Wadenhoe - - -	2 5½	2 3	

	Lady Day 1880.		Lady Day 1894.	
	Rateable Value.	Amount raised from Poor Rate.	Rateable Value.	The Call and County Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.* £	£	*s. d.* £
Barnwell St. Andrew - -	2,673	2 4½=319	2,292	1 5=241
Fotheringhay - - -	4,772	2 1 =500	2,935	1 5=378
Nassington - - -	3,884	2 3 =446	3,385	1 5=423
Wadenhoe - - -	1,453	2 5½=179	1,144	1 5=120

Foreign competition.

47,241. What do you consider to be the causes of the depression?—Foreign competition, I suppose, which affects prices.

47,242. Do you consider the cost of production is not less than it was?—Very little.

47,243. (*Mr. Channing.*) When you can purchase barley at 13*s.* and wheat at 16*s.*, the cost of feeding stuffs is less, is it not?—Yes, the cost of feeding stuffs is less, certainly; I was referring more to corn.

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Cost of productio .

47,244. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Surely the cost of production has diminished in pretty nearly every particular, has it not?—I do not think the labour is any less.

47,245. The labour is less than it was at one time, is it not?—It is less than it was in 1870.

47,246. As regards rates, taxes, and rent, you are no worse off but a great deal better off than you were, are you not?—Of course we have a reduction; it makes a difference in that way; but I am thinking of the incidental expenses on land.

47,247. You mean the actual expenses on the land?—Yes.

47,248. With regard to that, you would admit, of course, that feeding stuffs and manures are much cheaper than they were?—Feeding stuffs are a little cheaper.

Remedies for depression.

47,249. (*Chairman.*) What remedies do you suggest?—I hardly know. They will not have protection. As far as the tenants are concerned the only thing is to reduce the rents, and have some of the burdens taken off the land.

47,250. Then there are two things, the first, that the rent should be reduced, and then that the rates should be reduced?—If prices are not altered.

Reduction of rent.

47,251. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The rents, you say, have already been reduced, in some cases 60 per cent.?—Yes.

47,252. So, I suppose, any further reduction of rent upon that would be a very trifling help to you; I mean, the rent where it has been reduced 60 per cent. bears only a very small proportion to the rest of your outgoings?—That is, perhaps, an exceptional case, but where you have been paying 500*l.* a year, and then you only have to pay 300*l.*, that makes a material reduction.

47,253. (*Chairman.*) Do the farmers in your district think that the rents have not been reduced enough?—Some of them are applying for a reduction of rents this year. I know of several on a neighbouring estate.

47,254. Apart from the difficulty of the present year do they consider that the rents in the past have not been reduced enough?—Some of them do.

47,255. Is that generally the opinion, or is it only the opinion of some?—The opinion generally is now, that they want a further reduction after the two bad seasons.

47,256. But apart from the specially bad seasons, do they think that the rents were not reduced enough before?—They seem to think that they cannot pay the expenses, and cultivate the land to a profit at the present rent.

Judicial rents.

47,257. Do the farmers of your district think that there should be any tribunal for settling rents?—No, I believe most of them are perfectly satisfied with the present state of things.

47,258. They are willing to leave it to agreement?—They are willing to leave it to the agents and their landlords, generally speaking.

47,259. Has the matter been discussed at the farmers' meetings, whether there should be arbitration rents or judicial rents?—No, not that I know of—not in our neighbourhood.

47,260. As far as you know, is the general view against the proposal?—I believe it is.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,261. Have you anything to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act?—It is not popular—certainly not in our neighbourhood.

47,262. Why is that?—It does not seem to work well.

47,263. In what respect; is it costly? I only want to know your view. What do you think are the defects of the Act, and should it be remedied?—The tenants do not seem to derive the advantage under it that they expected they would do.

47,264. What do they think should be done?—That they should be paid for improvements.

47,265. What alteration do they suggest?—I suppose they would like the Act to be altered so that they can be paid.

47,266. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are you a member of the Northamptonshire Chamber of Agriculture?—No.

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47,267. You have not attended any of their meetings?—No, I have not.

47,268. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you represent any large body of agriculturalists; have you been nominated by any meeting to come here?—No, I think my name was sent up by the Duke of Buccleugh's agent.

47,269. Then you do not represent a large body of farmers in Northamptonshire—I mean officially?—No.

The season of 1894.

47,270. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I am rather surprised at your saying that last year was such a bad year with you. You are in the main a grass farmer, are you not?—Yes.

47,271. Did not grass farmers do fairly well in England generally, last year?—I believe not; in our district certainly not.

47,272. In what way?—Beasts paid very little for grazing.

Prices in 1894.

47,273. Prices got fairly satisfactory, did they not, as the year went on, especially after Christmas?—I know several that bought their beasts in the spring who did not make any more in the autumn when they had to sell them off fat.

47,274. Do they sell in the autumn?—Well, even when kept until Christmas.

47,275. Stock did very well, did it not, last year?—Yes, fairly well.

47,276. Is your land high and dry, or wet?—I have some which is a good deal subject to flood.

47,277. You had too much rain probably for that land?—It was not the great quantity of rain that we had, it was the continual showery weather. We had not too much for the grass, but there was an absence of sun.

47,278. You rely a good deal upon your stock for paying your rent, do you not?—Yes.

47,279. You were hit entirely by the bad prices in the autumn?—With me it was much worse last year than it was in the dry season. I had a much better season in the dry season than I had last year with the grazing.

47,280. Do you raise beef chiefly?—Both.

Cost of production.

47,281. With regard to the cost of production, on which I have already asked you some questions, I understand you admit that taking everything into consideration, rent, rates and taxes, cheaper machinery, cheaper manures, cheaper feeding stuffs, and so forth, the cost must have considerably decreased, though not in the same proportion, perhaps, as prices have?—It has decreased to a certain extent, there is no doubt, but nothing in proportion to the prices.

47,282. You have not calculated how much could be set against the fall in prices by the fall in the cost of production?—I am quite satisfied of one thing, that we cannot produce wheat at 3*l.* 10*s.* an acre.

47,283. Are you speaking of wheat more particularly?—Or barley; we cannot produce corn at 3*l.* 10*s* to 4*l.* an acre and make it pay, in fact not without a serious loss.

Reduction of rent.

47,284. (*Mr. Channing.*) What are the average rents for mixed farms, arable and pasture, about Oundle?—From 15*s.* to 25*s.*

47,285. Are those the present reduced rents?—Yes.

47,286. Are those rents subject to any abatements or are they practically paid as net rents now?—In certain cases a return is made.

47,287. The reductions you spoke of in the rents which have been asked for by farmers are permanent reductions, are they not, and not abatements?—Yes, but they want them to be permanent.

47,288. About what, on an average, would you say they are asking these rents to be reduced by?—In some instances 25 or 30 per cent.

47,289. In addition to the present reductions?—Yes.

47,290. I see you have read Mr. Pringle's report. Do you think that his report represents the general condition of the farmers in the county?—As far as the condition of the county goes, I think it is a very fair report.

47,291. I have not the report before me; do you think that what he says with regard to the rents not having been sufficiently reduced nor reduced in time in Northamptonshire is correct?—Yes.

Arbitration for rent.

47,292. Are you aware that he recommends that there should be an arbitration as to whether a rent is a fair rent or not?—Yes.

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47,293. Do you agree with that or not?—No, I cannot say that I do.

47,294. Do you think that that had better be left to agreement?—I think that had better be left to the landlord and the agent.

47,295. For agreement between the parties, you mean?—Yes.

Compensation for good farming.

47,296. Do you agree that the tenants should have a fuller compensation than they have now if they farm thoroughly well during their tenancy?—Yes.

47,297. And for continuous good farming?—Yes.

47,298. The custom of the country I see you mention is preferred; do you mean by that that the practice of the valuers in the Midland Valuers' Association is more satisfactory, or in what sense do you mean it?—I mean that the valuation by valuers is preferable to the Agricultural Holdings Act in a great measure.

Official arbitrators.

47,299. Do you agree in Mr. Pringle's suggestion, that there should be an official type of arbitrator or valuer to settle about compensation?—No, I do not think it is necessary.

47,300. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You live in the Oundle Union, I understand?—Yes.

47,301. Do you know all the country around there intimately—I suppose you do?—Quite well.

Depression in the Oundle Union.

47,302. We had it in evidence on the Duke of Richmind's Commission, the former Agricultural Commission, that the Union of Oundle suffered almost more than any other part of England; will you say that is the case now, or are things rather improved?—It is the case now; things cannot improve as long as prices are as they are, I think.

47,303. Do you think there is as much land on the landlords' hands now as there was, we will say, three or four years ago?—No. I have said that there is not so much, but that is owing to the rents having been reduced, and so the landlords have been able to let them. The income is very much reduced, there is no doubt.

Flour mills.

47,304. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think you are a miller as well as a farmer?—Yes.

47,305. Milling is not profitable?—I have two bad trades.

47,306. That is on account of the imported flour, is it not?—In a great measure.

Foreign flour.

47,307. Is that flour imported for mixing or for using in place of English flour?—It is generally mixed.

47,308. So that you still have some grinding to do?—Yes.

47,309. Has there not been great improvement in mills lately?—In the machinery, yes.

47,310. And the old-fashioned mills cannot compete with the modern mills with their modern machinery?—They are going out of date entirely.

47,311. Is the flour that is imported of good quality?—It varies; some is good and some very inferior. Some of the American flour is very good.

47,312. The Indian flour, is that good?—We do not get any.

47,313. No flour from India?—None at all, I think.

Price of bran.

47,314. Do not the farmers complain of the high price of bran in consequence of the imported flour; is that not a grievance?—They have certainly not had any occasion to complain of that this last year. Bran has been selling from 50*s.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* per ton, and that is very low.

47,315. So that there is nothing in that complaint that they cannot get bran now because of the imported flour?—No.

Demand for farms.

47,316. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you told us that useful farms could still be let?—Yes.

47,317. But that there were not any men with a very great abundance of capital to take them?—No.

47,318. You also spoke of the farms that had been in the hands of the landlord and given up; can they always let these farms that they have had given up?—They have let a great many of them.

47,319. But at a very great reduction of rent, I suppose?—Yes.

47,320. Do they come under the designation of useful farms when they are given up like that?—Yes.

47,321. It is pretty good land, I suppose?—Some of it.

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47,322. You have read, I understand, and you generally agree, with Mr. Hunter Pringle's report?—Generally speaking.

Scarcity of labour.

47,323. Have you read what he said with regard to the employment of labourers in Northamptonshire. He says, in paragraph 120, "throughout the cold clay "districts there is a very great scarcity of employment "and less continuous service than formerly"—that is, for agricultural labourers; would you agree with that?—There is a great scarcity of good labour, certainly.

47,324. What he means in this report is that there is not so much employment for labourers as there used to be?—There is plenty of employment.

Unemployed labourers.

47,325. Then he quotes a village to the north-west of Northampton where he says that during last summer there were 12 or 14 men earning only occasional wages; are you acquainted with that?—What village would that be?

47,326. He says: "In a village to the north-west of "Northampton it was stated that even during last "summer there were 12 or 14 men earning only "occasional wages?"—It is an exceptional case for any man to be out of employment now with us; they are, generally speaking, well employed.

47,327. I suppose the main cause of the trouble you consider to be the fall in prices?—I do.

Effect of low prices on labourers.

47,328. Are you apprehensive that if that fall continues the labourers then will be in a position of difficulty with regard to employment?—I am inclined to think so.

47,329. I observe that Mr. Hunter Pringle makes a very strong statement on that subject. At page 55, paragraph 163, of his report, he says: "It is my plain "duty (and I do not shrink from it) to advise the Com- "missioners that if prices do not at once make a very "great improvement the country may be prepared to "see thousands of acres of good corn-growing land "thrown into grass, and thousands of farm labourers "cast into poverty and idleness." Should you agree with that statement?—No, I cannot say that I should. I do not see why it should be now any more than it would be four or five years ago.

47,330. In your part of the country that would not apply?—I do not think it would.

Reduction of rent.

47,331. Now you said that the relief for the depression from which Northamptonshire has been suffering could only be looked for in the first place in an improvement in prices?—Yes.

47,332. And failing that, if no improvement in prices could be obtained, then there must be a further reduction of rent?—Yes.

47,333. I think you said the reductions had already amounted to from 20 to 60 per cent.?—Yes.

47,334. On a farm where the rent is, say, 500*l.* a year—an ordinary farm let for 500*l.* a year—what would be the sum total of annual outgoings; what would the labour bill be?—My labour bill is 350*l.* a year.

47,335. Is that an arable farm you are speaking of?—It is not entirely arable.

47,336. It is half grass and half arable?—Yes.

47,337. Now what would be the outgoings of a purely arable farm; first, what would the labour bill amount to there?—It depends so much on how it is worked. Of course, the tendency is now to employ as little labour as you can.

47,338. But, of course, the outgoings on an arable farm would be much heavier than on a grass farm?—Yes.

47,339. Can you give me any idea of what the outgoings would be on an ordinary arable farm for which you paid 500*l.* a year?—It depends so much on the acreage.

47,340. We will say ordinary land, say land that would let for 15*s.* an acre now?—I should say it would be from 700*l.* to 800*l.* a year.

47,341. The labour bill?—Yes.

47,342. Then what would the other outgoings amount to?—There are the rent, the rates, taxes, manures, and feeding stuffs.

47,343. It would come to a very large sum, would it not?—It would.

47,344. What would it come to altogether?—I cannot say without going into it; I would not be prepared to say here.

47,345. At a rough guess?—It depends on the number of stock you keep. *Mr. G. F. Baker.* 3 May 1895.

47,346. Would it come to 2,000*l.*?—I should think it would come to nearly that.

47,347. It would come probably to about 2,000*l.*?—Nearly, I should think.

47,348. Then your rent would not represent more than a fourth of the outgoings?—No, not in that case.

47,349. Supposing it had been reduced to 50 per cent., which some farms I understand have been reduced already?—Yes.

47,350. Then your rent would represent one-eighth of your outgoings?—Yes.

47,351. Now you say that in addition to the reductions which have been made already there are further demands for reductions of from 25 to 30 per cent.?—Yes.

47,352. Supposing your rent was reduced another 25 per cent. that would make your rent only one-sixteenth of your outgoings, would not that be so, because your other outgoings would remain the same?—Yes.

47,353. If you kept on reducing it, first from 500*l.* to 250*l.* and then from 250*l.* again by 25 per cent. more, the proportion which your rent represented of your whole outgoings would be steadily reduced, do you follow that?—Yes.

47,354. Then it appears to me that the relief that you can get from reduction of rents would be very small indeed, would it not?—If I am paying 500*l.* a year, and I get say 25 per cent. reduction, that is a quarter, that is 125*l.*

47,355. I am assuming that you began with 500*l.* and that you have already had a reduction of 50 per cent.?—I took it at 732*l.*

47,356. I am not speaking of your farm in particular, but of an ordinary arable farm, and I am assuming that you have had a reduction of 50 per cent. already?—On the 500*l.*? No, I did not mean that.

47,357. Do I understand that farms have been reduced 50 or 60 per cent. in your neighbourhood?—Yes, in some instances.

47,358. And that there are now even in those cases demands for further reductions of 25 per cent. more?—Where they have not been reduced to that extent there have been, and they are asking for reductions of 30 per cent.

47,359. I do not quite follow you; I thought I gathered from you that there had been reductions of 50 or 60 per cent. already in some cases?—I say there have been reductions by different landowners of from 20 to 60 per cent.

47,360. And that even in those cases in consequence of the extreme bad season last year there are now demands for further reductions upon them?—Yes.

47,361. That might very possibly bring the reductions down to 75 per cent. altogether?—Yes.

47,362. Very well; then when you say that you look to reductions of rents as the remedy in the absence of any change in prices, is it not the fact that when your rent has got so low as it has done already, any further reduction only means a fraction of your necessary expenses and gives you very little relief?—If the land will only make a certain price, if you can only get a certain price out of the land, my argument is that if it is not worth any more to occupy, the rent must be reduced.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,363. You say the Agricultural Holdings Act is not generally popular in Northamptonshire?—It is not.

47,364. What is it that is complained of?—They think that they do not get compensation for the improvements that they hoped they should do under it.

47,365. That the compensation is not sufficiently large?—That is it.

47,366. Is that the main point?—It is not an inducement to farm well.

Northamptonshire custom.

47,367. You have a custom in Northamptonshire, have you not?—Yes, as far as the cake and the artificial manures are concerned.

47,368. Are the farms in Northamptonshire, in your district, held under agreement, or under the custom, or under the Act?—Both.

47,369. Under the custom and under agreements, do you mean?—Yes.

47,370. You prefer those, as a rule, to the Act?—Yes.

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47,371. Are the custom and the agreements generally satisfactory?—I believe so.

47,372. As far as you are concerned are you fairly satisfied?—As far as I am concerned I am perfectly satisfied.

47,373. Is that one of the reasons why the Act is not used more?—I suppose it is, in a great measure.

Average rent and assessment to rates.

47,374. (*Chairman.*) What is about the average rent of land in your district at the present moment?—From 15*s.* to 25*s.* an acre, I should say.

47,375. Does it average about 1*l.* an acre?—Yes, I should think it would, just in this district.

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47,376. I see that in your union the reduction in the assessment has been very considerable; it has been reduced from 86,000*l.* a year to 59,000*l.* a year; just about 30 per cent.; should you say that represents about the average reduction of rates in your district?—Yes, I should say it would.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. L. L. Price.

Mr. Langford Lovell Price called and examined.

Mr. L. L. Price.

47,377. (*Chairman.*) You are Treasurer of Oriel College, I believe?—I am.

Effect of depression on college properties.

47,378. You have given a great deal of attention to the question of the depression of agriculture so far as it has affected the collegiate property of Oriel College, and also other property belonging to the other University Colleges?—Yes.

47,379. The result of those investigations you have embodied in a paper which you read at the Statistical Society in the course of last autumn?—It is embodied in two papers, I think I should say, one which I read in February 1892, which dealt with the accounts of a single college—my own College, Oriel College.

47,380. And the second one dealing with 19 colleges of Oxford?—Yes.

47,381. In the case of Oriel College the comparison is made for each of the last 15 years, is it not?—For the 15 years from 1876 to 1890 inclusive.

47,382. It does not go on till 1894?—No, but I have taken out the corresponding figures for 1894 which I could give to the Commission.

47,383. In the case of the 19 colleges the figures deal with the decade from 1883 to 1893, I see?—Yes.

Oriel College estates.

47,384. Can you shortly state to us the result as regards Oriel College only, of the comparsion between 1872 and 1890. I see that the acreage of the whole of the estates in 1872 was slightly in excess of the present acreage; it was 6,292 in 1872, and 6,142 in 1890?—And bringing that down to 1894 it would be 6,133.

47,385. The land in respect of which these rents were collected I see lies in several counties, Yorkshire, Lincolnshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire, Somersetshire, Northamptonshire, Wiltshire, Buckinghamshire, and Kent?—Yes.

47,386. But mainly in Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Somersetshire?—In those counties are the four large agricultural estates.

Reduction of rents.

47,387. What has been the aggregate reduction of rent?—The aggregate reduction of rent has been from 10,472*l.* in 1876 to 7,533*l.* in 1894, which represents a fall of 28 per cent. in rental.

47,388. Is that after taking into account any benefical leases that there were?—That would be without any respect to beneficial leases so far as they might be expected to lead to any increase of rental.

47,389. That may be taken as a fair estimate of the reduction at a rackrent?—Yes, but that would include other besides purely agricultural tenancies; it would include the rents of cottages, the rents of woodlands, and allotments.

47,390. But no house property, I suppose?—No house property except such as might be situated on the agricultural estates.

Expenditure on improvements.

47,391. During that time have the expenses of management increased, or has the outlay of the college upon its estates increased?—I should say that generally it had in consequence of the falling in of the beneficial leaseholds.

47,392. Has the college had to spend considerable sums upon new farm buildings, or drainage, and so forth?—Yes, I should say it had spent considerable sums.

47,393. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are the buildings in a very dilapidated state, as a rule, when long leases fall in?—Yes.

47,394. Notwithstanding the covenants?—Yes. It was very difficult to enforce the claim for dilapidations, in fact it was almost impossible to do it.

47,395. Is much actual rebuilding required?—Yes.

47,396. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that the outlay in that respect has increased during the interval, and that there are larger deductions from the gross rent?—I should say, taking the last 15 years, it certainly had increased.

Other college estates.

47,397. Now, coming to the 19 colleges, will you tell us what is the aggregate acreage belonging to them?—That is a little difficult to ascertain, because the colleges have made no return of their acreage since the Duke of Cleveland's Commission in 1871. At that time they made a return of the acreage, from which it would appear that the acreage of the corporate property, excluding the trust property, amounted to some 168,000 acres, I think, in round figures.

47,398. Are they spread about in a large number of counties in England?—I should say that they are. I did not go into the particulars in any great detail that were given before the Duke of Cleveland's Commission, because I did not know how far they corresponded with the actual figures at the present time; but going into the figures for about a third of the colleges included in the 19 I found that, roughly speaking, you might say that a fourth of the acreage was situated in the three counties of Oxfordshire, Berkshire, and Buckinghamshire, and that the rest was dispersed throughout the whole country, and that there were very few counties indeed in which there was not some property situated.

47,399. What proportion would you say was in those three counties?—I should say about a fourth.

47,400. Then a good deal of that was let on beneficial leases, which are gradually falling in?—Yes.

47,401. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Were those six colleges fairly representative of the whole 19, do you think?—I think so; there were some of the larger colleges amongst them.

Comparative rents 1883, 1893.

47,402. (*Chairman.*) Can you say what the comparative rents have been in the two periods?—The figures given in my paper before the Statistical Society do not represent the rental, because that is not published, but they represent cash receipts on account of rents. Taking the lands at a rackrent, including the University, the receipts in 1883 were 167,370*l.*, and in 1893 159,198*l.* The receipts from the lands let on beneficial lease were in 1883, 12,483*l.*, and in 1893, 2,259*l.*, making a total receipt from land in 1883 of 179,853*l.*, and in 1893 of 161,457*l.*

47,403. But those figures are rather disturbed by the fact that a good deal of land let on beneficial leases has since fallen in?—Yes.

47,404. And has been, therefore, relet at a greatly increased rental?—Yes.

47,405. Therefore it is very difficult to make in the case of these numerous colleges an accurate comparison of their actual rent?—Yes, it is.

47,406. I see the land let on beneficial lease has been reduced from 12,483*l.* to 2,259*l.*?—Yes.

47,407. None of that represents a lower rent due to agricultural depression, does it—it merely represents the land which has fallen in from beneficial leases, and the rent of which is added to the rental of the lands let at rackrent?—Quite so.

47,408. Therefore you would have to deduct at least 10,000*l.* from the 159,198*l.* the rent of the lands let at rackrent in 1893, and also to deduct a considerable amount more due to the increased rent, at which the land let on beneficial leases has been re-let?—Quite so.

47,409. Therefore it is rather difficult to make any comparison of any considerable value?—Quite so. Excluding the three colleges which represent the bulk of

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the beneficial leaseholds, the reduction in the rent appears to be about 20 per cent., and I think that one might make a rough calculation for the falling in of the leases in the case of the other colleges, which also had beneficial leaseholds, but not in so large a quantity, and put it at five per cent. I should say that the reduction might fairly be considered to be from 20 to 25 per cent.

Reduction of rents.

47,410. I do not quite understand how you arrive at that?—By taking out three colleges which had the greater amount of the beneficial leases.

47,411. Taking them out of the account?—Taking them out of the calculation.

47,412. And leaving only those where the great bulk of the land is let at rackrent?—Yes.

47,413. Then you consider the fall in rent has been what?—About 20 per cent.

47,414. That has been the fall from 1883 to 1893?—Quite so.

47,415. It does not include any reduction of rent which occurred from 1879 to 1883?—No; that, I think, it is almost impossible to ascertain.

Oriel College estates. Reduction of rents.

47,416. In the case of Oriel College, you have been able to give us that, because your figures went further than 1879?—Yes. Taking out the purely agricultural tenancies in the case of Oriel College, I find that the reduction comes to 44 or 45 per cent., which, of course, is much larger.

47,417. That is in the case of Oriel?—Yes, taking out simply the farms.

47,418. Apart from other things, namely, cottage rents, woods, and so forth?—Yes, allotments, and so on.

Tithe property.

47,419. Does Oriel College own much tithe property?—It has not got a great amount of tithe, and I should say that, on the whole, it really pays out as much tithe as it receives. The tithe amounted to about 1,870*l.* in 1883, and 1,300*l.* in 1893.

47,420. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Have you included the tithe rentcharge in your calculation of the fall in rents?—Not for all the colleges; not generally.

47,421. In the case of Oriel?—No, I have not.

47,422. You pay now and you formerly did not?—In some cases we do certainly in consequence of the new Act.

47,423. And that should be added to the fall in rents should it not?—Yes, no doubt it should.

47,424. But you have not included that, have you?—I have taken that into consideration in calculating the fall in the farming rents.

Value of house property belonging to colleges.

47,425. (*Chairman.*) I see from the table on page 23 of your paper on the 19 colleges that besides the land let at rackrent and lands let on beneficial leases, there is a very large amount of house property owned by the colleges?—Yes, there is.

47,426. The rent of which has increased from 20,978*l.* in 1883 to 33,715*l.* in 1893?—Yes.

47,427. Then there are houses let on long leases which have risen from 12,299*l.* to 21,388*l.*; then there is an item of fines and fine loans which has gone down from 11,938*l.* in 1883 to 1,858*l.* in 1893; I suppose that was on land let on beneficial leases?—And partly on houses; the two would be together there; it would be impossible to distinguish them.

47,428. Then there is the tithe rentcharge, which has fallen from 49,426*l.* to 41,858*l.*; quit rents, which have fallen from 4,603*l.* to 2,319*l.*; timber and underwood, which has fallen from 4,400*l.* to 4,083*l.*; dividends, which have gone up from 19,504*l.* in 1883 to 20,322*l.* in 1893; and various other items of receipts showing altogether a fall from 301,115*l.* in 1883 to 289,158*l.* in 1893?—Yes.

47,429. So far as the colleges have been affected by agricultural depression (and the difference between these two sums is not very considerable) the effect would have been vastly greater if it had not been, first, for the falling in of the beneficial leases, and secondly, for the fact that house property is rising in value—probably due also to the expiration of leases?—Certainly.

47,430. And that has made up, to a large extent, the loss of the colleges from the fall in agricultural rents?—Yes.

47,431. Then I see on the other side of the account that the charges for estate loans have increased considerably, namely, from 14,182*l.* in 1883 to 18,371*l.* in 1893; the rates, taxes, and insurance have slightly increased from 15,790*l.* to 16,473*l.*; the agency and management remains about stationary, namely, 8,500*l.* in 1883 and 8,866*l.* in 1893, and the repairs and improvements have increased from 26,279*l.* to 34,975*l.*; but that may have been due considerably to the falling in of beneficial leases?—Yes, I should think it was, distinctly.

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Increase in expenditure.

47,432. There are various other items making a total expenditure in 1893 of 108,983*l.*, which in 1893 had risen to 124,193*l.*, among them being an item "miscellaneous rents and rentcharges, wich has gone up from 2,452*l.* to 8,056*l.*?—I do not know what the explanation of that item is, but I think it must be partly due to the fact of the colleges paying tithe direct under the new Act.

Oxford and Cambridge College properties compared.

47,433. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think Cambridge has suffered much more than Oxford—could you tell us anything about that?—I could not state the actual facts, I have only impressions; I mean that I have heard from people at Cambridge that they think they have suffered more, and no doubt there is the case of one college in Cambridge which in its accounts of last year does not carry any sum at all to the credit of the head of the college or of the fellows.

47,434. Which college is that?—Downing College.

Tenure.

47,435. (*Chairman.*) What is the usual system of tenancy in the properties held by these colleges?—Now, undoubtedly, I should think it is a yearly tenancy under agreement.

47,436. It was for the most part let on beneficial leases?—Yes.

47,437. Not actual leases in the usual sense of the term, but beneficial leases?—Yes.

47,438. With fines on renewal?—Yes.

47,439. That system has now been practically done away with, and the land is almost universally held so far as the leases have fallen out at a rackrent?—Yes, but there would be some cases of leases.

Sporting rights.

47,440. Do the colleges usually let the land with the right of sporting, or do they let the sporting rights separately?—I should think they usually let with the right of sporting. The practice, no doubt, would vary, but I should think that was the usual way.

Demand for farms owned by corporate and private owners.

47,441. Is there a demand to become tenants of the college property?—I saw the agent of our own college before I came up before the Commission, and he told me that he invariably found if there were two farms to let equally desirable in every respect, and one was held by a corporate owner and the other was held by a private owner, that he could let the farm held by the corporate owner much more easily than he could let the farm owned by a private owner.

47,442. There is greater stability of tenure, I suppose, on the whole?—On the whole there is, and the corporate owner, of course, is non-resident, and therefore is not likely to interfere very much.

47,443. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That is rather in favour of absentee landlords. I should think the sporting rights have a good deal to do with it?—I daresay they have.

47,444. (*Chairman.*) One would suppose a college would be rather less anxious to spend money upon the land than a private owner would be?—I think that probably it is the case that they do not see repairs the moment they are needed, and that there may be delay in executing repairs, but I should think, on the other hand, that when the question of repairs does come before them they are disposed to be liberal on the whole.

47,445. I suppose that the average condition of the property is, probably, rather better than that of other property, inasmuch as the colleges inherited a good deal from the monasteries, and they have probably got some of the best land in the districts in which their property is situated, is that so?—I do not know that I could speak as to that. I can only say that the agent, who is an agent not merely for Oriel College, but for three or four other colleges, and for some of the largest colleges, told me that at present they had only one farm (which was in Cambridgeshire) unlet, and that during the last 15 years he could say that at any particular time they had not had more than about 400 acres upon their hands.

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Land in hand.

47,446. Then as a general rule you would say there is very little property in hand?—Very little.

47,447. They have been able to let their land?—Yes, I think so.

47,448. At a reduction of rent?—At a reduction.

47,449. Apparently not a very considerable reduction if we may take the case of Oriel College?—Well——

47,450. It is considerable, but it is not so great a reduction as we have heard of in other cases?—That may be so.

47,451. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose a college would be even more reluctant to take a farm into its own hands than the private owner?—I think it probably would.

Management.

47,452. (*Chairman.*) Does the bursar of the college generally look after the estates himself, or is it all done through agents?—There is an agent employed, but the bursar would go round the property every year, and of course he would receive the rents, so he would be in direct personal relations with the tenants.

47,453. Who would the negotiations about the rent be made with?—They would be made primarily no doubt with the agent.

Beneficial leases.

47,454. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Why have beneficial leaseholds been discontinued?—I think partly in consequence of the recommendation of the Royal Commission.

47,455. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are they not under Acts of Parliament?—Yes. They cannot be renewed if they are once allowed to lapse, but I think they can be continued.

47,456. (*Chairman.*) I believe the land belonging to the colleges has not been dealt with in the same way as land belonging to episcopal bodies and chapters?—No.

47,457. There, I think, a certain right in the tenant to a renewal was recognised, and these beneficial leases were not allowed to fall in?—I do not know.

47,458. Colleges seem to have been treated in a somewhat different manner, and the leases have been allowed to fall in?—That is the case with colleges.

47,459. The colleges, therefore, have got the full rackrent value of the land?—Certainly.

47,460. Whereas in the case of the Church property there was conceded to the tenants of the property a certain right of renewal, and the Church body was given the option either of purchasing or selling, I think?—Yes.

47,461. The Church body has found itself eventually with something like half the original acreage, having bought some and sold the other; therefore the colleges have been treated by the law in a very much more favourable manner?—That would appear to be so.

Future prospects of value of college properties.

47,462. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You say in your proof that the most serious element in the situation as regards the effect of this fall of price on the equipment of the colleges is the uncertainty as to the future?—Yes.

47,463. Is there much apprehension of a further fall of rents?—I think during the last few years it has been the general practice of colleges to make remissions, and certainly in the case of my own college (and I believe in the case of other colleges) we are considering whether the time has not come when those remissions should be made into reductions.

47,464. Have you not taken account of the remissions in dealing with the question of the fall of rents in these figures?—They would be taken account of.

47,465. Is there any apprehension of a greater reduction of rent (including remissions) in future more than has been?—The position is really so uncertain that it is difficult to say.

47,466. You have not made any study yourself as to what the course of rents is likely to be in the next few years judging from the data in your possession?—I do not think I could say.

47,467. Have you taken into account whether the suffering of the colleges will be again modified, as it has been in the past, by the possession of property other than land?—I should think that they have reaped the greater amount, if not the full amount, of the benefit from that other property at present.

47,468. You see no prospect of a rise in the value of the property in the future to compensate any fall in the value of land, that seems to be apprehended, judging from the last sentence in your proof?—I do not see any. The only point on which one could have any definite information at all would be with respect to house property in Oxford. I imagine that the greater part of the house property of the colleges is in Oxford, and I do not see that the tendency at present in Oxford is for the rents of houses to go up.

Mr. L. L. Price.

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Petitions for reduction of rent.

47,469. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Is it the custom of these colleges, when there are petitions from their tenants for abatements, to send a practical man down to inspect and report?—In the case of an application for a reduction of rent it would certainly be done.

47,470. You get many of these petitions, I suppose, from your tenants?—During the last few years we have made remissions. We dealt with the cases generally, considering each special tenant, but still making a general remission. I do not know that the applications for reduction have increased during the last few years.

47,471. What do you mean by the last few years?—The last three I should say.

Tenure.

47,472. Those leases that you grant are only annual leases from year to year?—Yes.

47,473. You do not grant long leases?—Not long leases; in the case of my own college, I do not think we have one long lease now.

47,474. Is that because they do not desire it?—Certainly.

Oriel College.

47,475. (*Mr. Everett.*) You are able to present to us fuller details in regard to Oriel College than in regard to the group of colleges, I see?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

47,476. You tell us that the fall of rents in regard to Oriel College is about 45 per cent.?—I should say that now.

47,477. That is a very considerable fall. In that fall, do you include the abatements?—No, I do not. In the case of Oriel College the figures simply refer to rental.

47,478. So that if the abatements granted in 1894 be added to that and become permanent the abatement of rent will probably exceed 50 per cent.?—Yes. I should say that we made abatements in 1894 amounting in the aggregate to 1,300*l.*

47,479. Is your knowledge of the figures enough to know within a little what that will add to the 45 per cent. if it becomes permanent?—I am afraid I have not worked that out.

47,480. It will add sensibly to it. I suppose you have have had many of these abatements of rents and reductions of rent owing to the fall in prices?—Undoubtedly, I should say.

Fall in prices and currency charges.

47,481. Have you formed any opinion as to the cause of this extraordinary fall in prices which has been going on now for several years past?—Perhaps I might merely say on that point that I am a member of the Bimetallic League, and that I think I am in general agreement with the evidence which was given by Professor Foxwell before this Commission.

47,482. In your view the fall in prices is largely attributable to currency changes during the last few years?—I should say so.

47,483. And to your college the fall in prices is a very great calamity?—It is, undoubtedly. It is a calamity, perhaps, especially in this way: that we are not able to carry out the recommendations which were made by the last Commission; we are not able, for instance, to carry up to its full amount the endowment of a professorship which has been charged upon us, and we have also had to apply to the Visitor (and I should think that has been the case with a great number of colleges), for the suspension of fellowships.

47,484. And the pinchings and reductions which you have put in force I suppose are equally punishing all receivers of rent and of tithe rentcharge all through the country?—I should say so.

47,485. The fall in rents if it gives temporary relief to agriculture is in itself an enormous disaster to a great many people?—Yes, I do not think that it is too strong to say that it is an enormous disaster.

47,486. Is it your view that the fall in prices will probably continue?—That is a very difficult matter to pronounce any opinion upon.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

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Ninety-first Day.

Thursday, 9th May 1895.

PRESENT:

The RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

Mr. ROBERT HUNTER PRINGLE re-called and further examined. (*For previous evidence, see Vol. I., page 246.*)

Mr. R. H. Pringle.

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9 May 1895.

Report on counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton.

47,487. (*Viscount Cobham.*) As a sub-Commissioner appointed by this Commission, you visited the counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton between May 2nd and July 19th last year, I believe?—I did.

47,488. And you have presented a report to the Commission giving the results of your inquiries in those counties?—I have.

47,489. Were you able to make a pretty exhaustive investigation into the state of farming in those three counties?—Yes; I hand in maps of those counties on which I have marked every place that I visited.

47,490. I believe you did not hold formal meetings?—I did not hold any public meetings at all.

47,491. You found that you could get information more satisfactorily without public meetings?—Yes, I think the farmers speak more freely in private than in public.

47,492. I believe you found a very severe state of depression existing over the greater part of these three counties?—In all the heavier districts particularly.

Effect of depression compared with Essex.

47,493. Would the agricultural depression there compare with that which you found in Essex; is it as pronounced and severe?—It is not very easy to make comparisons, but I should say that all the very heavy clay land district in the north of Bedfordshire, and a large portion of Huntingdonshire and a good deal of the southern strip of Northamptonshire is pretty much similar to what it is in Essex.

47,494. But it is not so marked by the total abandonment of land?—No, that is not quite so distinctly marked. There is undoubtedly a wonderful similarity, but it does not strike the eye so much.

47,495. I suppose the conclusion would be that more capital both of landlords and of tenants has been lost in Essex than in Northamptonshire, or at all events that a more complete feeling of discouragement has set in?—Yes, but I do not think it is quite so bad in Bedfordshire, although it is tending that way.

Derelict land.

47,496. I think you say that no land is absolutely derelict in this district?—No land is absolutely abandoned to any person who likes to put stock in, but there is a great deal of land which is paying a nominal rent which formerly used to pay a good rent.

47,497. Perhaps the landowners in this district are men of more means than the owners in Essex, and they have more to fall back upon?—Yes, I think that is so; in the northern part of Bedford, which is very bad, a large portion of the land used to belong to his Grace the Duke of Bedford; that estate has been sold, and I do not exactly know whom it was purchased by.

47,498. Has it been broken up into small ownerships?—Yes, it has been broken up.

Characteristics of depression.

47,499. What are the main and special characteristics of the depression in this district?—Loss of capital and absence of capital, I think; and the fact that land is not being used to its best purposes, that is for the purposes that it might be used for in better times.

47,500. As to the causes of the depression, have they any special character; has it been more due to seasons than to the fall of prices, or what?—I do not think so; I think there have been bad seasons and good seasons, but I do not think the farmers themselves, as far as I could gather, attribute the depression to the seasons. Probably the effects of the bad seasons are worse felt when prices are so bad; in fact there is no doubt about it.

Causes of depression. Low prices.

47,501. (*Mr. Channing.*) The season of 1879 threw them back very much, did it not?—1879 appears to have been a shocking year there.

47,502. The grazing land fell off, did it not?—Fluke seems to have had an extraordinary effect in the low-lying meadow land.

Shee fluke in 1879.

47,503. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The ill-effects lasted longer there than in most parts of England?—There appears to have been in Northampton and Bedford, prior to 1879, a considerable number of farmers who kept breeding ewes; the fluke of 1879 and subsequent years practically cleared them out, and they have never recovered from that.

47,504. Should you say that that land is still infected?—It is not infected by fluke; that passes away; but there is no doubt that the effects of that wet term of years, culminating in 1879, deteriorated the quality of the pasture immensely. Now with the seasons they have had in the last three or four years, it appears to have been recovering again. All the grazing farmers were agreed upon that.

47,505. But the capital that was then lost has not been replaced?—It has not come back again.

47,506. And consequently the stock has not been replaced?—That is just it.

47,507. Was that specially the case upon the strong permanent pastures of Northamptonshire?—I think you might apply that generally to all the grazing low-lying lands.

Condition of strong clay lands

47,508. How have the strong thin clays of the district fared?—Very badly. Take the strong clay land in the north of Bedfordshire, indeed all over the county, for it is very difficult to define the localities where the strong clay lies; I find strong clay all over Bedfordshire and all over Huntingdonshire, and wherever you get on that strong clay there you get the same sort of desperate condition, for it is a desperate condition, of agriculture. The farmers do not know what to do with it. Some of them are endeavouring to farm it and not successfully; others again are laying it down to grass for longer or shorter terms; they seem at their wits' end to know what to do with it.

47,509. These clays will carry grass, will they not?—I think they will.

47,510. And to that extent they are superior to the poorer clays of Essex?—Yes, I think they are superior. I say so from what I saw; I am convinced in my own opinion that these clay lands if properly treated will

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carry grass; I do not think that it will be good, but it will be grass.

47,511. Probably that will be the main explanation why the farms there have not been altogether given up?—Yes, I think, probably that is so. I saw land in Huntingdon, in a bad district too, near Somersham, which had absolutely gone down to grass, down of itself, and which is letting at 1*l.* an acre after lying from 12 to 14 years; it was letting at 1*l.* per acre per annum, and it is very stiff land.

47,512. Are the fences let down?—The fences were not good, certainly.

47,513. Just the boundary fences kept up?—Yes, and there were gaps in the minor fences filled up with hurdles and wattles, and other things.

47,514. Had the land been pretty well done in the matter of artificial foods?—No, these lands were let from year to year, and they were generally taken by Fen farmers, and I do not think there has been very much exhibition of artificial food on the land at all. It seems to have a power or an inclination to go to grass a bit.

47,515. It must be good pasture already—judging from the rental; is there a special demand for the grass?—There are undoubtedly accommodation rents. The Fens are all tillage land, all arable land, and consequently a field of grass within accessible distance, undoubtedly possesses a sort of excessive value, accommodation value.

47,516. There seems to be something rather exceptional with regard to that district?—Yes. The grass lands near the Fens, to which I am referring at present, appear to me to be rather outside the ordinary run of grass land.

47,517. Is not the soil somewhat better?—No, the soil is very stiff clay. All along the Fens, from Somersham right up to Yaxley, the upland is very stiff four-horse clay.

47,518. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it deep clay?—No, it is what they call thin-skinned clay.

47,519. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is what they call the uplands?—Yes; the uplands as contrasted with the lowlands, the Fens. It is all thin-skinned clay. To watch them ploughing, it seems well nigh impossible to bore the plough in more than 4 inches deep, and the steam-cultivator just goes stotting along the top in very dry weather.

Reduction of rents before 1879.

47,520. You express an opinion in your report that there should have been a reduction of rent before 1879?—The farmers expressed that opinion.

47,521. Do you suppose that the losses incurred by the farmers before 1879 were universal or only here and there, and due to special, and perhaps individual causes?—As far as I could gather between 1875 or 1876 and 1879 there was nothing made even on the best holdings, and undoubtedly there were severe losses on others, particularly on the land that is liable to suffer from wet weather. There was a run of wet seasons then.

47,522. But there was no falling off in the competition for farms, probably, at that time?—Land let then, but I think there appears to have been a sort of cooling down in the ardour of experienced farmers. Probably new men, anxious to get farms, were prepared to give almost the old rents for them.

Reduced cost of production.

47,523. Do you think that the farmers that you have consulted, have given full value to the fall in the cost of production?—As far as I could gather, there is rather a doubt in their minds as to whether there is any very great fall in the cost of production.

47,524. You give rather a striking instance in your report, on pages 46, 47, and 48, of a farm of 324 acres on which there has been a reduction in rent of 325*l.*, which is an immense reduction of rent?—Yes.

47,525. And a reduction of the cost of farming expenses of 270*l.* 6*s.* 0*d.*, or a total reduction of 595*l.* 6*s.* 0*d.*?—Yes.

47,526. And large though that sum is, you say there was still a difference or loss of 178*l.*, or 11*s.* per acre in 1893 as compared with 1877?—Yes. There has been an enormous reduction of rent in that case; I think one of the largest reductions of rent that I met with.

47,527. And a large reduction of working expenses too?—Yes, there has been a large reduction of working expenses, chiefly on account of the decrease in artificial manures and cakes.

47,528. Of course that applies to other farms?—Yes, quite so.

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47,529. 1893 was a very specially bad year, was it not?—I fancy the figures for 1894 would have shown it worse.

47,530. You did not visit the district late enough in 1894 to ascertain the results for that year?—No, I did not.

47,531. We have had one or two witnesses from Northamptonshire who have spoken as to that year?—I was in the district in 1894, but I could only get 1893 accounts. I left Northamptonshire on the 19th July.

47,532. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In these figures you were contrasting 1893 with 1877?—Yes.

Farm accounts 1877 and 1893 compared.

47,533. Was 1877 a good year or a bad year?—Judging from the prices there, and contrasting them with some of the other accounts I got, 1877 does not appear to have been a very good year. I think it was an average year. I do not think I would have taken 1877 into account if I had thought it was a good year.

47,534. I thought you might have got only the figures for that year; I only wanted to get at whether it was an average year, or a bad year, or a good year?—I cannot say for certain, but I think, to the best of my recollection, we selected 1877 because it was not a particularly good year. It was an extremely good witness who gave all these accounts, and I went over them very carefully and I sent them back to him again and asked him to look through them again.

47,535. (*Viscount Cobham.*) In that case can you tell us what the rent of 1877 was?—The appendix C. 10, page 126, gives the accounts, but I am sorry to say they do not go further back than 1887.

47,536. At all events the rent has fallen 1*l.* an acre?—Yes.

47,537-8. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I see you have given the rent in a note to page 49?—Yes; in 1877 it was 584*l.* 4*s.* 0*d.* and it had fallen to 259*l.* 4*s.* 0*d.* in 1893.

47,539. Do you take that as a fairly representative instance? Do you think the farm had been managed with energy and ability?—Yes: I do not think I could have selected a better specimen because the tenant was an extremely moderate man, and a very expert man, and I went all over that farm.

47,540. Had he been there since 1877 himself?—Yes.

47,541. Had there been no change of tenancy?—There had been no change of tenancy, and he was a man with capital.

47,542. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Had he made any profit in 1877?—Yes.

47,543. Did he state what his profit was?—He said he was doing fairly well in 1877; he made no concealment that he was doing fairly well then; he was not doing anything very great, but he was doing well enough.

47,544. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is a little unfortunate that 1893 was a very special year, of course, in the matter of weather?—With reference to that, the accounts for 1893 are not taken as to the yield which absolutely took place in 1893; but fair averages have been taken. I think you will observe that the returns for corn in 1893 are practically made to be the same as they were in 1877. It is only the different prices that he is applying: "In preparing this table, what were recog-"nised as fair average yields of corn crops and the "usual out-put of cattle and sheep and really well-"managed typical Northampton farm were charged "with the prices current in 1877 and 1893."

47,545. And you think that 1894 would probably have given a worse result?—Yes, I am sure of it.

47,546. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I understand that the difference between what he got in the two years was 178*l.* Then we heard that he was doing fairly well in 1877; had his profit entirely disappeared in 1893?—There was a profit of 49*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* in 1893.

47,547. (*Viscount Cobham.*) When you used the words, "a loss of 11*s.* per acre," you meant compared with 1877?—I meant a difference of that amount.

Wages.

47,548. Then you say the wages of labour have not fallen; but I suppose a good deal less is paid in labour throughout the district, as there is less labour employed?—Yes; I think there is no doubt about that. Looking through the accounts, the labour bill shows a

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slight decrease, but there has been a great deal of land put away to temporary pasture.

Reduced labour.

47,549. Do you think that on the arable land there has been a stinting of the labour employed?—I saw no general signs of anything of that kind; the land seemed to me to be on the whole well laboured. Occasionally you come on a farm where the tenant is apparently going down the hill, and there is deterioration.

47,550. I suppose the farmers can hardly afford to be as liberal as they were with their labourers?—No. On strong clay land, really so much depends upon the seasons. If the weather is dry the following the ploughing makes land look very well, no matter although there be no hand-picking of weeds or hoeing. 1893 was a splendid year for cleaning clay land.

Serious position of farmers.

47,551. You give a very melancholy description of the position of farmers during the last 14 years; I hardly think you mention a single exception to the general tale of ruin; did you come across no men that were quietly making profits?—I came across one man; and strange to say he was on very heavy land, who was not making a loss. I extracted his balance sheets from him with considerable difficulty, and they are here in the report. That was in Huntingdon. He is the only man that I really could say would admit to having made any profit.

Exception.

47,552. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are his accounts given in one of the appendices?—Yes. His balance sheets show a profit a little under 5 per cent. on capital.

47,553. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Was he a native?—He was a native; but he did a little jobbing.

47,554. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What do you mean by a little jobbing?—He bought and sold cattle.

47,555. He was a cattle dealer, in fact?—He was, in a small way.

47,556. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I understood there was a profit on this farm, given on page 49, of 49*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* as late as 1893?—Yes; this gentleman had a profit of 49*l.* 16*s.* 6*d.* in 1893, but it was not a living profit.

47,557. I am not saying that it was; but I understood you to say that no profits were made except on the other farm you mentioned?—In that I was mistaken; the gentleman, on page 49, had a very small profit in 1893, and I think he had a profit every year. His profits over seven years averaged 6 per cent. on capital.

47,558. (*Viscount Cobham.*) His farm was rather better than the average, was it not?—That man had got a very large reduction of rent. Of course I could not really say what were the causes for his apparent prosperity. He seemed to me to be a very smart man.

47,559. You would expect to find a greater reticence on the part of farmers who had been doing well than on the part of those who had been doing badly?—Yes.

47,560. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The farmer whose accounts are given on page 123 seems to have made a profit; is he the one you refer to?—No, that is another man. His books show 1½ per cent. profit, but no interest is charged on capital in his balance sheets.

47,561. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Did that man do much jobbing, do you know?—The man whose accounts are given on pages 119–122 did some jobbing; but although he did jobbing the fact remains that his jobbing does not appear in the account.

47,562. His accounts show a profit every year?—Yes.

47,563. I see his profits range from 8*l.* in 1887 to 426*l.* in 1882, and that in 1893 he was able to make a profit of 232*l.*?—Yes, that was in about the strongest district that I visited.

47,564. What was the acreage of that farm?—462 acres. The farm is marked on one of the maps I have produced. Perhaps you know the district—it is one of the strongest districts in Huntingdonshire.

47,565. I see that his rent was very low, being only 262*l.* in 1893, for the 462 acres?—Yes, he had a very small rent.

47,566. Have you any reason to believe that there are numerous exceptions to the disasters that have overtaken the farmers in this district?—I think that there are very few exceptions so far as I was able to gather; very few.

47,567. You would except the Fen district, I think?—Yes, I except the Fen district as stated. They have undoubtedly had better times in the Fens, chiefly because the Fens are so easily cultivated, and because they can grow oats and potatoes.

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The Fen district.

47,568. (*Mr. Channing.*) And you would except some of the stock-raising and dairy districts, surely?—Yes, taking the last 15 years into account; but they have had very bad times, until within the last three or four years in the grazing districts, though the losses on grazing have not been anything like so heavy as on corn growing.

Dairy and grazing districts.

47,569. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you believe that a considerable number of mere adventurers have come into the occupation of land in these counties?—Yes; I heard of them everywhere except on the grazing districts and on the Fen districts; wherever there was corn-growing land, I heard of these strangers who come and take farms, and do not appear to farm very well.

Adventurers.

47,570. Do they take advantage of the relaxation of covenants as to cropping and sale of hay and straw?—Yes, they do apparently; I heard a great deal of that.

47,571. Do you find that the better class of tenants are rather against such a relaxation?—Yes, the better class of tenants look very decidedly askance at that way of going on; they feel it intensely.

47,572. They naturally do not like that competition, which the influx of those men has caused for farms?—I think it is not so much, perhaps, the increased competition, but that they do not like to see strangers coming in and deliberately settling down to destroy a place, and then bolt as soon as it is destroyed.

47,573. So far as it has encouraged competition for farms of that sort, it is not a healthy competition?—No, I do not think it is, and I think they feel that.

47,574. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) May we have from what date these adventurers began to come?—I should say they date somewhere from 1880 to 1883. Disputes appear to have arisen about what was the rent of land then, and these men came in then and took land undoubtedly that there had been disputes about.

Freedom as to cropping and sale.

47,575. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you think that amongst farmers generally, there is an opinion in favour of maintaining some restriction as to cropping and the sale of hay?—Among the better class of farmers there is, undoubtedly, there were two or three farmers whose names were given to me—because all my witnesses were selected for me by the agricultural societies—who were of opinion that there ought to be a complete abolition of all restrictions, but the very great majority were the other way.

47,576. That is to say, they probably are in favour of the existing practice of having restrictive covenants worked in a liberal spirit?—Yes, quite so; but they think that if complete freedom were given and all restrictions abolished, the consequences might be very serious to the fertility of the soil, and that that would not be met by any really lasting and enduring advantage to the tenant.

Deteriorated cultivation

47,577. Did you find any widespread deterioration in the condition of the land?—I heard a good deal about deterioration. Of course I could not form an opinion; I saw the country under somewhat favourable circumstances after a dry year, 1893, and after a dry tract of weather in 1894. But to my own eye, certainly the medium-class soil appeared to be very well cultivated indeed; even some of the heavy land that was cultivated seemed to be in good order. On the other hand, I saw thousands of acres that were evidently very much neglected. The general opinion amongst farmers was that farming had certainly suffered from losses and want of capital and was not so well conducted as it used to be.

Farm accounts.

47,578. (*Mr. Channing.*) Referring to the table on page 31, is the profit there stated the profit over the number of years given in the third column, or is it over the same number of years for each farm?—The accounts on C. I. extends over eleven years, and the profit that has been made in various years during those eleven years amounts to 1,348*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* The loss that has been incurred during that period amounts to 2,082*l.* 18*s.* 4*d.* You will see that the profits and the losses for each of the term of years have been taken out and put in different columns.

47,579. You give for each of the farms in the table variable periods of years?—Yes.

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47,580. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Ranging from 4 to 13?—Yes.

47,581. Are those 11 farms all on one estate?—No, these are all through the three counties.

47,582. In the gross the table show a profit on the 11 farms of 14,000*l.* and a loss of 10,000*l.*?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

47,583. There is fair demand for good farms in this district you say in your report?—Yes, there is a fair demand for good farms on medium class land and not too big.

47,584. Is there a great difficulty in letting poor farms?—It almost amounts to an impossibility in several cases.

47,585. Would you say that large farms even of good quality are difficult to let?—Undoubtedly, when you get over a certain size I should think the difficulty in finding a tenant increases.

Cause of farmers' losses.

47,586. Do you consider that the losses have been considerably accentuated by the rashness of the farmers themselves?—I think so, I think they have gone on growing too much corn when it has not been profitable, and I think that a great many of these men have taken land without ever having sufficient capital to do it with.

47,587. Is that because they shrink from realizing as a loss and go on adding to their stock in the hopes of better prices?—It is partly because corn-farming can be carried on with very little capital. I gather from what was said to me, that a good many of the men undoubtedly went in thinking that corn would get up again and went in with too little capital; but corn did not get up again and they are rather sorry for themselves now.

47,588. Have not the stock farmers also been adding to their holdings in many instances?—Yes, some of them have.

Lord Spencer's co-operative farm.

47,589. Did you go over that co-operative farm of Lord Spencer's?—I went over a part of it.

47,590. Do you consider that the farm itself is well adapted for that description of enterprise?—It was a nice farm, a desirable farm, I cannot exactly say what nature of farm is desired to succeed under co-operative principles; but it was a nice farm, nice land, useful land and convenient to the station; there was nothing unfavourable to it in these respects.

47,591. It was started with ample capital by Lord Spencer himself—about 10*l.* an acre, I think you say?—I think that was the amount.

47,592. But it was in poor condition?—Yes.

47,593. Did the labourers get it into good condition at any time?—Yes; I have been informed by Canon Bury who had a good deal to do with it, that they improved the condition of the farm immensely; the first year the improvement was visible.

47,594. But the net result has been disastrous?—It has.

47,595. Did you get at the opinion of the men themselves with regard to it?—No, I did not.

47,596. Are you able to form an opinion what really were the causes of failure; were there independent causes of failure apart from the fall of prices and so forth?—I saw both Canon Bury and Mr. Morley, Lord Spencer's agent, and they were both of the same opinion, that it was bad prices that had caused the failure of the enterprise.

47,597. And not friction in working, or the employment of inefficient supervision?—There was a certain amount of friction in working, and I think one of the managers was not a very efficient person; but neither Canon Bury nor Mr. Morley attributed the failure to these causes.

47,598–9. Would you say that the farm did fully as badly as an ordinary farm held under a tenancy?—I think it did fully as badly or worse. It was in very nice condition; the turnip land was very clean and the crops nicely done.

47,600. I see the annual loss averaged 259*l.* 16*s.* 9*d.*?—Yes, I got the last published balance sheets for that co-operative farm, namely up to 1893.

47,601. Upon whom did the loss fall, upon the landlord?—The loss appears to have fallen upon the bank so far, because the bank's over-draft is getting bigger and bigger.

47,602. I suppose the amounts were guaranteed by somebody?—I should think so.

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Immigrant farmers.

47,603. You believe the immigrant farmers failed as a rule, have there been many of them?—There are not very many of them there. I heard of six or seven and I saw three Scotchmen, and two or three Devonshire men. I would not like to say they have done any better than the others. I think, perhaps, they have done as well; it may be a wee bit better.

47,604. But there were hardly enough of them to enable you to form a judgment?—No, and as to those I saw, I went over two farms and they were farmed really on the Bedford system.

Fall in prices and "protection."

47,605. Now we come to the subjects of complaints and remedies suggested; you found a strong feeling in favour of protection, I see?—Yes, a very strong feeling.

47,606. And a universal opinion that the fall of prices was the main cause of the depression?—Yes.

Relation between landlords and tenants.

47,607. In addition to that you report that there was a strong feeling that the business relations between landlord and tenant, might be put upon a more satisfactory footing?—Yes, I heard a great deal on that subject, too.

47,608. Would you tell us what the nature of the evidence was that you have collected on that point—I mean what body of evidence you have collected?—I should think almost one out of every two tenant farmers that I saw, spoke on this subject. I think my note books show that.

Insecurity of tenure.

47,609. And expressed an opinion that under the present conditions there is an insecurity which should not exist?—Yes, that there was something not right.

47,610. How has this evidence been collected?—Altogether privately.

47,611. And through organisations?—I never held a public meeting. I got from the committees of the three agricultural societies the names of witnesses; these I visited on their own farms, I went over their land with them and spent generally half a day with each of them; that is the way I collected all my evidence.

47,612. Are you referring to the county agricultural associations?—Yes.

47,613. Not farmers' clubs?—The Bedford Agricultural Society, the Huntingdon Agricultural Society, and the Northampton Agricultural Society and Chamber of Agriculture selected all my witnesses for me.

47,614. Did they include landlords as well as tenants?—Yes. This, for instance, is a list of witnesses for Northampton (*handing in a printed list*). That was prepared for me by the joint committees.

47,615. (*Mr. Channing.*) There was a list sent here, dividing the four divisions into groups of witnesses, was that prepared by the Chamber of Agriculture or by the joint committee of the Agricultural Society and the Chamber of Agriculture?—By the joint committee; they combined for the purpose.

47,616. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You say these views were held by fully half the witnesses that you examined?—Yes, half the witnesses that I examined on this particular subject. In some cases my examination did not extend to this question.

47,617. What were their opinions as to the insecurity of tenure?—I tried to put them down in black and white. Their opinions were, I think, that the great majority of tenants are on an extremely pleasant and friendly footing with their landlords, but they have the feeling that providing the landlord were to die the tenant has no security whatsoever, and that he may be turned out if the landlord likes if any difference arises about rent or anything of that kind.

47,618. Have the heavy incumbrances on many estates intensified the insecurity?—Yes. On some of the larger estates, the better estates, I did not hear one single expression of unfriendliness at all—much to the contrary; but undoubtedly there appeared to be certain encumbered estates where the agent does not appear to have as free a hand as he otherwise would.

47,619. Did they maintain that agriculture has been much affected by the sense of insecurity and that men have farmed worse than they otherwise would have done?—No, they did not; it just was an element in their position.

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47,620. Bearing more upon the future than upon the past?—Yes, I think so in most minds. Looking to the future they are afraid that if things mend a little bit people might come in behind them and bid bigger rents than they are prepared to give, and under those circumstances they feel that their position would not be secure.

47,621. Do you think that this feeling originated with the bad times?—I am sure of it and I am sure that if the good times were to come again it would disappear again.

47,622. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Then all this feeling really is entirely due, you think, to the depression and the trouble they have gone through?—I think I state that that is so in this report.

47,623. It did not exist at all when times were prosperous before?—I am quite sure it did not.

47,624. They were then quite satisfied as to their security?—Yes, I think so. Might I refer you to paragraph 179. I say there:—"I have not the least "doubt that, save for the presence of this very agri-"cultural depression, the feeling of security and safety "under a yearly agreement for the sitting tenant "would never have been submitted to me as a doubtful "matter."

Illustrations of insecurity of tenure.

47,625. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Did you hear of many cases illustrating this insecurity of tenure?—Yes, I did, of a great many cases; in fact I would not take evidence of that character from any person unless he was able to substantiate it. Estates would be picked out for me, and cases would be given of where a good old tenant had to leave because he did not offer a sufficiently large rent, and the farm would be taken in hand for a year or two, and finally it would be let to some other person for a far lower rent. A great many cases were mentioned to me, and the farms were pointed out to me. I saw farms myself that had gone through this.

47,626. (*Mr. Channing.*) By "offering a sufficiently "high rent," do you mean to say asking for a reduction in the first instance?—Yes. Asking for a reduction, and asking for too large a reduction.

47,627. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Were there many instances of estates coming into the hands of trustees or mortgagees, and of being rack-rented in consequence?—I heard of several. These very estates which came into the hands of lawyers appear to me, from what I heard, to hold out extremely stiff in the beginning and to collapse more rapidly than any estates in the end. That is to say they are not so easily dealt with in the case of the sitting tenant, but then when the sitting tenant is got rid of, enormous reductions are made to new men far more so than on estates in the hands of country gentlemen.

47,628. That is very often a mere matter of miscalculation, is it not?—I am sure it is miscalculation from beginning to end. I do not think the tenants would wish me to understand that it was venom or spleen; it was misjudgment and difference of opinion.

47,629. In regard to these schemes which you have put before us, do you consider that they fairly embody what I may call the floating opinion of the body of farmers?—Yes, of those who discussed the subject with me. I have no hesitation in saying that 75 per cent. of the tenants who have mentioned that matter to me would adhere to some system of arbitration. My note-book is full of evidence of that; and I do not think the landlords would object so far as I questioned them.

Scheme of arbitration.

47,630. Then you refer to a system of arbitration. What would the duties of the arbitrator be? I do not think you have quite explained that. In paragraph 188 you say: "The propriety of arbitration has been ad-"mitted by some landlords"; and then you go into the question of who the arbitrator should be, but I do not think you say what his duties should be. Did you mention arbitration in connexion with these schemes that you go on to detail?—No. The system of arbitration suggested in paragraph 189 was not thought of until I had collected all my evidence and put it together. I submitted no scheme to any witnesses, nor did they submit one to me. The quotation you have made merely refers to the feeling that exists in certain quarters as to the advantages likely to accrue from arbitration.

47,631. Then you mean arbitration to carry out some such schemes as those that you have formulated?—Yes, where differences of opinion upon any point whatsoever arise between landlord and tenant. At present the tenants feel, and I do not think the landlords would deny, that there is no way of conciliation. I think I tried to explain that in this report. They feel that it would be well if there was some system by which these differences between two men who are well disposed towards one another, should be settled.

47,632. Of course the differences must be very clearly defined. You cannot give an arbitrator a roving commission to investigate all cases of dispute between a landlord and his tenant?—No; he would need to know what he was going to settle first.

47,633. Do you believe that farmers in this district would generally accept some such scheme as that you have set forth here?—I can only answer for those whose opinions I heard on this subject. With regard to them I am of opinion that some such scheme would meet with their approval. The leading features of that scheme I believe to be in accordance with their views so far as I have heard them.

47,634. And an arbitrator should settle all points of dispute under that scheme?—Yes. There should be some system of arbitration for settling all points of dispute whatever these points may be. Of course disputes invariably pertain to something connected with the value of the land, or the occupation of the holding.

47,635. These schemes, I presume, have been formulated by yourself as fairly embodying the opinions of the persons you met?—The principle of arbitration was in the minds of those men before I went near them at all, and they had also opinions upon what this arbitrator ought to deal with, and the qualifications that were necessary, and the various branches of duty that he would have to fulfil. These, as they came before me one by one, were all noted down in my books, and I tried to condense the thing and produce it to you in this form.

Fixing of rent according to revenue.

47,636. In relation to the rent you found that a leading principle in their minds was that the net revenue should be known before rent becomes payable?—The men who mentioned this question of the determination of the rent were chiefly those who kept books.

47,637. That is a very small proportion to allow; I think, you say 10 per cent., somewhere?—A good many more of them keep books, but they do not all keep their books in such a condition that I could accept their accounts. I should think there were about 15 per cent. or 16 per cent. of them that do. A great many of the other men knew perfectly well where the rent was coming from.

47,638. But the leading principle in their minds was that the net revenue should be known before any division of profits should be made?—The leading principle in their minds was that there was something very awkward in the paying of their rent year after year out of capital, and their getting worse and worse; and the question arose whether the principal of the thing was right, or whether it was not. I then submitted to them could they conceive of any other way, and the matter was very thoroughly discussed, and very carefully discussed, and their opinion seemed to be that if any other system could be discovered, it would be better and fairer.

47,639. Your first suggestion is that a tenant should be entitled to a fixed per-centage on his capital before anything accrues to the landlord?—That was one light in which it was discussed.

47,640. That is to say, take a farm of 300 acres, on which the capital is 3000*l.*; at the end of the year the books show an excess of receipts over expenses amounting to 420*l.*, and that has to be divided in this way:—10 per cent. on 3,000*l.* (300*l.*), and rent 120*l.*?—Yes.

47,641. Why did you not deduct from that 300*l.* as in the other cases, the rent of house and keep of horse and such things?—Immediately underneath the figures you refer to I add, "Under this system the tenant "would be charged with a fixed annual rent for his "house, garden, keep of horse, and such things, but "all taxes and rates would be paid by the landlord." This applies to each of the three specimen cases included in paragraph 192.

47,642. You take three years—one a moderate year, one a very good year, and one a very bad year; and in the very good year it seems to me that a tenant would get less than in the moderate year; how do you explain that?—Less?

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47,643. The tenant's claim to 10 per cent. in a good year comes to 300*l.*; but the rent of house, keep of horse, and such things are deducted, so that his share is only 220*l.*, but in the first instance, where only 420*l.* profit is made, the tenant seems to get 300*l.*?—The explanation is simply that, although I stated that under the system the tenant would be charged with a fixed annual rental for his house and gardens, I have not deducted them in the first year.

47,644. Even if you had, there is this result, that the tenant does not get any more in a good year than he does in a moderate year?—No, he simply gets 10 per cent. on his capital.

47,645. He has just invested his capital at a fixed return?—Yes, I think that is the reason why I did not show the deduction of 80*l.* in the first instance.

47,646. You do in the very bad year, you see?—Yes.

47,647. And in the very good year?—Yes.

47,648. There seems to be no encouragement to a tenant to do more than get his fixed return?—No.

47,649. So long as he gets his fixed return he would be satisfied then?—In my report I say, "The above "would be merely a case of a landlord farming his own "land through the medium of a tenant's capital and "management, and it would be open to at least one "objection."

47,650. He would be farming through a bailiff, and that bailiff would be finding the capital?—That is exactly, I think, what I say. "Looked at from the "landlord's side, this arrangement would be infinitely "preferable to having land in hand and managed by a "paid bailiff with nothing to lose and everything to "gain."

47,651. Would there not be very great insecurity under this scheme in a bad year?—Take a landlord who has nothing but his rents to live upon, he would be totally unable to make up the loss upon his farms?—Yes, but if he was farming the land himself upon his own capital, his position would be no better.

47,652. But he would be the only loser in that case, in the case you suggest the tenants would participate in the losses of a bad year, because they would not get their 10 per cent. in a bad year. Supposing the landowner has nothing but his rents, obviously he could not make up in a bad year the deficit upon his farms?—That is quite true, but if the capital was his own on this farm, his position would be rather worse, because not only would he get no rent, but the capital would be wasting away.

47,653. I am speaking of it from the tenant's point of view?—The tenant would be getting 10 per cent. on his capital, good year or bad year.

47,654. If he can get it?—If he could get it.

47,655. The system would involve very complete book-keeping, would it not?—It would.

47,656. Do you find one man regard profits as one thing and another man as another?—It would require a system of auditing by the land agent or a regularly qualified auditor.

47,657. There would have, in fact, to be a uniform system of accounts, would there not?—Yes, there would, examined every week or every month.

47,658. You do not intend to commit the farmers of this district to the details of this or of any other scheme, do you?—By no means; certainly not; and particularly not with reference to this paragraph 192. I think, with reference to the scheme mentioned in paragraph 193, some tenants undoubtedly are of opinion that that might be workable and might succeed very well; but as to paragraph 192, that scheme was simply discussed because there were so many landlords farming their own land, and it was wondered whether that scheme might not be rather better for the landlords than farming their own land with their own capital.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,659. There seems to be a strong feeling against the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, very much so.

47,660. Is it much used?—Very little used.

47,661. It is simply neglected?—Yes.

Valuers.

47,662. You say that one of the drawbacks to it is the class of valuer that is employed under it?—Yes, that was very frequently mentioned to me:

47,663. By whom, the farmers or the landowners?—Both.

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47,664. Do the farmers complain of the landowners' valuers?—Yes. Both landlords and tenants were of opinion upon that point that the administration of the Act by the system of valuers now existing was not what it ought to be.

47,665. (*Chairman.*) Do you mean by that that the process was an expensive one, or that they had failed to carry out the intentions of the Act as regards compensation?—Both that the process was expensive, and that the results were not sufficiently clear to be satisfactory.

47,666. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Many of the valuers are, in fact, men whose decisions do not carry weight?—Many of the valuers were men who had not succeeded in farming, and who had simply taken it up as another resource.

Custom as between outgoing and incoming tenants.

47,667. (*Chairman.*) As as matter of fact, are those questions generally settled as between the incoming and the outgoing tenant, or as between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—Between the outgoing tenant and the landlord chiefly.

47,668. Is that the usual course?—Yes, I think so.

47,669. Not between the incoming and the outgoing tenant?—No, I think not.

47,670. That is a very important point?—Yes.

47,671. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you mean to say that there is nothing passed between the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant on a farm, for instance, that is vacant, we will say in Northamptonshire—is there no such thing as a tenant-right passed between the two?—Yes; but I thought that was met in the matter of compensation.

47,672. It is all included in that?—Almost all those estates have customs and covenants.

47,673. Is there nothing passes between the outgoing and the incoming tenant under the custom?—Yes, but where there is compensation for unexhausted manures or unexhausted improvements under the Act, I think that the landlord settles up with the outgoing tenant, and the incoming tenant settles with the landlord.

47,674. You think so, but are you prepared to state that as the fact?—No, I am not.

47,675. (*Chairman.*) Did you make inquiry upon that point, because it is a matter of extreme importance as to what the custom is; you have not inquired as to how far these arrangements are made between the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant, rather than between the outgoing tenant and the landlord as contemplated by the Act?—I think I have got a little evidence here on the point. I still think that the question of any disputed claim for manures or feeding things, is arranged between the landlord and the outgoing tenant, but on a matter of covenant in which there is no dispute, where it is simply a matter of valuation the claim is paid by the incoming tenant.

47,676. Surely if there is no dispute at law on the subject the settlement must almost necessarily be between the incoming and the outgoing tenant. Is that not so; there is not a double arrangement, one between the incoming and the outgoing tenant, and the other between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—I think that there can be no doubt from the evidence that something passes between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant, because I see that one witness thinks the landlord should pay the claim of the outgoing tenant, not that the incoming tenant should pay for the improvements, which would imply that it is the custom that the incoming tenant should do it; but on the other hand, of course, when there is not an incoming tenant the landlord has to do it.

47,677. When a legal question arises it must be a matter of dispute between the landlord and the tenant?—Yes. I should imagine in the event of any dispute, so long as things move smoothly, there is no difficulty, and it is quite right that the incoming tenant should settle with the outgoing tenant, but if any dispute arises the landlord would at once be the contracting party.

47,678. Quite so; if a dispute arises which necessitates going to law, so to speak, then it must be between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,679. (*Viscount Cobham.*) As to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, you report that the farmers of the district are very much in favour of the scheme proposed by the Central Chamber of Agriculture?—The scheduling system is universally accepted by both landlord and tenant.

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47,680–1. They are in favour of an arbitrator being appointed by some public authority, such as the Board of Agriculture and of the scheduling of farms on entry and on quitting?—Yes, exactly so; and that these schedules should form the basis for an award. So that the whole system should be very much simplified and made cheaper.

47,682. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You have just said that there is a very strong feeling as regards the Agricultural Holdings Act to the effect that it is of no use, and worse than useless almost, and you have also said that there are extremely few cases where it has come into operation; how would these gentlemen who gave you this evidence judge about it; were any instances given you where it had been put into operation and failed?—Yes, I have heard of numerous instances. I think it was the failure of the Act to do what was expected of it in these cases that, perhaps, explained the dissatisfaction that it caused, and the want of confidence in it.

Valuers.

47,683. Then you also think that all through Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire there was a very low value put upon the valuers, and that any one could be a valuer?—Yes.

47,684. I understand that what you gathered from those you consulted is, that any arbitrator in the future must be a servant of the State, employed and paid by and accountable to the Government, in the interests of justice and equity; now what sort of person are you going to find qualified for that if you cannot take the valuers in the country?—I think that such men could be found.

47,685. I want to get the impression of the farmers?—The same class of man that would please the farmers would please the landlords, and the same class of man that would please the landlords would please the farmers—an upright man of experience who is calculated to give a right and proper decision between man and man—without showing favour to either party.

47,686. This low estimate put upon the valuers is, I think, very contrary to any evidence we have had from elsewhere. We have had a good deal of evidence that valuers should be to a certain extent local men, so that they might know the country, the surroundings of the farm and all that. This is a very strong expression of opinion, and I want to know who had given it you?—I think I state in this report that the valuers should be local men.

47,687. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you say, that they must be thoroughly familiar with the value of the land and the custom of the farming in the district?—That is what I mean by being local men.

47,688. All I want to get at is, whether the suggestion as regards valuers being so under the mark as to their work was a general impression, or whether it was the impression of a few?—It is the general impression.

47,689. Throughout those three counties?—Yes. They are not satisfied with the present system, and there are very great objections made to the class of valuers, and the general opinion is, that the class of man that should be appointed, and that would give satisfaction is the person that I have endeavoured to describe. I do not see it put in the report, but at the same time, if I have not stated it, I certainly should have done so, because it was the one point of all others that this person, whoever he is, should undoubtedly have knowledge of the value of land in the district.

47,690. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You say in paragraph 199, which I had not read before, "Let one arbitrator "be appointed for each county or district by the Board "of Agriculture," which points to the men belonging to the county or district?—Yes. Would you please also refer to paragraph 189, where I say that this district arbitrator "must be a person thoroughly familiar "with the value of land and customs of farming in the "district to which he is appointed."

Land courts.

47,691. But you do not ever mention in actual words that he must be a local man. Was there any expression of a wish that there should be a land court?—There was a very decided wish that there should not be a land court.

47,692. The work should be done through this board of assessors, or this representative appointed by the Board of Agriculture?—That was the general feeling.

47,693. (*Chairman.*) Was the wish that there should not be a land court general throughout the district you visited?—Yes, the idea of a court does not meet with their favour at all.

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47,694. You mean for the decision of rents?—Yes, I think they do not like the idea of a land court.

47,695. To determine rents?—To settle any matter of dispute.

47,696. Including rents?—Including rents.

47,697. (*Mr. Channing.*) But as I understand you, the arbitration by this official is according to these people to include the question of rent, is it not?—Yes, any matter in dispute.

Tenure.

47,698. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You told us that there is a very strong feeling as to the insecurity of tenure; did you learn that in the past or at the present time there were tenancies taken under leases?—There were hardly any leases—I think I only discovered one or two.

47,699. Existing?—Existing.

Milk trade.

47,700. Did they exist before the bad times?—I do not think leases were ever common in any of thes counties.

47,701. You heard no wish expressed for leases?—No, none.

47,702. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) You say in paragraph 249, "Four classes of farmers have weathered the storm in "so far that an outward appearance of prosperity is "kept up," and you go on to say that one of those four classes is "those who occupy land near towns, and "take advantage of their position by selling milk, "potatoes, vegetables, hay, and straw;" have milk dealers done well?—The farmers themselves told me that there was no doubt that the milk business had done almost better than anything else, but they complained of the fall in the price of milk lately.

47,703. Would that be generally throughout the counties, or only near a town where there were special advantages for railway traffic?—Generally throughout the county. I certainly was told that all through the county. I visited dairy farms four and five miles from a railway station, and there the farmers stated without any hesitation, that dairying was the best business they had.

47,704. That is not likely to increase on account of the low price which is now ruling, I think you said?—Yes, but on the other hand, if land goes out of arable cultivation, and more to grass, there is a sort of natural tendency to keep more cows.

47,705. Is there room for more milk business throughout the counties?—There may be room for the milk business, but the more you increase the milk business, the more you will bring down the price of milk.

Market gardening.

47,706. Would those remarks apply to vegetables equally?—In Bedford, Northampton, and Huntingdon, the area of land suitable for vegetable cultivation is very limited. There are a good many instances where I found that vegetables had been tried upon strong land and had not succeeded.

47,707. Is not the market gardening done by small men generally, and not by farmers?—It is almost entirely done by small men in the Biggleswade district.

47,708. Who would be near towns?—Yes.

47,709. Is that likely to increase, do you think?—No; I think almost the whole of the area of available soil for that sort of market-garden farming is taken up.

47,710. Did you find that the farmers were growing vegetables at all, such as potatoes, greens and cabbages?—All round Sandy Potton and Biggleswade there is a very large industry. On the sandy land the farmers grow potatoes and greens between them, but I do not think it is capable of further extension, because the class of land suitable for it is limited.

47,711. Limited by question of soil?—Yes; you have strong clay lying cheek by jowl with light sand.

47,712. That would not apply to potatoes I take it?—I would not like to attempt potato culture upon very strong clay-land; it has been tried there, and it has not succeeded; I do not think it has succeeded anywhere.

Fruit growing.

47,713. I think you say that fruit-growing is not at all adopted in the counties?—No, it is not, except near Somersham.

47,714. It has not been profitable?—Except in the Somersham district, and there it seems to be rather overdone.

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"Protection."

47,715. It is not extending then?—It is not.

47,716. What form of protection do you say that the farmers ask for—you said it was general?—I should answer to that—the biggest you can give them.

47,717. Duties upon corn and so on?—Yes; but certainly some of the farmers confine themselves, as I thiuk I stated in the report, to protection upon the manufactured article.

47,718. But others went in for the whole thing?—Yes, wholesale, the majority of them.

Effect of rise in prices.

47,719. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Towards the close of your report, in paragraph 252, page 86, you state "If I dare "offer an opinion from what I saw and heard, I would "say that unless some way of raising prices can be "discovered, the tenant farmer of our corn-growing "counties, can only be preserved at the expense of the "landlord, the labourer, and the nation at large"; would a rise of prices necessarily preserve the tenant farmer any better than he is now?—I think it would.

47,720. Is he not an intermediary altogether?—No, I do not think he is an intermediary—I think he is a grower.

47,721. It is a question between him and the landlord as to what the rent is?—Yes.

47,722. And between him and the labourer as to what wages he pays?—Yes.

47,723. And he does not need to go on unless he finds that he can make a profit?—He might wind up, certainly.

47,724. And if prices were to rise, competition might come in and make the particular tenant farmer no better off than he was before?—Yes, but it is almost impossible to imagine that the prices even of labour and of rent would rise to such an enormous extent as to do away with an increase, because supposing there was a rise of 5*s*. a quarter of wheat, as every acre produces 4 quarters, that would be 20*s*. on the acre.

47,725. That brings me to the next question that I was going to put; supposing a rise of prices took place in corn produce coincident with a proportionate rise of prices in everything else including wages, would that be of any benefit to the tenant farmer or help him to preserve his existence in the slightest degree?—Of course not. If the cost of production from these various things, rent, labour, and all these things were to rise in equal proportion to the price of stuff a tenant farmer would not benefit at all.

47,726. So that any general cause of the rise of prices which would affect everything equally would not be of any benefit to the tenant farmer for this purpose?—Presuming that it affected everything equally, and to the same extent it would not be.

47,727. What you mean then by a rise in price is, a rise of price in this particular article or group of articles, and not a rise in anything else at the same time?—No.

47,728. That is the condition?—Not quite that, but the rise in price of the produce must be sufficient to allow a margin after allowing also a fair increase other things.

47,729. It must be more in that than in the other things?—By all means or else the position would be as it was.

Duty on foreign flour.

47,730. (*Mr. Clay.*) I see your report gives opinions with regard to the abolition of the malt tax and regarding the duty on foreign barley?—Yes, those are exact quotations with reference to the malt tax from reports that I had sent in to me.

47,731. Have you had any question raised—I do not say that it is in accordance with Free Trade, which I believe in—about charging a duty upon imported manufactured flour?—Yes, I heard a good deal about that.

47,732. What was the general opinion of the farmers you met on that point?—A great many of the farmers think that manufactured flour should be subjected to a duty or a tax, and that that would encourage the growing of wheat, and lead to the opening up again of mills which are standing idle, and would thus give employment to the millers.

47,733. Has the quantity of flour that is being manufactured in foreign parts deprived the farmers of the very valuable article of bran and other raw materials?—Yes; there is no doubt that the farmers feel that the price of offals is excessive at present. They also think that if flour were manufactured in this country they would get offals at from 1*l*. to 30*s*. a ton cheaper.

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47,734. In your opinion, do you not think it is a little infringement upon principles of Free Trade?—I think probably it is—I would say decidedly it is.

47,735. But the feeling of the farmers is that they would like to have some increase of duty put upon the manufactured article?—Yes, the feeling of the farmers is that their trade is not a thriving one just now, and that they would like to see it made better by hook or by crook.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,736. Regarding the Agricultural Holdings Act, you have it now in your own mind, and you think in the tenant farmer's mind, that the outgoing tenant and the landlord are the only two contracting parties?—Mr. Chaplin corrected me in that, and I looked my notes up.

47,737. What is your own opinion?—My own opinion is that the landlord and the outgoing tenant are the two contracting parties, and that the incoming tenant if he takes over and pays to the outgoing tenant, does it simply as an arrangement of convenience.

47,738. I know you are acquainted with the custom of Scotland; there, if the landlord has to take a way-going crop, as he generally has, from an outgoing tenant, he has no right to devolve that way-going crop upon the incoming tenant?—I think the landlord should be the responsible party.

47,739. He is the most substantial party, is he not, to meet the engagement?—That depends upon his banking account.

Demand for farms.

47,740. You talk about farmers being much handicapped by fresh men coming in to take the business off their hands, and we had evidence given by one of the sub-commissioners, Mr. Speir, from the South of Scotland, that there were 175 farms let lately, and only 90 tenant farmers took them, so 85 men outside came in; that was a hard business, was it not?—Yes.

47,741. Did you find anything of that kind in your report?—I found that there was a fair demand for useful land in good condition if the farm was not too large, but that for heavy land farms, where the buildings were in bad condition, where the land was wet, it was very difficult to find tenants.

47,742. Were practical men taking them or were they taken by outsiders?—A great many were outsiders. The land agents themselves told me that very largely. I am thinking just now of the evidence of Mr. Trethewy, Lord Cowper's agent. He distinctly told me that in the heavy land which he had to manage, it was almost impossible to get tenants for farms there, and that you had to knuckle under to them in ways which were perfectly new to the land agent business.

47,743–4. (*Chairman.*) What district was that in?—The district to which Mr. Trethewy was referring was the Harrold district; that is all strong land.

47,745. Should you say that those remarks applied generally to the very heavy land?—Yes, they do.

47,746. It is difficult to get a tenant?—Yes, very difficult, all the land agents told me that.

47,747. But not, I suppose, for the good turnip farms that you speak of?—No, there is a good demand at reduced rates for useful land.

47,748. And I suppose also for the fen land?—Yes, there do not appear to have been many changes in the fen land of late.

47,749. But where the farm is vacant, it is not difficult to get a tenant?—No.

47,750. Do you say that with regard to all the land in the district you have named, except where it is very heavy, or where it is exceptionally light?—Yes. There is not a very large area of very light land there, but the two extremes of very light and very heavy are difficult to let; therefore, land that may be turned and farmed on a convertible system is lettable to a fair class of tenants.

47,751. The light land, which you said just now is suitable for market gardens, I suppose is let easily?—That is easily let.

Official referees.

47,752. (*Mr. Clay.*) I gather from you, referring to the official referee, that the tenant farmers you have been visiting are very much of the opinion that you should have substantial practical men, devoted to that purpose, to award compensation under the Act?—Yes, there is a very strong opinion that the time has come

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when there is some system wanted for amicably and quietly settling disputes between landlord and tenan upon all points.

Advisory boards and land courts.

47,753. Is it their opinion that these official referees might not be put into a land court, but might be put on a board for advising on any difference of opinion between the landlord and the tenant about the rent of the land?—Yes, that they might constitute in themselves, not a court, but something which would do what falls to the lot of a land court elsewhere, without what is undoubtedly an objectionable characteristic of courts to farmers.

47,754. What you would call an advisory board?—Yes, you could call them that; they would act as conciliators. But the advice of persons other than the official referee would only be within the reach of the referee himself. When in doubt or difficulty he could seek their assistance in private.

47,755. (*Chairman.*) Are they to have the power of determining absolutely, against the will of the landlord and the tenant, what should be the rent between them?—If a landlord and tenant cannot agree between themselves, certainly the decision of the official referee would bind both parties.

47,756. Where they do not agree, is this officer to have the power of determining absolutely what the one shall pay, and what the other shall receive?—Yes.

47,757. Then in what respect does that differ from a court?—Not very much, except in the name, and in the appearance of the thing.

47,758. You call it an advisory board, but in point of fact it is a court, is it not?—It is a court, and does not spell "c-o-u-r-t"; I think that is all about it.

47,759. That is all the difference?—I think it is. I I think it is a matter of sentiment.

47,760. I only want to arrive at what the thing is. You speak of it as an advisory board, and you say the farmers have an objection to a court, but they would like an advisory board, and then you say that this advisory board would differ from a court only in respect of the name?—Unless I have misinterpreted the language of my witnesses, it appeared to me that their wishes were that so far as possible nothing calculated to disturb the friendly relations between landlord and tenant should be set in motion. For this reason, if official arbitration could not be carried out without the publicity that is inseparable from a court and the friction caused by landlord and tenant appearing in person before a court, I am sure the great majority of those who mentioned the matter to me would prefer to go on as they are.

47,761. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have you heard any people express any opinion in favour of the farmer being entitled to have some body to fix rents, on the same principle as conciliation boards have been formed to fix wages in the mining and other industries?—Yes, of course I have; there is nothing in this report except what I have heard, and I have no opinion with respect to Bedford county except what opinion was given to me. I am a total stranger to the counties of Bedford, Northampton, and Huntingdon, and it would be presumption on my part to have an opinion.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,762. The Agricultural Holdings Act has not, you say, wrought well and satisfactorily?—Apparently it has not.

47,763. Do you think it should have a wider extension, so as to apply to general cultivation, and increased fertility?—That is certainly one point upon which farmers feel very keenly.

47,764. Should not the next Act, if it is framed, give the official referee or valuator a little more sea-room to go further back than one, two, or three years in regard to improvements?—The opinion of the farmers and landlords too, in Bedfordshire, is, that anything which will encourage good farming, and deter bad farming, will be an advantage. For instance, if the Agricultural Holdings Act is so amended that it will entitle a tenant to compensation for continuous good farming, it would be a right and proper thing; on the other hand, if it will give the landlord a check upon deteriorative farming, that will be right and fair.

47,765. The great question before us now, is to bring capital back to the land, instead of driving it away?—Yes.

Urban rates.

47,766. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Will you refer to page 82, where you have a paragraph headed, "Farms subject to urban rates;" there you make certain recommendations with regard to urban rates on agricultural land, what do you consider urban rates?—These complaints were made to me by persons farming land close by villages or towns which had the power of making rates, and levying rates, and these farms are subject to those rates.

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47,767. But these two places that you name, Potton and Bozeat, are not urban districts; one is in the rural sanitary district of Biggleswade, and the other in another rural sanitary district; they are practically villages, and not towns, I think?—Bozeat is a village.

47,768. And Potton is not a large place?—No, it is a small place.

47,769. They are a considerable distance from any large town, I think, both of them?—Yes, they are.

47,770. The two unions in which they are situated, are Biggleswade and Wellingborough, one in Northamptonshire, and the other in Bedfordshire?—Yes.

47,771. You have kindly let me have the demand notes in these cases, and I find that the reason the rates are so high in those two parishes is, that each has a school board, one of them has a burial board, and both of them have rather high special sanitary rates, levied by the rural sanitary authority. But you would not take either of these cases as typical cases of farms, in what would usually be called urban districts, would you? They are both of them rather large villages, but not large urban centres of any kind?—No, the fact remains that they exist.

47,772. No doubt; but you take in your report the rates in these two villages as an argument for altering the whole law of the urban rating of the country. Of course where you have a farm near a large town, it is benefitted by that large town, and is in a totally different position from the agricultural land that is close to a village of this kind, which is not rising in value, and is not going to be building land, or anything of that kind. Neither of these villages is rapidly developing. The population of Bozeat has increased from 1,187 in 1881, to 1,273 in 1891, but I think Potton had a smaller population at the last census than it had at the preceding census. Bozeat is not a town in any sense of the word, is it?—It is a big village; I remember about Bozeat.

47,773. How would your proposal as to urban rates work in these places: you would propose, you say, that the land should in no way contribute to these rates, practically?—Not in the same proportion that it does at present.

47,774. Towards the sanitary rate it contributes a fourth annually?—I question whether it should contribute any to the sanitary rate.

47,775. Then, you would leave the expense entirely on the small cottages in these villages?—I would make a cordon round the town of a certain distance out.

47,776. The result would be that you would undoubtedly place an enormously heavy rate on these small houses, in these two particular cases that you mention?—Probably.

47,777. I think the average rateable value of a house in each district is very low; it is 6*l.* in one parish, and 4*l.* or 5*l.* in the other; would you throw the whole of the expenses of the school board and the sanitary expenses on the inhabitants of those small houses?—Not of the school board.

47,778. You do not consider the school board rate is an urban rate, then?—No.

47,779. The school board rate is the main rate in both of them, which has made them so high?—No, I think not. I may be wrong.

47,780. It is 2*s.*, I think, in one, and 1*s.* 6*d.* in the other case?—I do not think that the question of the school rate appears at all in Bozeat.

47,781. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it not covered by the term: "Ordinary rates for the year, 4*s.*"?—The gentleman that I got these rates from in Bozeat, could neither read nor write.

47,782. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In Bozeat there is a one and tenpenny school board rate, according to the local taxation returns, and it is included in the poor rate in the demand note, but in the Potton demand note the school board rate is stated, and it comes for about a year and a half to 2*s.* 10*d.*; you would not propose to throw the school board rate entirely upon these houses?—No,

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it is more with reference to lighting rates. That is the point which is felt by the farmers. I walked over this gentleman's farm at Bozeat, and at the very end of the farm—it was about 2½ miles from the town of Bozeat—there he began objecting to these rates; he said, "here "am I paying these urban rates for this piece of land "right away out here. I get no benefit from the drains, "and the burying places, and the lighting."

47,783. Is there any lighting rate at Bozeat, because I do not find it?—I do not know whether there is any lighting rate, but I know that there is a special sanitary rate.

47,784. Yes, but that is for the drainage of the houses; a farmer would prefer to live in a healthy village rather than an unhealthy one, I presume. But the land pays very little for the sanitary rate there; it pays 2½*d.* I think in that case; it is the school board rate, which is the high rate on the land in each parish?—It may be so; it may be that the rates are very low; but there is always a danger of some other terrible one coming on, you never can tell; some special rate comes on, and there they are liable to it. I think it is more the principle of the thing.

47,785. You propose to exempt the land altogether outside a certain cordon?—From what I gathered from the farmers there, I believe that is their feeling.

47,786. With regard to the sanitary rates?—With regard to these rates which undoubtedly benefit towns and places where people congregate to live together, and which do not benefit the land lying, as it were, outside a certain distance from it.

47,787. Would you include the school board rate?—I do not think that the farmers would object to the school board rate being a rate levied upon land provided that other parties were equally taxed for it.

Effect of depression on the labourers.

47,788. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In paragraph 120, page 38, you express some views and observe about the future of labour if the present depression continues in the counties you visited, and you say: "Throughout the "cold clay district there is a very great scarcity of "employment, and less continuous service than "formerly." Then you go on to tell us of villages in Northamptonshire and in Huntingdonshire, where there has been loss of labour, and a great reduction in the population of agricultural labourers. Is the state of things that you describe there to be taken as at all indicating what is occurring in other parts of the corn-growing districts?—Yes; I should say that the state of affairs described there is universal throughout all the strong land districts in these three countries.

47,789. Some of the labourers have rather strong views upon this subject themselves I understand?—They have.

47,790. Is it the case that they are beginning to think that if prices do not improve their position will be very injuriously affected?—Yes; that was stated to me by a party of several labourers whom I interviewed myself near Yaxley, just on the borders of the Fens; also by some labourers I saw in Bedfordshire.

47,791. I think it is the case that you anticipate (you say so in paragraph 122), within the next few years a steady decrease in the labour employed in farming?—Yes; I consider that inevitable, unless a very great change takes place in prices.

47,792. What sort of change in prices, for instance in wheat, would put the land back again in arable cultivation?—Double it in price.

47,793. That is to say from whatever it is now to ——?—40*s.*

47,794. If wheat was to go up to 40*s.* again, that would remove all difficulties as far as labour is concerned in the corn-growing districts?—I think if wheat went up to 40*s.*, and rents did not rise you might say in proportion, that undoubtedly wheat would be cultivated again, and I think the land could be cultivated to a profit.

47,795. (*Chairman.*) You make the important destinction "if rents do not rise?"—If rents do not rise too high.

47,796. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You do not mean to say if rents do not rise at all; but if rents do not rise beyond the level, I suppose, or the proportion that they were at formerly in comparison with prices?—Yes; that is what I meant.

Effect of a rise in prices.

47,797. You were asked a good many questions by Mr. Giffen upon that particular point; is not the answer to those questions this: that although in theory the suggestions he made to you may be perfectly right, yet as a matter of practice they never did occur, and that when prices were high formerly there was great prosperity to the farmer?—I am quite sure of this from everything I heard,—that in past times when prices were fair, and land could be worked to a reasonable profit, paying a respectable rent, there was no suspicion whatsoever between landlord and tenant; and I am quite sure of this too—that if the old times were to come back, you would have a recurrence to those very pleasant times that were.

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47,798. From all that you have seen, you have formed the opinion that whereas under higher prices in former days, there was great prosperity among the farmers, and the labourers were all well employed, the same thing would in all probability happen again if there was a return of better prices, and that all the fears suggested to you by Mr. Giffen would not take effect?—Yes, that is the impression that was made upon my mind by what I heard.

Effect of present prices.

47,799. And I observe that in paragraph 140, you make a statement with regard to the opinion of the farmers in these counties on this particular point, and you say that "The verdict of the arable farmers of these "counties cannot be misconstrued. A large proportion "of the land can no longer be cultivated to a profit, "and whatever be the consequences to the labourer, "the manure merchant, the blacksmith, the carpenter, "the engineer, or the kingdom at large, it must go to "grass." I understand you that is the view in those arable districts, put before you by a great number of practical farmers themselves?—Yes, of practical farmers, land agents, and landlords, every person connected with this industry.

47,800. That the only remedy at present prices is, that the land should no longer be cultivated and go back to grass?—That is so. My books are full of that evidence.

47,801. Then, as far as labour in those districts is concerned, I apprehend that the remedy would be worse than the disease; does it not come to this from what you heard in those districts, that the situation can only be saved by a wholesale displacement of labour?—Yes. The land will no longer support three classes, and one of them must disappear.

47,802. (*Mr. Channing.*) The arable land, you mean?—Yes, the stronger class of arable land.

47,803. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I suppose the arable lands in the districts you visited, are a very large proportion of the whole?—In Bedfordshire, I think, there is about one-third pasture, from one-third to one-fourth.

47,804. So that it affects a great area of land, and a very large population?—Yes, but the north part of Bedfordshire is very sparsely populated now, judging from what I saw.

Immigrant farmers.

47,805. In one part of your report you refer to the immigrant farmers, that is to say, Scotchmen and men from Devonshire who have come into Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire, but they do not appear to have done any better than the locals, am I correct in that?—Yes, I could not find out exactly how they had done, whether they had done better. I was of opinion, and I heard it supported on various occasions, that the two Scotchmen that I saw, had really done wonderfully well considering the times. But if you take the opinion of the Englishmen, they say that the Devonshire men have certainly not done a bit better than themselves. I do not think there is enough evidence to entitle me to say that the immigrants had done any better whatsoever.

47,806. (*Chairman.*) The two cases you examined, you say had done well?—No, I do not go so far as to say they had done well. I quote the language of a Scotchman.

47,807. Where is that?—In paragraph 142, page 44. He says: "I had a lot to do to this farm at first, improving it, otherwise I could have saved money. Then the bad years set in, when there has been nothing on the right side. I cannot say I have lost. I have got through, and I rather congratulate myself."

47,808. Is that not a good deal better than the record of a good many?—It is on that that I was basing my answer to Mr. Chaplin.

47,809. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It is very cold comfort under any circumstances?—Yes, it is.

47,810. (*Chairman.*) Men do not usually confess that they have made a profit; so when a man congratulates

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himself, that means, probably, that he has done fairly well?—Yes.

47,811. Your Scotch friend congratulates himself on the fact that he got through without loss?—Yes.

Cheap loans.

47,812. But that is the most he can say. You advocate some new system of obtaining cheaper money for agricultural works as a necessity if any improvement is to be made; what system do you point to by that?—I hope I do not put it that I advocate it. What is the paragraph?

47,813. Paragraph 146, it is in reference to the division of farms?—All the landlords agree upon this point that there is an advantage to be gained by the sub-division of farms, but they say—I am thinking particularly of one landlord, a large landlord, just now—that at the present rate of money it cannot be carried out, because the interest that is to be paid upon money would not be met by the increased rents that would be thereby obtained.

47,814. All the witnesses that you saw and all the evidence that you have gathered point to the cause which lies at the bottom of all the trouble, I understand, as being the fall in prices?—Yes, I think that is the opinion of every person.

"Protection."

47,815. And they advocate protection, I understand, so far as this: that while they would leave wheat without a duty they would tax flour and all other cereals?—Some of them say that, others say tax everything hip and thigh.

47,816. That seems to be the general impression?—Yes, I should say that certainly 75 per cent. of the tenant farmers that I saw are protectionists more or less.

The currency.

47,817. Then, I understand, you find also that there is a growing feeling in favour of some reforms of currency, although they do not profess, themselves, to understand very much about it?—Yes, there is decidedly, I think that farmers are looking into this question more. I am not sure that they see as far into it as they might, but they seem to think there is something in it. I could hardly express it in any other language.

47,818. You find that it is beginning to be considered a great deal?—No doubt about that.

47,819. And discussed?—Yes.

Farm accounts.

47,820. In paragraph 152 you give us a very interesting comparison of the profits on a farm of 600 acres between the years 1853 and 1872 on the one hand, and the years 1886 to 1893 on the other hand. In the first period (the period being for 19 years) there has been a profit of 2,881*l.*, and in the second period (being for seven years) there has been a loss of 4,319*l.*?—That is so.

47,821. Would that represent at all an average of the state of things in that district on similar farms?—That farm is in the landlord's hands, and it is well farmed. It lies within a mile and a half of Northampton town. There is some of it excellent old pasture; the rest of it is stiffish soil, and I should think it is a very good example.

47,822. It is a good example of what would attend, no doubt, a farm held by a landlord, but would it be a good example of farms held by tenants?—Yes, because there is a fair time rent charged against the place.

47,823. You charge a high rate—at the rate of 1*l.* 12*s.*?—That is so. The rent charged for the first term of 19 years is 1*l.* 12*s.* 9½*d.* per acre and the rent charged against the farm for the second period of seven years is 19*s.* 7½*d.* per acre. It shows that there has been a very substantial reduction of rent charged.

47,824. I think you said in cross-examination you had not come across one instance of a man who admitted he had made a profit in recent years?—Not a working profit.

47,825. Even in that case the major part of his profits, I understand, were probably due to the fact that he had been dealing in cattle?—That is one particular instance, but on looking through the figures I see there are more men who have made profits.

47,826. (*Viscount Cobham.*) His cattle dealing does not come into the accounts?—No.

47,827. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In reference to that, can you explain how it is that there is such an enormous return from stock sold on that farm as against any stock bought?—Yes; I did not like to mention that point, but I am glad it has been mentioned. I am perfectly sure that that man, from his dealing facilities and his connexions, probably bought beasts in to-day and kept them for a fortnight and sold them again, taking a profit out of the transaction.

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47,828. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Now, I wanted to ask your attention to some very striking statements that you make. In paragraph 163 you say "there is one thing "absolutely certain, serious loss, if not ruin, threatens "everybody whose capital is represented by or invested "in land. I much doubt whether half of the arable "farmers of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton "could pay 20*s.* in the pound. Were I to accept the "evidence given to me without qualification, I would "be compelled to report that over a large portion of "the district farming had assumed all the features of a "bankrupt industry." Well, of course, that is a very grave and a very serious statement, and I want to ask exactly how much is imported by your saying, "Were "I to accept the evidence given to me without qualifi-"cation?"—The evidence that was given to me was this, that in certain districts it was not a question of half of them at all, but that the farmers there were just stone-broke, and were only existing. I really toned it down.

Serious position of farmers.

47,829. Then you go on to say, "There are gentlemen "located in this part of England who bring to bear on "farming everything necessary for its successful pro-"secution—unusual intelligence, long experience, "extreme caution, sound judgment. They farm land "of excellent quality, they have a suitable proportion "of sound, useful old pasture, their farm buildings are "commodious, convenient, and in good repair. They "possess abundant capital, and frequently have private "means which they do not hesitate to apply to their "farming business. They have cut down their house-"hold expenses to the finest margin. In fact, they "have done everything that could be thought of to "make ends meet, and in spite of all they have failed "to make farming pay its own way." Now are we, as the Commission, to understand that that is your deliberate expression of opinion with regard to a great number of farmers in these important districts, after having made the most full and thorough investigation in your power?—It is undoubtedly, and some men whose names are well known to you all, are those that have perhaps suffered most, and take the most gloomy view of it. There were some witnesses that I visited, because I thought it was my duty to do so—who absolutely asked me not to ask them upon that question of the profits and losses, because it was too painful to look back.

47,830. Then, I take it, that you have nothing to withdraw or modify in regard to those statements?—Nothing to withdraw at all.

Prospects of the labourers.

47,831. Then you proceed to point out what this state of things must lead to, and I shall ask you the same question in regard to this paragraph—"It is my plain "duty (and I do not shrink from it) to advise the "Commissioners that if prices do not at once make a "very great improvement, the country may be pre-"pared to see thousands of acres of good corn-growing "land thrown into grass, and thousands of farm "labourers cast into poverty and idleness." Is that your deliberate opinion?—It is not my opinion; it is exactly what was told me by the farmers and what I could see going on around me as I drove from place to place.

47,832. As far as you can judge, you have no reason to doubt the accuracy of the forecast made by the farmers?—None; on the contrary, it was supported by ocular demonstration.

47,833. Then you put it before the Commission as a very serious matter, that if the low prices continue we must be prepared for a state of things under which we are to see thousands of labourers out of work?—I am quite sure of that.

47,834. Under those circumstances, could you form any opinion as to what must happen to the labourers and where they are to go?—No. I can form this opinion, that they must go out of where they are, but where they are to go to is quite another story.

47,835. You also quote as the opinion of the people amongst whom you have been "that although the con-"sequences of this long continued depression, clinched "as they have been by the drought of 1893 and the "disastrous prices of 1894, must tell severely on the "rent rolls and complete the ruination of scores of "tenants, it is upon the employment of labour the

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"deepest impression will presently be made?"—Yes. What I mean by that is that the land will go down to grass, that it will pay a certain rent in grass but that the farming of the land in grass will not bring any employment to the labouring classes.

47,836. Where the labourers have been in employment up till now and where they are still in employment their position on the whole I suppose is somewhat better than it used to be in former days?—It is and it is not. It is in so far that the money that they receive buys more, but there is more intermittent employment, there is less steady employment.

47,837. Have wages fallen in those districts recently?—I think they have fallen since I was there; I think they have fallen about a shilling a week. They go up again in busy times.

47,838. Then with regard to the future if the present state of things continues you have the greatest possible apprehensions with regard to the condition of the labourers?—Yes, with regard to the immediate future.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

47,839. Now you have said a good deal upon the position of the landlords and tenants, and I understand that, generally speaking, you would say that the relations between them as a rule are excellent?—Yes, I think they are very friendly.

47,840. Especially on the larger estates?—Yes, a great many witnesses' evidence in my books are full of testifications to the gratitude which tenants express towards the landlords for what they have done for them. A great many witnesses said to me "We are very sorry "for our landlords."

Insecurity of tenure.

47,841. On the other hand there is a very general impression, I gather from you, that where a tenant has farmed well through these bad times he feels himself to be in a position that he has no security at all?—Yes.

47,842. I do not quite understand what is the meaning of that expression—no security for what? For compensation for his improvements or security in what other respect?—Of course his security for compensation for improvements comes under the Agricultural Holdings Act; and any feeling with reference to that comes under the head of the Act. It is the security for continuance. I take it that these tenants who have long interests in holdings do not want to leave their holdings, and would like to remain in them paying what is a reasonable and a fair rent. Their position seems to be that they fear, and judge from what has gone on around them, that in the event of any difference of opinion arising they can be moved, so to speak, simply because there is a difference of opinion.

47,843. It comes to this, I rather gather from you that in the case of a man who has got a useful farm which at the present moment is in really good condition, either he finds great difficulty in getting his rent lowered or he is afraid of its being let to somebody else at an increasing rent; is that it?—Yes, if a man has farmed his place well. A well-farmed place is lettable still, and it is even perhaps more lettable because of the large number that are not well farmed.

47,844. They have no feeling of insecurity, I suppose, on the ground that they are going to be turned out if they continue to pay their present rents?—I think that with the times getting worse a great many of the sitting tenants naturally think that they should not be paying such big rents.

47,845. And so there is where the feeling of insecurity comes in?—Yes.

47,846. They think the time has come when they should ask for a reduction of rent, and they feel they are entitled to it; then they are afraid that if they do that, the landlord, pressed by this cause, or that, or the other, will not agree, and in preference will let it to some new man who will give the same rent, because the farm is in very good condition?—Yes.

47,847. That is the exact position?—Yes, that the landlord thinks that because the farm is in good condition he can get it let.

47,848. Are we to understand from you that in these counties, that has been a common state of things?—Yes, far more so than I think almost anyone would believe.

47,849. Do you know instances of it?—Yes, plenty of them; I would not take such evidence without it.

47,850. You could give the Commission such instances?—I could, I believe, from my books here. I do not like taking names down, but there were very few estates there but what there were some instances of farms in which there was treatment of this character.

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47,851. (*Chairman.*) It is a very important statement, and I am inclined to think we ought to have the evidence verified by names. Were these statements made to you confidentially?—Yes, they were made confidentially.

47,852. Would they object to their names being brought forward?—I do not believe that such evidence would have been given to me in a public meeting.

Tenure.

47,853 (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In those cases, under what agreements, or under what security, do they hold their farms in these counties—under written agreements, as a rule, or under the customs of the counties, or under the Agricultural Holdings Act itself?—There are some cases where there are no written agreements whatsoever.

47,854. Then, *ipso facto*, they hold under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I believe they hold under the Act.

47,855. Is it common to have no written agreements?—No, but there are two or three large estates—the Duke of Grafton's for instance; I believe Lord de Ramsay's is another—which I discovered had no written agreements whatsoever.

47,856. Was that done intentionally, or in order that they might be under the Act?—I do not know. I do not think there ever were any agreements. This is an old standing custom.

47,857. But that is not common, I suppose?—It is not general, but there are a good many instances.

47,858. Is there an effective custom in these counties?—Yes, there is a custom.

47,859. In each of them?—Yes.

47,860. Then, if there is no written agreement, they would hold either under the custom, or under the Act?—Yes, under the Act. There are more estates where they have regular written agreements, and customs under the agreements—covenants under the agreements; and, consequently, there are more farms held in this way.

47,861. There is a great number of farms, I suppose, in these counties; have you any idea at all what the population of farmers is?—No, I have no idea at all.

47,862. You saw a great many, I suppose?—Yes. I believe I give the numbers in the very first paragraph. I saw about a hundred, I think, altogether.

47,863. (*Mr. Channing.*) If you deduct allotment holders and small holders, the number of tenant farmers has diminished in these counties, has it not?—That I could not say.

47,864. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did you see 100 tenant farmers?—Tenants, landlords, and land-agents.

47,865. You saw about 100 witnesses altogether from these three counties?—Yes.

47,866. From whom all these facts, and these views that we have now before us have been gathered and collected?—Yes. I saw a person on every one of the dots on my maps. I tried to divide the country up as well as I could.

47,867. Did you attend some meetings besides?—No meetings besides; I had not a public meeting.

47,868. All your evidence has been collected from these 100 different witnesses—from what you heard and gathered from them, and also from what you saw?—Yes. I went over a large number of these farms, and I devoted about half a day to each witness—all private.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

47,869. Now, when you tell us that the Agricultural Holdings Act is so very commonly condemned, may it not be the case that that is to some extent from ignorance as to its provisions on the part of those who condemn it? We have had a great many instances in evidence before us here of where, for instance, amendments have been proposed to the Act which have already been contained in the Act itself?—I do not think that it is so much on account of ignorance. The class of witnesses that I saw were not ignorant men. I grant there were two men that could neither read nor write, but they were taken as specimens of this uneducated class especially for me to see, but the general run of witnesses were good, clever men, practical men, who knew all about these things. Therefore I would not like to say, in fact it is not my opinion that the reason that the Act is thought little of is because they do not understand it.

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47,870. As far as you could gather, the men with whom you have discussed matters thoroughly understood the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I would not like to say that they thoroughly understood them, but I think that they had a very good general knowledge of them, and they certainly had a keen appreciation of their experiences under the Act previously.

47,871. It was the administration of the Act, I think, that was chiefly complained of?—That was very much complained of.

Suggested amendments.

47,872. With regard to the amendment of it, I understand you to say that, generally speaking, they were satisfied with the proposals contained in the report of the Committee of the Central Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes, I might say that they go entirely upon those lines.

47,873. What was proposed by that committee, generally speaking, would be accepted by them?—I think so. I think the scheduling system, the reporting system, seems to have been a very strong point with them.

47,874. (*Mr. Channing.*) A record of the condition of the field you mean?—Yes; they think that the adoption of schedules would meet a great many of the deficiencies.

Insecurity of tenure.

47,875. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In spite of all that has been said upon this subject by them, they admitted, I think, to you that after all in the present condition of depression this security, or want of security, was, comparatively speaking, an insignificant matter?—That is so.

47,876. They are looking forward to the future?—Yes.

47,877. What they think is that if times became prosperous again, then security would become of more importance?—Yes, they do, because the demand would come for land again.

47,878. I want to know if I understood you rightly, if this was the drift of the opinion you had formed from what you heard, that although they have these views now and put them before you, both with regard to the arbitrators and the decisions as to rent, and the various other matters you have spoken of, that if these good times did recur, all these things probably would be forgotten again as they were before?—I do not know that they would be forgotten again, but I do not think they would be pushed so much.

47,879. They would not be pressed?—Yes.

47,880. They would become again of less significance?—Yes.

Appointment of valuers.

47,881. These valuers were to be appointed by the Board of Agriculture, I understand?—Yes.

47,882. Would they wish to retain the liberty to appoint valuers of their own if they desired to do so?—No, I do not think so. I think that the feeling among the farmers—and I must say that the landlords' and the farmers' opinions on these matters struck me as being somewhat similar—is that they are perfectly prepared to accept and abide by a person appointed by the Board of Agriculture, or some qualified, fair-minded, disinterested party.

47,883. They would like all the valuations to be conducted under the superintendence of the gentlemen so appointed?—Yes, I think both parties would leave themselves in his hands.

47,884. I suppose you found, in the course of your investigations, some of the tenants who were not in accordance with these views?—Doubtless, there are various opinions on this subject, and it is right to say that in many of the written reports sent in to me, no remarks whatsoever were made with reference to "land courts, fair rents fixed, fixity of tenure at fair "rents, free sale of tenant's interest." I am pretty sure that if the persons who filled up these reports had felt keenly on such subjects they would have expressed their opinions in writing, especially seeing that each report was marked "strictly private and confidential."

Arbitration as to fair rent.

47,885. We were examining a gentleman from Northamptonshire the other day, and I see he was asked this question by Mr. Channing: "I have not Mr. Pringle's "report before me; do you think that what he says with "regard to the rents not having been sufficiently re "duced in time in Northamptonshire is correct," and the answer is, "Yes." Then he is asked this question, "Are "you aware that he recommends that there shall be an "arbitration as to whether a rent is a fair rent or not?" (*A.*) "Yes." (*Q.*) "Do you agree with that or not?" (*A.*) "No, I cannot say I do." (*Q.*) "Do you think "that that had better be left to agreement?" (*A.*) "I "think that had better be left to the landlord and the "agent." (*Q.*) "For agreement between the parties, "you mean?" (*A.*) "Yes." If that is the evidence of one witness out of Northamptonshire that has been called before us, do you not think it is quite possible or probable that if you pushed your investigations a little further you could have found a good many more of the same views?—Possibly I might. I pushed my investigations pretty far; I was from the 1st May to the 19th July there.

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47,886. You have learnt nothing by your inquiries to make you very confident that there may not be a considerable proportion who take the view of this gentleman?—I would certainly say this, that it is not, so far as I was able to ascertain it, the feeling of the tenant farmers even the tenant farmers in the counties of Northampton, Bedford, and Huntingdon, that there should be what you might call avoidable interference between landlord and tenant. They have a kindly feeling towards their landlords, but they have also a feeling that it would be a right and proper thing for the good of both parties that there should be some system of settling disputes. I do not think that the tenant farmers—and far be it from me to suggest it—speak unkindly of the landlords or of their treatment, but then the difficulties of the position, and of the times, are such that there ought to be some way of amicably settling disputes.

47,887. The general drift of it all, I think is this, that the great preponderance of opinion is, that the real cause of the whole thing is the fall in prices?—I think it is. Then there is the fact that certain landlords, on account of the fall in prices and the demands that are made upon them, are naturally trying to fight their own battle to the best of their ability, and a man who is in that position is not just as capable of making a very liberal concession as another person would be.

47,888. And it is also the opinion, I gather, that no substantial improvement can be looked for unless there is some change in prices?—I think every person looks at the bad prices as being at the root and at the bottom of the depression.

Condition of the agricultural industry.

47,889. (*Mr. Channing.*) I want to ask you one or two questions as to paragraph 163, which was referred to by Mr. Chaplin. Do I understand you to say that that paragraph applies equally to Northamptonshire as to the other counties, in regard to the position of the farmer?—Yes, but it does not apply in quite such strong language to the grazing districts, or to the fen districts—chiefly to that belt, that circle of strong land, which grips the low side of Northamptonshire and most of Huntingdonshire, and almost all the top of Bedfordshire.

47,890. Part of the land between Northampton and Wellingborough and Kettering?—Yes, all away from Yardley, Hastings, and right away up there till you get to Yaxley.

Labour.

47,891. On the question of labour, and the particular aspects of that question, I would like to ask you whether it was not your experience in Northamptonshire that on the whole the farmers had a fair supply of labour, and that the labour part of the farmers' duties was carried out well—in my experience certainly it was?—Yes, with medium class soil in Northamptonshire, particularly between Northampton and up the Nene Valley, the land was well farmed.

Effect of depression compared with Essex.

47,892. You did not see the same derelict condition and the same absence of agricultural labourers that you have in Essex?—No it is a different story. I think if you go over the Northampton district from there—that is the land all about Lord Wantage's place—and walk 10 miles to the right hand, to the east, you would get into a different country. You would get out of these nice lands and you would get into strong clay, and there the aspect of affairs is different.

Wages.

47,893. Are you aware that the wages paid in the parts of Northamptonshire that I know are fairly high?—Yes, I think they are about 15*s.* a week, if I recollect aright.

47,894. They range from 12*s.* to 15*s.* or 16*s.* a week?—Yes, 15*s.* is about the ordinary wage of a teamsman.

47,895. So, as far as you know, the farmers have, in the matter of labour, in the districts of Northamptonshire that you have visited, done the land well and seem to be continuing to do the land well as a matter of labour—that is certainly my experience?—Yes, the land is well done.

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Farm accounts.

47,896 Now I want to ask you with regard to the very interesting appendix on page 134 C. XII. The expenditure on the 1,500 acres referred to in labour seems to have been continually rising year by year from 735*l.* in 1886 to 1,513*l.* in 1892. I wanted to ask you how that was accounted for?—Quite easily. In 1887 there was a farm of 237 acres tacked on, and then in 1888 there was another farm of 291 acres tacked on, so that the holding was gradually increasing.

47,897. Still that would not be an increase sufficient to account for the relative increase of the labour bill?—I think it would, with great respect to you.

47,898. It does not double the size of the holding?—But it does not double the amount of the wages.

47,899. 735*l.* to 1,513*l.*—I think it is more than double?—I beg your pardon; I was looking on the top of the page.

47,900. Then I want to ask you with regard to paragraph 137, which refers to the same land, I believe, does it not?—Yes it does.

47,901. How do you connect the increase in the labour bill with the manner of cultivation adopted, which seems to have been the continuance of corn growing in the same manner as Mr. Prout of Sawbridgeworth adopted?—I do not think it can be connected exactly, because this continuous corn growing has been going on for a year or two. I cannot tell you how many years it has been going on. Certainly it has been going on since 1890.

47,902. Has that experiment been successful or unsuccessful?—It has been successful so far as the crops have been growing; the corn is splendid but financially it has not been a success. I never saw cleaner land or a better crop.

Prospects of the labourers.

47,903. I will just put to you this question with regard to what I have elicited as to the farming in Northamptonshire and the employment of labour and the figures which you have shown in this appendix: whether your forecast of the general throwing out of employment of the labourers is not a little exaggerated?—I do not think so at all. Of course as you say with respect to the land in the Central Vale, in the Nene Valley, that is so. I would not like to say that the land would go out of cultivation there but there is such a very large proportion of Bedfordshire particularly, and Huntingdonshire which is that strong land gradually going out of cultivation. Of course I have the three counties to deal with, and I know if you take out districts such as the grazing districts and the Nene Valley, it would not apply with equal force at all.

"Protection."

47,904. Now, about the expressions of opinion about protection, did you hear that opinion from those who are connected with grazing?—No.

47,905. They would be opposed to protection I should think?—Yes; they never mentioned it.

47,906. Are you aware that protection is not in favour at the Northampton Chamber of Agriculture?—I am quite sure of this, that if I had met farmers in bodies, probably they would never have said a word about it, but when you meet them privately, you hear a lot of things that they will not say when they are massed together.

47,907. Now, as to the more important point of your report on which you have been examined. In the first place, as to the witnesses from whom you obtained evidence, I have here a list of witnesses recommended by the Northampton Chamber of Agriculture to this Commission; does that correspond with your own list of witnesses, or is it a separate list?—It is precisely the list that was prepared for me, as you will see by comparing my list with yours.

47,908. Practically it is the list which you have visited?—That is the list, and every one of their farms is marked on the map you have got in front of you.

Freedom as to cropping and sale.

47,909. Now, you found a very strong expression of opinion from the practical farmers against the reckless giving of freedom of cultivation, and freedom of sale of produce, did you not?—Yes, among the better class farmers.

47,910. They would not object to freedom of cultivation, provided there was a guarantee given of the adequate manuring of the land, would they?—No, provided that the landlord had saving clauses. I think the feeling is that the tenant ought to have a fair and reasonable power given to him to exercise his judgment, and I think that most of the farmers are of opinion that they have got that now.

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47,911. You have stated that the tenant's capital is very largely reduced everywhere?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

47,912. Was it the general tenour of the evidence given to you, that the tenant's capital had been reduced owing to the reductions of rent not having been given promptly enough?—One of the causes was that the reductions were not given promptly enough, and that when they were given they were not given in sufficient volume, and were not sufficiently large, and that for the last considerable number of years, rent had been paid out of capital.

47,913. That is very largely owing on some estates to the landlord not being in a position to give the reduction, is it not?—I am sure of that, and the tenants feel that. For instance, on one large estate where the landlord is a very wealthy man, he has for the last three years given 50 per cent., and on the next estate, the tenants have got 30 per cent., but there is no visible reason why, if the one was entitled to 50 per cent., the other was not.

47,914. On some well-known estates there had been no raising of rent in the period of prosperity, and, therefore, the reductions have been comparatively small at the present time?—But equally valuable.

47,915. And you found the reductions in that case appreciated as useful to the tenant?—Yes, and the tenants said that although they had not got such a large reduction nominally, still, they considered that the reduction which had been given to them was as reasonable and fair as a larger reduction would have been on another place.

Expenditure of improvements.

47,916. There has also been in Northamptonshire especially a very large outlay in drainage and other matters of that kind on some estates, has there not?—Very large indeed.

47,917. In order to restore the condition of the land?—Yes.

47,918. So that to some extent the reductions have been carried out in that way?—Yes; and in some estates—I could very easily mention names if the Chairman asked me to do so—not only have very large reductions been given in money but money has been given in drainage and buildings over and above.

Fixity of tenure.

47,919. You speak about an insecurity of feeling of the tenants, did you find any desire for what is called fixity of tenure?—I do not remember any witness having mentioned the phrase fixity of tenure to me, and my note-books do not show the word at all.

47,920. And they did not have any desire to take leases did they?—No, none.

47,921. Was the desire of the tenants generally to have continuous occupation and enjoyment at a fair rent?—Yes, just to feel that so long as they were prepared to do their duty and to pay a fair rent for the use of the land they should not be disturbed.

Insecurity of tenure.

47,922. With regard to paragraph 177 in which you say "There have been many examples of cruel injustice "accidently inflicted upon men who bore all the "character and exhibited all the characteristics of "good hard-working conscientious tenants;" I understand you have facts in your notes which justify you in having inserted that in the report?—Yes, certainly; facts were mentioned and names were given to me although the men were total strangers to me; I could not trace them, they had gone and I could not find them, but all evidence of this kind was based upon names and farms which were mentioned.

47,923. Then the sense of insecurity is rather this, that the tenant is unable to have any confidence that he can obtain a reduction which would really give him the enjoyment of his own improvements, is that it?—Yes.

47,924. And then there is also the fear of competition?—Yes, among men who farm their land well; but men who let their land down are in rather a strong position. This was frequently said to me. "If you "want to get a sufficient reduction you must let your "land down because then it is not lettable in the "market."

Adventurers.

47,925. I judge from the tenour of the evidence on which you base your report, that most of your witnesses condemn very strongly the class of bad servants who run farms, and spoil farms?—Yes.

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47,926. They form a body of unfair competitors against the ordinary farmer?—Yes, that is the point. They come in behind the ordinary good farmer. Their interest is simply confined to the few years that they intend to remain there, and they will give rents which are, perhaps, not fair time rents, in order to occupy farms for a few years.

The law of distress.

47,927. Do you find any expression of opinion as to the abolition of the law of distress, in order to check competition?—No, there was not much said about the law of distress. There have been very few cases of distress; but it was very frequently stated that, if this law of distress enabled the landlord to take in men of straw, it was putting an artificial value on land. I have mentioned that in the report.

47,928. But the general expression of opinion was that a fair reduction was not easily obtained; and that was the basis on which the demand for arbitration was based?—That it was not easily obtained, and very difficult to ascertain.

Valuers.

47,929. As to your condemnation of the present type of valuers, do we understand that that is general, or that there are valuers and valuers?—There are valuers and valuers. There were names mentioned to me of men who were held in high esteem, but, on the other hand, the door is open to parties who have been described in this report as they were described to me, and there is no reason why these men could not come in, and do come in.

Rules of valuation.

47,930. My experience once was to meet a valuer who snapped his fingers at the Agricultural Holdings Act, and said, "We never regard it in any way." Is that the type of valuer which is condemned by your witnesses?—I believe there is nothing to prevent a man saying that, because it appears that their awards are given in a very concealed way, in a secret sort of manner; they can do what they like. They are stated to meet together, and make certain arrangements which the tenant farmers and, I believe, the landlords think ought not to be.

47,931. As a matter of fact, the Midland Valuers' Association keep to themselves the rule under which they value?—As a matter of fact, I was not able to obtain them.

Arbitration as to fair rent.

47,932. Now, as to this principle of arbitration which has been referred to, does it amount to more than this: that where a landlord and his agent wish to re-value their farms they employ a valuer, and, in certain cases, the tenants would approve the appointment of the valuer, but that having regard to the difficulty of obtaining a fair rent, the suggestion of these farmers is that this form of re-valuation should be done, not by a man selected by the landlord, but by an official?—Yes, quite so.

47,933. It is not so much a land court as an official arbitration?—Conciliation, I think, it ought to be called rather.

47,934. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Only brought in in case of any alteration of the rent or re-valuation; or would the arbitrator be called in at the entry of a tenant?—No, only in the case where a matter of difference arose between a landlord and a sitting tenant upon which they could not agree, and which had a good deal to do with the occupation of the holding. In a case like that, where they could not agree, there is an arbitrator appointed by the Government, and they both refer the matter to him.

47,935. But if the tenant claimed a reduction of an existing rent, and they could not agree, then the arbitrator would be brought in?—Yes, or if the landlord wanted to raise the rent, and the tenant would not give it.

47,936. A man might take a farm on an agreed rent one year, and the next year he might take his landlord before an arbitrator?—Yes, and provided the landlord and he could agree then that is all right, but in the event of their not being able to agree one party must be wrong, and the official would decide who is wrong and to what extent.

47,937. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did the suggestions that were made to you go so far as to say, that when this matter of rent had been referred to this official arbitrator, that that rent should be fixed for any given period?—There was no period mentioned, it was simply the principle. Here the difficulty arises, and has arisen in a very great many cases, and exists at this present moment largely throughout these three counties. Tenants think that the rents are too big, and the landlords think that they are not.

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47,938. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Surely that is tantamount to the arbitrator fixing the rents?—So be it.

47,939. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did the witnesses you saw on this matter express an opinion that the work of the arbitrator should be to mark off what portion of the annual value of the land belonged to the tenant in respect of his improvements, so as to secure that they should be excluded from the rent; or what was their idea?—The idea was—and I would ask you to look at this in connexion with their opinions upon the Agricultural Holdings Act—that if you could introduce this scheduling system it would settle the whole matter.

47,940. How would they deal with the record of condition, would they interpret that into money, do you mean, by taking the record of the condition of a farm at one time, and then again later on?—Yes, all improvement or deterioration would have a money value attached to it.

47,941. Practically, does the suggestion amount to more than the old suggestion, which has often been made, of allowing a sitting tenant to have his improvements considered and estimated for whenever the rent had to be re-settled: does it amount to more than that?—I think that the introduction of the schedule in the Agricultural Holdings Act amounts to that, but I think that the question of arbitration when disputes arise amounts to rather more, because questions may arise as to the value of land irrespective of improvements altogether. The tenant may say this land is worth 10*s.* an acre, and the landlord or the agent may say "No, I think it is worth 12*s.* 6*d.*," irrespective of whether there have been any improvements at all. That is a question of the value of land and of a difference of opinion upon it.

47,942. Then it comes to this, that they do want arbitration as to the value of the land and as to a fair rent for it?—I have no right to say all tenants, but many tenants, and they appeared to be good tenants, feel that in these present times there has a new aspect appeared upon the scene, and that is that there is far more liability to differences and disputes than there used to be, and that there ought to be some way of protecting the sitting tenant from the consequences of differences of opinion.

Fixing of rent according to revenue.

47,943. Now, about these claims mentioned in your report for fixing the rent, my experience of the farmers I have had to do with in Northamptonshire has been that they have objected to the idea of produce rents of any kind?—Yes, that is so.

47,944. With regard to the second scheme, at any rate, the half-profit system of determining rent, do you think that a scheme of that kind is generally supported?—I would not say that at all, because I perfectly readily admit that this half-profit system was submitted by myself to the tenants in order to see whether it would be a workable thing. I simply introduced that as being possibly of some value to you. I believe I stated in the report that such an idea had not occurred to them. In paragraph 193 I say "no "examples of landlord and tenant in this district "having tested the working of either of the above "systems were quoted by me." I heard of one farm in Bedford taken lately on something like the half-profit system. The landlord supplies the capital, the tenant pays 4 per cent. upon it, and the profits are equally divided.

47,945. You mentioned one farm which is working with a sliding scale system?—Yes, in paragraph 194, and a very extraordinary scale it is.

47,946. Did you find any other farm worked on a scale?—No, none now; but I found a lot of farms which had once adopted a corn rent, but which had been altered.

Arbitration as to fair rent.

47,947. Irrespective of the special way in which it is worked out, you found a very general demand for a reduction to a fair rent and for arbitration to determine what is a fair rent?—Yes. I occasionally mentioned this matter to landlords, and the landlords said: "We "have no objection in the world to some system of "arbitration, provided that you appoint a right and "reasonable man; we are just as willing to submit "our matters and our dealings to arbitration as "tenants are." I am sure landlords have expressed themselves to me in that way. A great deal depends upon the man. (*See* Question 47,950.)

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Mr. R. H Pringle. May 1895.

47,948. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) May I ask, did you specially put before them the main question upon which Mr. Channing is dwelling, namely, the fixing of the rent; arbitration upon other matters of course is easily understood; many would like that well in order to have done with a difficulty that ought not to exist, but there is one main question which I think Mr. Channing has put in about this fixing of the rent, and I do not think you have given a very clear answer to that?—I see your point. I do not know that I absolutely put the question of arbitration in regard to the matter of fair rent before any landlord, but I put the question of arbitration for the purpose of dealing with all matters that arise.

47,949. All questions that arise after the rent is fixed between the landlord and the tenant though, and after the man has become a tenant?—I put it all matters of dispute concerning anything which might arise between landlord and tenant.

47,950. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) This is a very important question?—Of course it is; I quite see it, and would accordingly ask permission to withdraw my reply to Mr. Channing's question in so far as it refers to the fixing of rent.

Scheduling the condition of farms.

47,951. Do the tenants want a fixture of rent between landlord and tenant, and do the landlords want that? What I want to get at is whether there was an expression of opinion that you must have an official man who would settle the rent as between landlord and tenant, or whether that was to be left to the landlord and tenant?—I will be very glad to read you my notes as I took them down at the time. One landlord's agent says that he "entirely approves of any Act which will "encourage good farming, while providing ample pro- "tection and compensation to the landlord for bad "farming, and so far as he can at present judge the "scheme which has been suggested to him appears to "be in the highest degree suitable and is calculated to "be a wise substitution for the present unsatisfactory "Agricultural Holdings Act."

47,952. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What scheme is that?—That is the scheduling system.

47,953. The scheduling at entry and on quitting?—Yes.

47,954. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) But that has nothing to do with rent?—No; I just happened to come across that. Here is another landlord not very far from the other: "So far as Mr —— understands it the substitution of "the report system for Agricultural Holdings Act is "good and just; feels that the security of the good "tenant is very bad, and thinks that the report "system would settle question; good land has suffered "least."

47,955. (*Mr. Channing.*) Perhaps the Chairman had better examine you on this point?—Yes, it is a long story.

47,956. And it might take some time?—It would.

Reduction of rents.

47,957. With regard to the reductions of rent, I see in paragraph 76 you put down a complaint in one case of there being a certain amount of partiality in the reductions of rent?—Yes, I have a case in point which shows there are some cases where for some reason or other one tenant is better treated than another. I think it appears in an appendix. At page 108 in the answer to my queries, paragraph 26, you will see, "This "tenant has been in the occupation of this farm for "more than 50 years. He is a good farmer. In the "early 80's he had great losses from floods and sheep- "rot. Possibly he was treated a little more liberally "on account of his long tenure and also on account of "his leases. It is now not a dear farm." I think there are a good few instances of that about.

47,958. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Would you object to that?—No.

47,959. (*Mr. Channing.*) No one would object to it at all?—No, particularly the farmer himself.

47,960. Was it the drift of the evidence given you, that the farmers who had farmed well on the whole, did not get as much reduction as the farmers who had let their land run down?—Yes, that was very distinctly said, too.

47,961. Was that a very general statement?—It was a very general statement that if you wanted to get your rent permanently reduced, the best way to do it was to let your farm down.

47,962. Was there a recognition at the same time, that all rents must be fixed according to the real value of the fields composing the holding, in other words, that the rent should correspond to the proportionate value of the fields composing the farm. I mean to say that the principle of the record of the condition was recognised fully by all the tenants?—Yes, that suggestion was very warmly supported. I think it originated with the Chamber of Agriculture.

Mr. R. H. Pringle. 9 May 1895. Principle of fixing rents.

47,963. I will only ask you one more question, which I omitted to ask you just now, as to the official arbitrators. I suppose what was contemplated, was that the best local man should be appointed by the Board of Agriculture, not strangers?—Certainly. I did mention it. It is a *sine quâ non* that this person should be capable, and have local knowledge and experience.

Appointment of valuers.

47,964. And, at the same time, not to be selected, I think you say, by the county council, or by any local body which might act in a prejudiced way, or be open to influence?—Yes, the opinion was that although county councils were very good things, still they undoubtedly had preferences, and it was best to have the appointment made by a totally impartial party.

47,965. I have only one more question to ask you. I see that you say that the men who have taken to horse-breeding, have done better; is that so?—Yes; I think that wherever any little speciality has come in like that, that it has been attended with good results.

Special branches of agriculture.

47,966. One injury due to the loss of tenants' capital, is just the difficulty of starting new and more lucrative branches of agriculture, is it not?—Yes, because it takes more capital to carry on a farm with stock, than it does to till the land and grow corn, consequently, when the capital is lost, you are more or less penned up in a corner.

47,967. Has the diminution of tenants' capital been one of the important contributing causes of the depression?—Yes, it has; it has originated from it, and, of course, it has been intensifying the depression as time has passed.

Tenants' capital.

47,968. In one passage of your report I think you say that a great many of the good farmers could not have got on unless they had private means of their own?—A great many of them could not.

47,969. They have been paying to keep their farms in fairly good condition?—Yes. I could read you any amount of evidence to that effect. It is only those who have private means who have been able to get along at all without suffering almost fatal loss.

47,970. (*Lord Rendel.*) I take it that the general result of your very extensive inquiry is that, in the main, the cause of the depression—and I mean by "main" the cause in an overwhelming degree—is simply the fall in prices?—That is it.

Low prices

47,971. But you have illustrated the fact that there are certain ancillary causes which you have thought it worth while to bring into prominence?—Yes, I have done so.

47,972. One of those has been this, that the yearly system of tenure, which has worked extremely well in good times, has proved rather a fair-weather system?—Yes, I think the farmers feel that there are causes undermining the old satisfactory results which used to follow from this yearly system of tenancy.

Tenure.

47,973. In short that that yearly system, though very general, has broken down comparatively under the stress of bad times?—Yes, especially and particularly upon certain estates which are unfortunately circumstanced.

47,974. Another ancillary cause which has been mentioned by you has been the rashness of corn farmers in going on growing corn at prices which could not possibly pay?—Yes, that naturally is, more or less, my own opinion.

Cause of farmers' losses.

47,975. Did you learn whether the farmers who had so suffered ascribed their confidence in any measure to the hopes held out to them of a recurrence to protection?—No, I do not think that any farmers really have what you might call well-founded hopes of protection—much the contrary.

"Protection."

47,976. You do not think that it is necessary to suppose that the farmers had been in truth misled by promises or anticipations which could not be realised?—No, I do not think so. A great many farmers said to me that there was no good in talking of protection,

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Mr. R. H. Pringle. 9 May 1895.

that protection ought to be, but that there was no good in talking about it.

47,977. But at the same time, I think you mentioned that they now talk of bi-metallism?—Yes, that is an increasing idea. The currency.

47,978. Then to that extent bi-metallism seems to have taken the place of protection?—I think it is running side by side with it; protection is a very easily understood thing, and bi-metallism is not.

47,979. You have learnt that they have some definite ideas with regard to bi-metallism?—Yes, they have.

47,980. Have they ever shown that they realised that bi-metallism, if good for farming, is good for every industry?—I do not think that the farmer in these times looks at the question of bi-metallism as it would affect other people, but he looks at it as how it would affect himself. I do believe that the farmers are beginning to realise that, in competition with such a country as the Argentine, the value of the sovereign is a very great deal more out there than it is here, and they are beginning to see that we are competing rather under disadvantages.

47,981. There is a great deal, that is to say, to be said both for protection and for bi-metallism?—Yes.

47,982. They, you think, are turning their minds to bi-metallism, and protection also, as giving some hope of a remedy?—Yes, they look at the cause as being low prices, and they say protection would raise the prices or bi-metallism would raise the prices; consequently they will go for one or both.

47,983. And to the extent on which their hopes and their anticipations may be well or ill founded, to that extent they may be misled or wisely led?—Yes, undoubtedly so.

Incompetent farmers.

47,984. Then with reference to one other point, is it the fact that in the industry of farming you have an inherent disadvantage in the difficulty of getting rid of incompetent farmers, as compared now with shopkeepers?—I do not think there is any inherent difficulty in getting rid of an incompetent farmer, because you have simply to act upon your power, and give him a year's notice. I think that landlords are very long-suffering, and in these times frequently do not take any action whatsoever to get rid of a farmer, even although he may be doing damage.

47,985. I think I have used a wrong expression in using the expression "getting rid of," but if I might direct your mind to the general operation in other industries, is it not the fact that incompetent men from various causes drop out of success and disappear?—Yes.

47,986. And may it be said of farming that men who are incompetent do not so easily drop out?—No, they linger on and linger on, and they do not collapse until they have brought down the land with them.

47,987. Then you would agree with me that an inherent disadvantage in farming, according to the information you have gathered with so much care is, that in farming there is a difficulty in shaking off the incompetent man?—It is very difficult once he gets a grip, as we say.

Tenants' capital.

47,988. Then may I pass on to what I understand you to say you find to be regarded as the worst features of the present condition. First of all I gather it is a very general depletion of farming capital?—Yes, a terrible loss of farming capital.

Serious position of farmers.

47,989. Then I gather that you consider from what you learned that there is very serious danger of a wholesale wiping out of the existing generation of farmers in extensive districts?—Yes, I believe that if all dues were called up at this present moment there would be an awful sweeping.

47,990. And an industry which is essentially dependent upon inherited habit and tradition like the industry of farming, is in great danger of permanent injury from the risk that a whole generation may at the present moment be seriously impaired in numbers?—I would not like to say that it would be a permanent difficulty, because, of course, when a man has disappeared; but another would rise in his place. I think the present generation of farmers are just on the brink of a precipice.

47,991. Farming is not a trade which would be easily or quickly learned?—No, it takes a man to be almost brought up between the ploughstilts to know his business.

47,992. Then I think a third instance you have brought into prominence showing the present condition of things is that land now for want of competent farmers and in consequence of the condition into which it has fallen is being wrecked by a class of adventurers?—Yes. Mr. R. H. Pringle. 9 May 1895. Adventurers.

47,993. That of course is a smaller matter but still you think it has substance?—I think it is a matter that ought not to be looked over because it is increasing.

47,994. Then I gather that you have learned that in the wide inquiry from the very competent men which you have met, their position is that the case is one for heroic remedy, for some exceptional remedy on the part of the State?—Yes, it will want to be a heroic one, I think, to meet the difficulties of the case so far as their views go. It must be a big remedy.

Agricultural credit.

47,995. May I ask this, finally, with regard to the remedies which have been glanced at; I understand that the farmers and others interested in the occupation of land, whom you have consulted, have spoken of State loans?—Yes, State loans for buildings; some of the buildings are very bad there.

47,996. Also, I think of agricultural banks?—Yes, I heard a great deal about agricultural credit.

47,997. May I ask whether you have gathered from them much on that very confidential point, how far the present action of the county bankers has been adverse to the interests of the farmer, or favourable?—Yes, I have not only gathered from the farmers, but I have gathered from the bankers what was going on. I stayed a night with a banker, and we threshed this point out very well, he gave me some excellent evidence; he admitted, himself, that he would not allow farmers to overdraw their bank accounts now, as he did 10 or 15 years ago.

47,998. During a long period the profits of the provincial bankers had been exceptionally high?—Yes.

47,999. Do you think they have been derived, judging from what you have learned, largely from the distress of the farmer?—I am not aware of that, but I think, probably, if they had not withdrawn the credit they formerly gave, the profits would not have been so high.

48,000. I suppose the bankers have largely assisted in the winding up of unsound farms?—Yes, they have sunk a great many of them.

48,001. They have taken the odium off the landlord, and have done that quietly, which otherwise might have created social agitation?—I think that the banks, in the first instance, have floated a great many men, and, consequently, having floated them, they were the chief creditors, and they sold them up.

48,002. To that extent the capitalist position was transferred from the landowner to the banker, that is, the capital invested in the farming; the floating capital was supplied by the banker and the capitalist in the joint concern, the farm was very often, I gather, the banker?—Very often.

48,003. And not the landlord?—And not the landlord.

48,004. I think you were not satisfied that you were in a position to say whether the provincial banks had made large profits?—No, I was not aware of it.

48,005. Nor whether if they had made large profits they had made large profits out of their farming clients?—I could not say that.

48,006. Assuming that were so, would that strengthen the case as you have gathered it for the creation of either agricultural banks or State loans or both?—The evidence I received from bankers themselves and from everybody connected with farming was that there was less credit given than ever, in fact that there was very little agricultural credit given by banks, and I do not know that the points you have mentioned could be answered by me.

48,007. Credit is being drawn in now in consequence perhaps of its having been rather freely given in the past?—Very likely.

48,008. In short the credit that was freely given in the past has had something to do with the depletion of capital now?—No doubt about that. There is more difficulty in obtaining credit, the credit that is obtainable is subject to a very high charge.

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Mr. R. H. Pringle. 9 May 1895.

Advisory boards.

48,009. Then with regard to another remedy on which I wish to ask you one question, you found a concurrence of opinion in favour of the establishment of some kind of conciliation board?—Yes, I did among the tenants who referred to this matter. On the question of rent I do not include landlords.

48,010. And you are satisfied that the feeling is that a conciliation board under the present conditions of agriculture is imperatively required in order to give a greater security of tenure, to provide where necessary for the readjustment of rent and to settle minor differences?—I am forced to the opinion from what I heard in Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire, that if there was some system of conciliation it would be of immense advantage to both parties.

Fixing of rent according to revenue.

48,011. You have also glanced at a possibility of the solution of the present difficulty of the mode of occupying land by way of half profits?—Yes, I have brought that matter forward for the consideration of the Commissioners.

48,012. Have you found that amongst many witnesses the 73 farmers whom you have seen in these three counties, any of them have been disposed to take up the position that they are in truth the working partners in a joint business, and that the landlord is the sleeping partner?—I found a great many of the men who, although they may not have stated the case in your words, were becoming alive to the relations which they bore to the landlord—that their's was the capital in the land and that they were paying for the use of a thing which was no use. That has evidently set their minds astir, and that, I believe, is what is making them think of what is this thing called rent.

48,013. Then you think they are perhaps inclining now to viewing their relationship to the landlord as analogous to a partnership in any other industry?—Yes, I think they are, with regard to this question of rent.

Railway rates.

48,014. Then one last point, and I will not trouble you further; you have spoken of the strong opinion that prevails with reference to the cost of distributing produce by rail, and the fact that railway companies are not under any "most favoured nation clause" and that they regard themselves as entitled to settle rates with reference to the interests of their industry independently?—Yes, and with reference to the interests of their shareholders.

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48,015. Within the parliamentary maxima?—Yes.

48,016. Has that been at all freely discussed in your presence; you must have had very highly intelligent witnesses in some of these counties; have they at all shown that they have entered upon the question of the present system under which railway companies make their charges?—I do not know that their arguments would exactly stand your examination, but they certainly do speak very decidedly about the treatment of the railways in regard to these preferential rates. The farmers know them all, and they have got figures; they produced all these figures to me. They cannot see why railways should not bear a little of the depression.

48,017. Are they disposed to look upon their industry in one light, and the industry of the railway company, enjoying a certain monopoly under an Act of Parliament, as in another light—did you find that at all—I do not want to put any leading questions, of course?—That is all right. They seemed to think there was a very serious depression affecting agriculture, and that there is no depression at all affecting railways.

48,018. They are aware, I suppose, that agricultural capital is greatly reduced?—They are.

48,019. They are aware that railway capital is not only reduced, but is extraordinarily high?—Yes.

48,020. And that the railway company capital of the country, is probably vastly in excess of the actual value of the railway material?—Yes, and at the same time they are also aware of the fact that shareholders are being paid dividends from 3 to 5 per cent., while they are getting nothing out of the land at all.

48,021-2. Three to 5 per cent. upon the capital stated?—Upon the shares, and that upon the capital represented in their farm holdings, they are getting no interest at all.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

Ninety-second Day.

Friday, 10th May 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Rt. Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Rt. Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., }

Mr. ROBERT HUNTER PRINGLE recalled and further examined.

Mr. R. H. Pringle. 10 May 1895.

Bad seasons. 1892

48,023. (*Chairman.*) I gather from your report that the districts you visited in the counties of Northampton, Huntingdon, and Bedfordshire have suffered severely from three successive bad seasons; first, the season of 1892, which was a very bad one, I think?—Yes, it was.

48,024. With a very late frost which occurred so late as the 16th June?—Yes.

48,025. And then did great damage?—Great damage.

48,026. And generally was a very wet season?—It was a very bad harvest in 1892.

48,027. Then the next year there occurred the great drought?—Yes.

Mr. R. H. Pringle. 10 May 1895. 1893.

48,028. And that told in exactly the opposite direction?—Exactly.

48,029. But was equally disastrous?—It was.

48,030. Whereas, generally speaking, a dry season is favourable to heavy lands, the drought on this occasion was very disastrous?—It was excessive and disastrous.

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Mr. R. H. Pringle. 10 May 1895.

48,031. And the injury done by a drought of that kind was almost unprecedented?—It was explained as being quite unprecedented in the memory of man in those counties.

48,032. Should you say that, generally speaking, a dry hot season is good for the heavy land in the centre of England?—Without a doubt it is for arable land.

48,033. There was the extraordinary exception, therefore, that a very prolonged drought in hot weather was injurious?—Yes, it was, because it began so early and continued so late.

48,034. And the produce was extraordinarily low for that year?—Very low.

1894.

48,035. Then, in 1894 the season again was unfavourable, was it not?—The season was good up till a certain date, up till about a fortnight before harvest, I think, and then it became very wet.

48,036. And that did great injury?—It did the more so on account of the very heavy crops. I never saw more beautiful corn crops in any county, and before I left Northampton I never saw as much lodged corn.

48,037. Then they had the misfortune of this bad harvest and of this extraordinarily bad weather, which laid the corn very much, and resulted in a very inferior product?—Yes; the barley was very highly coloured.

48,038. And the wheat was damaged?—Yes.

48,039. I suppose that accounted to some extent for the great fall in prices?—I am sure it did.

48,040. Because very inferior produce was sent to market?—I am quite sure it did; it explained it particularly in the case of the high coloured barley.

Expense of harvesting in 1894.

48,041. Therefore, this district suffered, as I have said, from three successive bad seasons?—Yes, and if you will allow me to state it also, the expenses of the harvest in 1894 were unusually and exceptionally heavy. I have a letter from a gentleman on the subject. I have no hesitation in naming him—Mr. Richard Britten, of Abington, quite close to Northampton, who has a splendid farm, and who is a good farmer. He wrote to me, and said every acre of corn had to be cut with the scythe and the sickle in 1894. That, of course, made a very heavy expense.

48,042. That was also a cause of loss to the farmers?—Undoubtedly.

48,043. The expense of harvesting was very great?—Yes, it was very great.

Effect of seasons in Durham and Yorkshire.

48,044. I suppose, comparing this district with the other districts that you visited, namely, that of Durham and Yorkshire, this district has suffered infinitely more from these three bad seasons than the district up in the north?—It did; 1893 was rather a good season in the north.

48,045. They did not suffer from the drought?—It was not so excessive; they had rain at the proper time, that is about May.

48,046. Then, probably in the north, the heavy lands rather gained by the dry weather?—In the north, in the district that I was in, there is not so much heavy land to be seen, particularly under the plough, so that the question of heavy land really did not come so much under my notice then.

48,047. But at all events those districts did not suffer in 1893 from the drought, and I think I am right in saying that they did not suffer to the same extent from the bad weather and the bad harvest in 1894?—No, it was a good harvest. I was there at harvest time and it was a very fair harvest in the north.

48,048. Then may we infer that a good deal of the present condition of the farmers in this central district has been due not merely to the low prices, but also to the fact of there being three successive bad years?—I would not like to say a good deal of it, but a certain portion of it, undoubtedly.

Effect of wet seasons on grass lands.

48,049. Then, I rather gather also that the grass districts had never quite recovered from the successive wet seasons which culminated in 1879?—I think the consequences of these wet seasons were undoubtedly visible, and felt until, perhaps, two or three years ago, and since then the dry seasons have rather improved things again.

48,050. But they suffered from a succession of bad seasons which deteriorated the quality of the grass?—Every person agreed in that. The better class of grasses, the finer variety of grasses died out, and aquatic grasses and coarser grasses came.

Mr. R. H. Pringle. 10 May 1895.

Comparative effect of the seasons

48,051. Comparing the two districts, would you say that the loss on the part of the farmers in this central district as compared with the other district is largely due to the bad seasons?—Yes, I certainly do say so. I think that the year 1893, which, perhaps, sealed the fate of many men in Northamptonshire, helped a great deal a lot of men in the north. In the north they all described 1893 as having been a good season and a profitable season.

Characteristics of district.

48,052. Now, I gather from you that there are three classes of land in this district. First, there is the fairly good land, which is called the good turnip land, and fairly light land, next there is the fen land, which is also good land, and then there is heavy land, which is the inferior?—Yes.

48,053. What proportion of the whole district would you say consists of the heavy land?—I looked into this and I absolutely scaled it on the map, so as to be able to give you, in this respect, an approximate figure as near as I could.

48,054. Of course I do not want it very accurately, it is not possible, I know, to do it very accurately; but what is the general average?—About one-fourth of Huntingdonshire is occupied by fen land; there is a little fen land in the top corner of Northamptonshire; but I do not think there is any fen land in Bedfordshire at all.

48,055. How much of the remaining three-fourths in Huntingdonshire is heavy clay?—I say in paragraph 3 "The clay belt which occupies the northern county "division"—of Bedfordshire—"may be said to begin "at Turvey and Stagsden on the west, and stretches to "the north-east across the Huntingdon boundary till the "Huntingdon and Ramsey fens are reached. Thus it "will be seen that at the lowest estimate about one-third "of the soil of these two counties" of Huntingdon and Bedford "is strong cold clay—essentially wheat, bean, "and bare fallow land."

48,056. And of Northamptonshire how much is heavy clay?—In Northamptonshire there is not so much. There is a narrow strip which runs all along the borders of the counties of Bedford and Huntingdon; I really could not say the width of it, but it is a narrow strip.

48,057. There is nothing like the same proportion that there is in Bedfordshire and Northamptonshire?—No. In the south of Northamptonshire, in the Towcester district, you come across clay districts here away and there away; but I could not form any idea.

48,058. Should you say one-sixth or one-tenth, or what?—I do not think it is as much as one-tenth.

48,059. Not as much as one-tenth?—No, I do not think it is. Northamptonshire is along thin narrow country.

Characteristics of cultivation.

48,060. In parts of Northamptonshire there is very good grass land, is there not?—Excellent grass land.

48,061. On which cattle may be fattened?—Without cake.

48,062. What extent of that should you say there is?—That is about the outlines of the grass district. I have made a blue line on the map, if you can trace it, beginning up near Rockingham on the north side, and then running away down Lord Spencer's property towards Northampton. That is all good fine grass land.

48,063. Is that about one-fourth part or one-third part of the county?—It is not one-fourth, because there is a great elbow down there (*pointing to map*).

48,064. I suppose that district is mainly a grass district?—Yes, perhaps a farm of 300 acres would have 60 or 70 acres under the plough.

48,065. They do not make that their main cause of profit?—No, that is auxiliary to pastoral farming.

48,066. They grow enough corn for the purpose, probably, of supplying themselves with straw?—That is what they do.

48,067. And they very likely now, considering the low price of wheat, feed their cattle upon that?—I think probably they do; in fact, I have no doubt they do.

48,068. That district, I presume, has not suffered to anything like the same extent that other districts have?—No, it has not.

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48,069. I presume that what they do is that they buy in cattle at the beginning of the season and sell them?—Yes, they fatten them on the grass.

Cattle dealing.

48,070. Therefore what they make their profit on is the difference between the buying price and the selling price?—That is so.

48,071. And if they buy low they may, perhaps, sell low, but still the margin between the two may be enough to pay them?—It may be. They have very low working expenses, and it has become of late years a very common thing for these grazing farmers to buy cattle in the back end, that is in the autumn, and winter then in the fens or in arable countries practically almost for nothing, so that they get the winter growth of those cattle which are brought into good condition and fattened on the pastures.

48,072. They naturally do not suffer so much from low prices, because they buy their cattle low, and they sell them after having fattened them for an additional sum?—Their advantage is that they have a very low cost of production.

48,073. And they, I suppose, have gained from the low prices of feeding stuffs of all kinds?—No doubt of that. The only thing is, that I think the quality has not stood the test. I think the cakes and artificial foods, although they may be cheaper now, are not quite the quality of the old cakes that even I remember.

48,074. Then the remaining part of Northamptonshire consists of fairly good arable land, I suppose?—Yes, with a little touch on the strong side, but it is a good quality of land.

Demand for farms on grass and fen lands.

48,075. I think you said in respect of that land, and also still more in respect of this good grass land and the fen land, that there is a demand for farms when they are vacant?—There is a demand for a good quality of soil in good order and of reasonable size.

48,076. Subject to a reasonable reduction of rent?—Yes. The agents told me that they had no difficulty in letting useful places.

48,077. Do they find men of capital ready to come in and take these farms?—I cannot recollect any agent having said to me that men with capital were willing to go into the thing, because I think capital is fighting shy of it a little bit; but they are substantial men as farmers go.

48,078. There are substantial men as farmers go ready to take these farms?—Yes; and I know of instances. There were farms taken when I was there, particularly in this very district you are talking about, and they were taken by good men.

Rent.

48,079. What kind of rent was it reduced to—to 1*l.* per acre?—One farm that I am thinking of was taken at the rent that the old tenant paid, but he had got a very considerable reduction; he had got a reduction of 40 per cent.

48,080. What was it reduced to; had it come down to about a 1*l.* an acre?—Yes, I believe a 1*l.* an acre was the very figure.

48,081. Then that probably was reduced from 30*s.* or 35*s.*, which would be the rent in better times?—I believe I can identify that farm in one of the accounts given in the Appendix to the Report. It has been reduced from 32*s.* 6*d.* to 20*s.*

48,082. A 1*l.* an acre for the land of which you speak in Northamptonshire, this fairly good arable land, may now be considered as a fair rent?—It is the rent. I may mention that there is some meadow land on that land, good meadow land, Nene Valley land, which possibly enhances the value of the place.

48,083. Then the better grass land, which is suitable for feeding cattle, I suppose will carry a higher rent?—Yes, it does. I made out a table of these rents, and it appears on page 25, paragraph 87, of my report.

48,084. I had that in my mind; it is the fine feeding pasture land which is useful for feeding cattle without cake?—That is so.

48,085. And that, even now, lets for from 30*s.* to 55*s.* an acre?—Yes. That 55*s.* an acre farm I was all over. That is rather an exceptional case. It is quite close to Northampton town, and it is not only very fine grass land, but it is almost all accommodation land.

48,086. But apart from an exceptional case like that, I presume the ordinary rent rises from 35*s.* probably to 45*s.*?—Something like that, I should not think there is very much let at 45*s.*, unless you get somewhat near a town or a railway station.

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48,087. Should you say that the land lets at from 30*s.* to 40*s.*?—That will do.

48,088. That seems a pretty fair rent?—Yes.

48,089. At that rent we are to take it that there is a demand for farms?—Yes, there is. These good grazing farms are not very easily got.

48,090. And there are people ready to come in and take them?—Yes.

48,091. I suppose in all that district there is no real difficulty practically, except that prices may be somewhat low, and that has caused a reduction of rent?—That is the impression that everything gives me in that district. There are not the same causes or elements of depression there as there are in the corn-growing district.

Demand for farms on arable land.

48,092. Then on the arable land, which is still good land—not the heavy land that you have spoken of—even there you say that there is a demand for farms?—Yes.

48,093. Even there, I presume that some alteration in the cultivation has taken place?—Undoubtedly.

48,094. And a larger amount is laid down to grass than there was?—Yes.

48,094*a*. But still a fair proportion of the land remains arable?—Yes.

Laying land down to grass.

48,095. I think your opinion is that the farmers there might sooner have directed their attention to the laying down of land for temporary grasses?—Yes. I would not like to base it on my opinion, because it is the men themselves who think this; they wish that they had begun this earlier, as then it would have saved them losses which undoubtedly they have sustained since.

48,096. This is what you say at paragraph 116; "Undoubtedly there have been losses, and taking the "past 14 years farming has not been conducted "to profit; but I believe that this is traceable to a very "large extent to the unwillingness to give up suddenly "the old rotation or introduce anything savouring of "listless agriculture, and not to any serious obstacles "in the way of farming to some profit on an altered "system"?—Yes, and I think that.

48,097. In your opinion they might have mitigated to some extent the losses and bad influences by somewhat earlier extending the period of their rotation and cultivating a certain portion of the land in temporary grasses?—Yes, I think so, and I do not think that it will be denied by almost any farmer that I saw there, that they feel that themselves.

48,098. Then probably it is due to the discovery that they can do better in this direction that there is now a demand for these farms, and that they are not cultivated so much exclusively as arable farms as they were?—I think that the good land, which is what we call convertible, possesses a very high value on that ground; I mean land that takes kindly to grass for two or three years.

Reduced labour.

48,099. Now on farms of that kind, I suppose that by adapting this process there would be some reduction of labour, but not a very great reduction?—Yes.

48,100. If you change the rotation and the cultivation by extending it from a four-years' system to a seven or eight-years' system, and have a larger proportion of the land in temporary grass, the farmer is able to do with a somewhat less amount of labour?—Yes.

48,101. But still no very considerable reduction of labour?—I was just trying to think if I could not give you a figure. I think that the conversion of a farm from the Norfolk four-course to the Scotch seven-course rotation would mean a reduction of wages to 65 per cent., that is a reduction of 35 per cent.. the wages would be 65 per cent. on the new system of what they were before.

48,102. That would be a reduction of one-third?—Yes, I think it would.

48,102*a*. Probably that has been already effected over a considerable district, and accounts for the reduction in the number of labourers that we perceive in the agricultural returns as compared with 10 or 15 years ago?—Yes, I have no doubt to a certain extent it does explain that. I have got some very interesting evidence on page 23 on that very point.

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48,103. I suppose that on the farms on which the cultivation has been altered in this sense the returns are much more largely due to stock and to cattle and so forth, than they were?—Yes, that is so.

Dairying.

48,104. And I suppose, to some extent, to dairying too?—Yes, the dairying has increased. Wherever you get these temporary pastures, of course you have stock in some shape or form in an increased quantity.

48,105. And it is to that we may probably attribute the fact that in spite of all the difficulties of low prices the farms are still lettable?—Yes, I think it is a decided advantage to a farm, and it enhances its value in the eyes of a person looking for a farm if he knows that his place is not stiff to work as arable land, and can be used as temporary pasture.

Extension of temporary pastures.

48,106. Do you think that this process of altering the cultivation can be carried still further in many parts, and that they are still hanging on to the old system too much?—Yes, there are a large number of men who have not, I consider, adapted themselves to the times, and who very likely are, on account of the losses which they have sustained, not just in the position to change because they have not the capital to stock the land.

48,107. Still, the farms could be let if those men left, and others would come in?—Yes, they could be let, provided the tenant did not remain there until he had destroyed the place.

Assessment to local rates.

48,108. Now, turning to another subject, did you find that the assessments for the local rates had generally been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rents?—Where there have only been remissions the assessments have certainly not been reduced.

48,109. But where there have been permanent reductions?—There they were reduced.

48,110. Would you say, as a general rule, that the assessments have been reduced?—Yes. I say, as a general rule, wherever the rent has been permanently reduced the assessment has been reduced. I do not think I have met with any case where it has not been so.

Permanent reductions and temporary abatements of rent.

48,111. Have the permanent reductions been considerable all over the county?—No, they have not; a great many of the estates have made very few permanent reductions. They have given returns year after year, and year after year, varying in quantity. I was rather surprised to find that.

48,112. Is that really so?—It is so.

48,113. Not actual permanent reductions over a large extent of the county?—There were permanent reductions made between 1880 and 1883. That, I take it, was in consequence of the bad years following 1876; but since those permanent reductions have been given there have been a lot of remissions and returns. I think that within the last two or three years, perhaps, there has been a return to permanant reductions.

48,114. That is to say, temporary abatements have been converted into permanent reductions?—Yes, that is what has taken place. I could mention the names of some of the largest estates in these counties where there have been no permanent reductions made since 1882.

48,115. In what part of the county, in the best part of the county?—All over these parts. I am thinking of Bedfordshire just now. One of the largest estates in Bedfordshire have made no permanent reductions. I mention it in the report and I mention also the Duke of Bedford's name, because I do not think the Duke would have any objections to it.

48,116. I think we heard in evidence before, that on the Bedford estate, the reductions have been rather in the nature of abatements year by year, but not permanent reductions?—No.

48,117. (*Viscount Cobham.*) They have been very large in many cases?—Fifty per cent. for the last three years.

48,118. (*Chairman.*) They have been very large and generous?—Yes.

48,119. But they have been in the nature of temporary, year by year, abatements, and not permanent reductions of rent?—That is exactly the case.

48,120. But I think it has been generally the evidence elsewhere that the reductions have been permanent?—There are a large number or estates where the system of temporary reductions or abatements has been continued, and there it is that the tenants complain to me of the impossibility of getting their assessments reduced.

48,121. Wherever the reductions have taken the form of annual temporary abatements, though they may be year by year, the tenants have not had the advantage of the reduced assessments?—That is exactly so, and members of the Assessment Committees told me that they did not see why they should.

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Assessment to rates.

48,122. In the Bedford Union I see the reduction in the assessment has been from 121,000*l.* to 74,000*l.* a reduction of 46,000*l.* upon 121,000*l.*, which is over 30 per cent.?—Yes.

48,123. That would indicate that in that union at all events the permanent reductions have been more than 30 per cent.?—Yes, I am sure you are right.

48,124. At all events you admit this, that wherever the reductions of rent have been permanent, the occupiers of the land have had the advantage of that in the reduction of their assessment?—They have, undoubtedly.

48,125. And there is reason to think, therefore, that they had a considerable advantage in that respect?—Yes, I am sure they have. I would like to refer you to Table A 4, which I produce almost at the beginning of the appendices.

48,126. I have been looking through those figures with the view of finding a case where the rates were shown independently of any other payment. In most of these tables, the rates are mixed up with other things, and it is difficult to make them out?—I know it is, and I am sorry for it.

48,127. There was one case I discovered where the rates appeared to be shown separately?—I think there are four cases where the rates are shown separately, Appendix A. IV. gives in the first table particulars of remissions of rent given to a tenant of a Bedford farm of 260 acres.

48,128. Turn to page 127 of your Appendix, there is a case there given where the rates are shown separately of a farm of 316 acres; it appears from that that the actual rate paid in 1885–86 was 42*l.*, which was about half-a-crown an acre, and in 1893 it was 27*l.*, which amounted to 1*s.* 6*d.* an acre?—Taxes, I am sure, should go along with rates, the farmers always keep rates and taxes together.

48,129. That is not stated here?—It is not, because, of course, I had simply to copy the things out as I got them.

48,130. It would seem as if it was only the rates here?—It appears so, but I am sure it includes the taxes.

48,131. The presumption is, looking at his profits, that the farmer of that 316 acres paid no income tax?—I am sure that in 1893 there were a great many farmers who appealed and got off the income tax. The fact of the tax not appearing there is simply due to the fact that I did not like to put anything into the accounts that were sent to me.

48,132. Assuming this was actual rates, the reduction was in actual payment from 42*l.* to 27*l.*, and from 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre to 1*s.* 6*d.*?—In that case, I should say on that assumption that I am perfectly sure there was a permanent reduction, and that the assessment was reduced. Might I refer you to Table 3 on page 92. This is a case, and I remember the estate well and the farm too, where there had been remissions year after year, but the assessment stands precisely the same.

48,133. Is that one on the Duke of Bedford's estate?—No; that is not the Duke of Bedford's.

48,134. The rent there has been reduced from 1,250*l.* a year to 940*l.*; that is, a yearly abatement has been made equal to that?—Yes.

48,135. Apparently every year there has been an abatement; but the result of its being given in that form and not made a permanent reduction has been that the assessment has been maintained?—It has.

48,136. Therefore, the tenant has been under the disadvantage of being assessed at his previous full rent, and he gets no benefit from the reduction of the rent?—That is so. I have got the balance sheets of that farm, and if you will please refer to page 112, Table C. III., you will see the rates paid in each case. The accounts begin in 1893.

48,137. Apparently there the rates and taxes, whatever that may mean, have continued very much the same; they were 161*l.* in 1882, and in 1891 they were 153*l.*?—Yes, that is so.

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48,138. That is a very slight reduction; whereas, if the assessment had been reduced in proportion to the real admission of rent year by year—namely, by one-third—the farmer would have had the advantage probably of a reduction of 50*l.* a year?—A full 40*l.* at any rate.

48,139. What was the acreage of that farm?—922 acres.

Land courts.

48,140. Now, with regard to what you said about land courts, I think I understood you yesterday to say that the general feeling of the district in which you have been was against a land court?—Yes. I believe I did meet with two persons who were rather in favour of land courts, but the great majority were not.

48,141. The others were opposed to them?—Yes.

48,142. Did they give you their reasons for being opposed to land courts?—I think it was a sentimental objection to appearing in public and giving evidence of this kind.

48,143. Did they object to an independent person appointed by the State determining what shall be the rent for a given period?—No, on the contrary, I think they would be in favour of any quiet peaceable system by which disputes could be arranged or settled. They have a very kindly feeling towards their landlords.

Advisory board.

48,144. I think you gave expression to this: you said that what they wished for was an advisory board?—Yes, that is the nature of it.

48,145. But that did not, on the face of it, appear to indicate anything like compulsion?—No, I think compulsion is the last thing that the tenant would like.

48,146. By compulsion I mean an independent person who should say what the tenant should pay for a specific period. Let us suppose a dispute between landlord and tenant as to what the future rent should be, and that there should be a difference between them of 100*l.* a year. Do you think that those persons that you saw would agree to be bound by a person who might determine that the tenant should pay 50*l.* a year more than he is prepared to offer?—I am quite sure that they would accept the ruling, even in a matter of £ *s. d.*, of a person to whom both parties submitted a matter of this kind.

48,147. "Both parties submitted"—but that is a matter of agreement to submit; do you think that they would wish and desire that some person independent of agreement should determine the rent that should be paid?—Yes, I think that their opinion is that there ought to be some person to whom they can appeal, and in the event of their not agreeing with their landlord; that they should say: "Well, we will put the matter "in the hands of this person."

48,148. Is that by agreement, or is it by compulsion, so to speak? Could either party say: "Well, as you "do not agree, you must come before this independent "person"?—That is compulsion.

48,149. Is that what they desire?—Yes, because if it were not, I think they believe there would be no good in it at all.

48,150. One would be rather glad to hear what they actually think themselves upon such an important point. Could you refer us to any representative man who would give us the views of the farmers of the district, and state what they really mean, because the expression of an advisory board seems to me to be rather opposed to the principle of actual compulsion?—There were so many of them that spoke to me that it would be equally the same, I think, which gentlemen you selected. The feeling is very general.

48,151. It is rather desirable to have somebody before us who should express what they really mean by the proposal. Perhaps you would think over it, and suggest some representative man to give us an indication of their views?—I could do that very easily.

48,152. I do not think you had meetings of farmers?—None.

48,153. You only dealt with individuals?—Yes, and very privately.

48,154. You only saw about 100 out of five or six thousand farmers in the district?—Yes.

48,155. You did not meet them at any public meeting?—No, I did not.

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Arbitration for fair rent.

48,156. Do you know whether this subject of the arbitration of rents or of land courts has been discussed by the farmers' clubs in the district?—No, I am not aware that it has; I do not think it has, and I do not think that farmers would speak upon that point, particularly the class of farmer that I had to do with, unless it was absolutely put to them on the question, what about security? I think that the farmers are rather afraid of talking of those matters; they are afraid that it might damage them in their position with respect to their landlords.

48,157. The subject has been very much discussed at other farmers' clubs in other parts of the country, and apparently the farmers have had no difficulty in expressing their opinions for and against it?—They have had no difficulty in expressing them to me.

48,158. Have you any reason to suppose they would not be equally ready as in other districts to express their views at public meetings?—If you will pardon me for saying it, I know that the position of a practical farmer—a man who is not very well up to giving evidence—is that he finds it rather terrifying to have to face so very many people.

48,159. I am not speaking of here, but I am speaking of their own clubs and meetings?—I do not know about that. There would be no difficulty whatsoever, if I had half-an-hour or an hour to look through the names, in my giving you the names of two or three witnesses whom I think you would find useful in that matter.

48,160. Is there an unwillingness on the part of farmers in the district to take leases?—Yes, there is. Leases have never been popular there, and they are more than ever unpopular now.

Yearly determination of rent.

48,161. Then they would not, I presume, like to be bound for any time, whether by agreement with their landlords or by the intervention of some other person for a specific rent for a definite period?—I think they are quite prepared to be bound to time subject to this power that they would like to have, of never paying what is an unfair rent. But this is only conjecture on my part, for fixity of tenure was not mentioned save by the few who desired the introduction of the Irish system pure and simple.

48,162. Just let us understand what that means. Is the decision of this independent gentleman to be merely for a year or for a term of years?—Until another dispute arises, I should take it.

48,163. That might arise the next year?—Then there would have to be another reference to him.

48,164. Another reference with all the difficulties of determining what the rent should be?—Yes, with all the difficulties, and very numerous difficulties they are.

48,165. Therefore it would practically involve this: that every year there might be a question what the rent should be, and that that should be determined by an independent arbitrator?—I think so. Of course you can strain it to that length quite easily, but on the other hand, what I think the feeling of farmers is that if this thing was in existence probably it might deter a great many of these disputes, and lead to agreement without the interference of anybody at all.

48,166. Might it not have possibly an opposite effect?—It might.

48,167. If there were an independent arbitrator either party might be inclined to go before him every year. A good harvest might come, and the landlord might say: You can pay a little more rent. A bad harvest might come and the tenant might say: I think I ought to pay rather less, and either party under either circumstances might be inclined to take the other before this independent arbitrator?—I think that, perhaps, the ruling of a person of that class would act as a guide pretty well all over the district in which he was employed. I think there would be both direct and indirect value from it.

48,168. At all events, you think there would be an unwillingness to accept any decision for a definite period, say for five years or for seven years, and that the same objections which they hold to making a lease for seven or nine years, or whatever the time may be, would hold to any determination of rent by an independent arbitrator for the same period?—Yes, I am sure of that. I am certain that no person mentioned to me the necessity of having a set figure put on for a term of years. It is just this: that they appear

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to feel, even the best farmers, that there is a difficulty at present, and that when these differences of opinion arise some way or another there is something which has to be bridged over between landlord and tenant.

48,169. Precisely the same objection which they would now have to binding themselves for a lease of seven years or nine years or 14 years, they would have to a determination of the rent for the same period by an independent arbitrator?—Yes, I think they would; I think they would not like to be bound down.

48,170. It practically comes to this; that the rent would have to be subject to a determination by this independent arbitrator upon the complaint of either party year by year?—Whenever required.

48,171. (*Mr. Channing.*) They really had not thought out the details of these difficulties, had they?—I do not think, so far as I am aware, that these matters had been discussed in public by these farmers. It was just a very deep probing on my part that brought them out.

48,172. (*Chairman.*) Still, it is important to know what the actual suggestion is?—Yes.

48,173. And when you give the expression of opinion of such men it is advisable that we should know what is really meant?—Yes.

48,174. (*Mr. Elton.*) I thought from what you said before that the farmers were not thinking of rent specially, but all disputes in general?—Might I refer you to the paragraphs on this point. I think it is put as plainly there as I can possibly put it. I refer you to pages 58 and 59, beginning at paragraph 170. The chief element in the disputes, I think, is the question of rent.

Advisory board.

48,175. (*Chairman.*) Undoubtedly your report indicates that the question of rent is one of the matters of dispute which you think the farmers would desire should be submitted to an independent arbitration, but your language yesterday when you described the nature of the thing hardly seemed to come up to that point, and the very term that was used by you as representing the views of the tenants that you met,—namely, that they objected to a land court but that they wished to have an advisory board of conciliation—seems to indicate rather a body who should intervene on the invitation of both to advise as to what should be the rent, but not necessarily compelling either party?—I think that that would be conciliation which would hardly be worth anything. That is in existence at present; there is nothing to prevent landlord and tenant calling in a third party and asking him to value the land; if they do not like to consent to it they need not.

48,176. (*Mr. Channing.*) You point out in paragraph 189 that the court or board of assessors would have as their duty to advise and assist the arbitrator in difficult and doubtful cases?—When one person, this arbitrator, feels that he would like some advice and assistance upon a certain point, they seem to think there ought to be some person whose advice he ought to call in; those would be the duties of the board of assessors.

48,177. (*Mr. Clay.*) Your idea is that you would like to see these official referees made into an advisory board, to sit and take evidence. Is that it?—On the contrary, I think that a board which would sit and take evidence would be objected to. Any evidence would be taken by the official referee alone. Landlord and tenant would never come in contact with the persons whose advice the referee would seek. I am simply endeavouring to represent, as well as I can, the somewhat scattered and undefined ideas of a large body of tenant farmers.

48,178. (*Chairman.*) Of course it is very important that we should really know what is meant by it; at all events we know from you that they do not desire that the rents should be determined for any specific term of years?—I distinctly gather that.

Yearly determination of rent.

48,179. Therefore, it would practically mean that the rent should be determined for one year; and, therefore, it would be open to this advisory board or this independent arbitrator to decide the kind of questions that a landlord has now to decide—such as whether there should be an abatement of rent for a particular year in consequence of the bad harvest?—If appealed to, yes.

48,180. Therefore it would be practically performing all the functions of a landlord in respect of rent year by year, determining whether, as I have said, in consequence of the bad harvest there should be a remission of rent for that year?—It would be performing to a very large extent the functions of a landlord.

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48,181. Taking, practically, every matter out of the hands of a landlord, and referring it to an independent arbitrator?—Yes.

48,182. Year by year, not the fixing of rent of a permanent character, but year by year determining what should be done as between landlord and tenant?—Yes, whenever a dispute arose.

48,183. Therefore, if the tenant was to come and say to his landlord "I think this has been a bad season, "and you ought to make an abatement of 20 per cent." If the landlord refused, that should go before this arbitrator, and he should determine whether the circumstances are such that an abatement should be made; I only want to ascertain what their view is. I do not want to lead you on if that is not their view.

48,183*a*. (*Mr. Elton.*) In paragraph 178 it appears, as the point stands, that the witness gives his own opinion and not the farmers'?—That very paragraph you mention, there is no doubt about it, does appear as if it came from me; but anything that I have said in this report with reference to this county, or any other county, is simply the gist of what was told to me.

48,184. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you suppose that all these consequences that have been put to you now were present to the minds of the farmers you consulted?—I am unable to say how far they had considered the consequences which might arise, but so far as I can remember the matter was not discussed with me in the light of the future.

48,185. The consequences that have been put to you by the Chairman, I mean, were they present to their minds?—No; I was going to say that I had considerable difficulty in answering some of the Chairman's questions, because there were a great many of these matters which naturally arise, and which the Chairman pointed out which were not mentioned to me; it was just the one question of how to get over this difficulty, and then as to what would follow was not mentioned to me, but of course the Chairman led me on very kindly.

48,186. (*Chairman.*) There is a great distinction between an ill-defined sentiment and a deliberate opinion of a class of people after full consideration of all the consequences which would follow?—Of course.

48,187. (*Mr. Elton.*) In this paragraph 178 you say, "Assuming both the landlord and the tenant to be "honest men, who is most likely to know the fair rent "that this farm can pay?" And then you give your own opinion, "I fancy most people will answer, the tenant"?—That was put to me in cases after cases.

48,188. But that is put in your own words?—It was, but I had very good grounds for that, because farms were shown to me, and cases of new agents coming into the country were mentioned where there was a difference of opinion, and the farmers said to me, "This old tenant has been there for years and years."

48,189. I was not testing the statement, I was merely correcting you, as I thought you said you had only put down what the farmers said?—I quite admit that this does appear as if it was my own opinion there, but anything that I said was based altogether and formed upon what was said to me.

48,190. (*Chairman.*) However, you very distinctly are of opinion that in the views that the farmers have expressed in favour of this independent arbitration, they do not contemplate the fixing of a rent for a term of years?—No, they do not.

48,191. They would have the same objection to a rent fixed for a term of years, even a short one, say five or seven or nine years, that they now have to taking leases?—Yes, I think they would; the question of the term of years was not brought before me; and might I add that when the question of the Agricultural Holdings Act was touched on in connexion with what they call security, I am quite sure, from what I heard, that the tenant farmers that I saw in Northamptonshire are of opinion, and will say so, that the whole of this security question would be settled by the introduction of that sort of scheduling system I have mentioned—I think I have stated that.

The Agricultural Holdings Act

48,192. In other words, if there was a good Agricultural Holdings Act, giving full security for improvements, much of this demand for revision of rents might

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cease; do you mean that?—I think it would meet this very point.

48,193. It would meet it, but of course it would not meet the question of the actual quantum of rent?—It would in this way, provided that landlord and tenant did not agree about what was to be the rent.

Security for improvements and revision of rents.

48,194. I understood you just now to intimate that the view was that a good Agricultural Holdings Act would, to a large extent, supersede the necessity of this reference of the rent to an independent arbitrator?—Yes, quite so, in the case of tenancies arising after the passing of a new Act.

48,195. They thought that?—Yes, they did undoubtedly. When the question was threshed out I went into that.

48,196. May we come to this conclusion; that rather in consequence of the difficulties of the Agricultural Holdings Act and the want of security for improvements the idea has been suggested to their minds of referring the question of rent to an arbitrator?—Yes, on this point of settling this question of rent, where disputes arise, if any other way could be conceived of settling it, I am perfectly sure that the tenant farmers would rather that there was no disturbance of the old, or introduction of a new system. If it could be done by the Agricultural Holdings Act I am sure they would like it.

Wages.

48,197. But that is not quite the same thing, and I thought you were indicating that an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, giving full security to the tenant's improvements, might supersede the necessity in their minds of referring the question of rent to arbitration?—Yes, and that is the feeling of a great many of them in the case of future tenancies. The landlords, too, said that they thought that would meet the whole of the difficulties of the question. If I did not put it in my report, I should have done so certainly.

48,198. Now, with regard to the labourers, are we to take it that through a great part of the district the wages have been maintained, and that it is only in the worse districts where there has been a fall of late?—I think even in the worst districts the fall in the wages paid has not been very marked, but there is a great decrease in the quantity.

48,199. But the wages have been maintained?—Yes.

48,200. Except possibly to the extent of one shilling a week in the worst districts?—Yes, I think that is about it at certain times.

48,201. And that on the worst land?—Yes.

48,202. Where the position of the farmers has been very much injured by their losses?—Yes.

48,203. But on all this better land I suppose the wages have been maintained?—I think the wages are in some places, perhaps, a little better.

48,204. Looking to the fact that the prices are so low, I presume the labourers have benefited very largely?—I should think so, I did not go into the labour question very much.

Market gardening.

48,205. Did you examine any of the farms in Bedfordshire, where they grow vegetables for pickling, and things of that kind?—Yes, in the Biggleswade district, I did.

48,206. Do you know how those farmers are doing?—Yes, I think that these men are doing fairly well.

48,207. Has there been an extension of farming of that kind?—I think it has just extended as far as it is possible to extend it, considering the area of land is limited.

48,208. Does it not depend very much upon the neighbourhood of railways as well as upon the quality of the land?—Railways are an immense advantage, but all the railways in the kingdom would not enable you to pursue profitably what you may call market garden farming unless you have the right class of soil.

48,209. Is it confined then to a particular quality of land?—Yes, it is.

48,210. How large in extent?—I could not tell the acreage, but all round about Biggleswade. The onion trade is a very important one there, and I am told that they are growing a white-skinned onion; these white skinned onions have been tried on other soils of comparatively the same texture, but they have not been anything like the Biggleswade onion.

48,211. There are fields of small cucumbers, are there not?—The cucumber trade is suffering a good deal there.

48,212. What from?—From the competition with glass.

48,213. But on the whole you think the farmers have done well in that business?—I think they have done better in that business than what you would call ordinary agriculture.

48,214. We failed to get a witness from among them; they did not seem inclined to come and state their actual condition?—I can tell you the name of one good man, if he will come.

48,215. I have heard the names of several good men if they will come, but they will not come, therefore we are in this position, that we hear the worst cases, but we do not hear the best, is that not so?—Yes.

48,216. There are persons who do well in this direction in the district which you have been in, and some apparently have made fortunes?—One gentleman, I believe, has done well. I got almost all my evidence of the Biggleswade district from another gentleman who is a native of these parts, and knows it very well.

48,217. Is there not the same kind of thing in some part of the fen district too?—Not that I saw.

48,218. I understood that in some parts of Cambridgeshire there is fen land which has been cultivated in the same way; but you did not see it?—Not in Huntingdonshire, and I went through the fens there.

48,219. Would you say there is any possibility of the extension of what one may call intense cultivation in the district?—I think there is not. I asked that question of several farmers that I saw on the fringe of this market gardening district. They have tried to extend it, and it has proved a failure in every case.

48,220. (*Mr. Elton.*) You have mentioned that the cucumber trade could not be developed very well; I suppose Jersey has always stood in the way, has it not?—Yes, and I think more than Jersey. They attribute their difficulties to the increase in glass near London.

48,221. I recollect going to a stall in Covent Garden Market, and being introduced to the gentleman selling cucumbers there, and he said he should be clear with his trade by 9 o'clock, by which time he would have sold 8,000 very fine selected ones, all of the same size. Of course they are not on a very big scale in the district you have been to?—No, I saw some in Biggleswade, but very few, and I was told by some market gardening men that 20 years ago it was a very important part of their industry.

48,222. In a great many parts of England they have had onion fairs, which have gradually been given up, or have become very small affairs now; I remember at Bristol there was one, and they said the onions were brought from Brittany, and that the Breton people could compete better than their people in that trade?—Yes, they are sent in thin sacks, transparent things; you can almost see through them; there are plenty of them about.

48,223. That stands again in support of what you were saying, that you cannot increase it very much with the continental supply so very near at hand?—Yes, it does.

Duck farms.

48,224. You mentioned that you were in the part of the country where they grow Aylesbury ducks—not the Aylesbury breed, but very near the same thing, I suppose?—I only saw one of these duck farms.

48,225. You saw one duck farm?—Yes, I did; I was on it.

48,226. That cannot be increased very much, can it?—You can increase it to any amount, but I am not sure that you can profitably increase it.

48,227. I mean to a profit?—I should think probably not. This duck farming is an expert business.

48,228. You say that yourself; you say the moment the French parcel comes over, the English parcel fetches an unprofitable sum?—That is what this duck farmer told me. The ducks he had early in the market paid well, but the moment the foreign trade began to compete with them down went the price of ducks 50 per cent.

48,229. You have not been to the Aylesbury district, have you?—No, I was not there. There was a lot of ducks on this farm, I believe, 6,000 or 7,000.

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48,230. Which soil?—Clay land; strong clay.

48,231. Wheat and beans?—Yes.

48,232. That is the Aylesbury ground?—I think they were Aylesbury ducks; they were white.

48,233. You could not find out anything about the increase of the noxious weed of wild onions?—I saw them and smelt them. A considerable area was damaged by them.

48,234. Did they apply to the Board of Agriculture at all about it?—I do not think they did.

48,235. Do you know that it prevents barley being profitable?—I am sure it must; the smell from that garlic will taint anything.

Insecurity of tenure.

48,236. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) As I understand it, the farmers in this district desire a better security for their improvements in view of the increased competition which will come about if things get better, as well as in view of obtaining adequate reductions now?—I think that the feeling of the tenants is in anticipation of some demand that is going to set in if times mend, rather than having reference to the necessity for something of the kind at present. It is more for the future, I think, that they want this security.

48,237. They are looking to the future?—Yes.

48,238. And they are really afraid of spending their money now?—Yes.

48,239. Because they have not got sufficient security?—Yes, they gave me that idea, that they were afraid. I do not think there is very much money to spend, but still I think they feel that if there was better security capital would be better worth laying out.

48,240. Of course, with more capital spent they would do better?—I would not like to say that, because a great many of the men that had the most money in the concern, I think, had perhaps lost as much as any. Still, it would be an object undoubtedly, and agriculture cannot go on without capital being put into it.

Scheme of arbitration.

48,241. (*Chairman.*) Before we go to your Durham report, I must ask you a few questions again about your report on Bedfordshire, paragraph 189, in which you propound a very definite scheme of arbitration on rent, and in which you say that the general belief among the witnesses selected by you is in the direction indicated in that paragraph. We shall be very glad if you can give us any extracts from your notes showing what these several tenant farmers actually said to you upon the subject, so that we may see how far they really bear out your statement that your witnesses were in favour of this definite scheme. It is not necessary that you should give the names, if you give the initials?—What the men said to me was more of a vague sort of indefinite thing. I do not think that any of these men could prepare a scheme, but they all had some ideas as to what ought to be, and it was by accumulating these ideas that I drew up this paragraph.

48,242. It is a very definite scheme of yours?—Yes.

48,243. And it is important we should know how far the mind of these witnesses that you examined upon the subject was really in that direction, whether, as you say, it was a mere indefinite and vague something, if so, we should like to know what were the terms in which they made their communication to you?—The two points of what you have termed the scheme appear to be arbitration first, and then this reference by the arbitrator to some people who were to assist him.

48,244. Would you have any objection to quote from your notes the passages on this point showing what the views of the particular witnesses were?—Looking through my notes I have copied out one or two, and I think you have them in your hand; that really is the character of my note right through my books. I have not gone through them all yet, but I think you may take that as a specimen of the notes in my book.

48,245. Would you mind reading them; you need not give the names if you think these gentlemen would object to their names being given?—I think they would.

48,246. Very well; perhaps you would read those without the names?—Of course I cannot write shorthand, and my notes are necessarily very curtailed. I have to try and keep pace with the men's thoughts as well as their words, and so my notes are very much curtailed compared with what they would be if I could write shorthand. The first gentlemen that I saw said that "he would approve of arbitration to protect the "sitting tenant in the case of dispute about a fair rent. "It would not affect good estates at all, but would be "fair in principle." I remember the gentleman; we talked over this question for about half-an-hour together in his own room, and his ideas were that there was arbitration wanted, and that there was somebody called an arbitrator to discharge the duties of an arbitrator wanted, but his ideas further than that were very shady. He did not know exactly how the thing was going to take place, but that is what his idea was.

48,247. Of course the very term of arbitrator is not a very clear one. To most minds an arbitrator would mean a man called in specially *ad hoc* by the consent of both parties, and not a person whom either could summon in to determine the question between them in a manner which would make the decision compulsory upon both. Of course the important question is to know what these men meant by the idea of arbitration?—Of course I had to determine that in my own mind. These men had very shady ideas; there was something lurking in their mind that there ought to be some way of settling these things, and possibly this word "arbitrator" that I have used may be an improper word.

48,248. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The word "arbitration," I think, implies consent, as a rule.

48,248*a*. (*Chairman.*) Of course one couples it with the statement you made that these men were, as a rule, against land courts?—Yes, distinctly.

48,249. Therefore there must have been some distinction in their mind between the land court and the arbitrator?—May I read some more.

48,250. Yes?—The next gentleman said he "would "approve of arbitration in cases of dispute. It would "not be required here at present, but we know it is "required in other parts." That was frequently said to me by the tenants: "We do not want it ourselves, "but we know that it is wanted some place else," and they gave me instances. The next gentleman said, "thinks there should be arbitration in cases of dispute "between landlord and tenant." The next gentleman says: "Does not want any interference between land-"lord and tenant, but he feels that at present it cannot "be denied that the occupying tenant's position is very "insecure. The tenant is at the mercy of the land-"lord." The next gentleman "feels that the security "of the good tenant is very bad, and thinks that the "report system would settle it"; that is the report system under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

48,251. That, of course, does not go to anything like the extent of arbitration on rents?—No; I brought that out because it explains what I say in my report, that there is an idea among certain parties that this amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act would meet the difficulty. The next gentleman, who was a tenant farmer, said: "Some system of settling disputes with "respect to fair rents is surely required." The next gentleman says he "surely approves of a Government "referee in case of dispute about future rent in the in-"terests of the sitting tenant; would go so far as to say "that in a new letting the arbitrator might be called in." The next gentleman says "the good tenant requires "protection. There should be some sort of arbitration "for disputes"; and that is as far as I have got in my books. I have not got half through Bedford county. The idea as to how this thing is to take place I grant and admit is very ill-defined, but from what they said I prepared this paragraph and thought that these remarks that I respectively submitted in my report would represent them.

48,252. Now that these paragraphs in your notes have been referred to, I would ask you whether you think that paragraph 189 is quite justified as indicating a scheme put forward on behalf of a considerable number of men?—I certainly answer that in this way: if I had no other evidence than the notes in my book, I would certainly say I was not entitled to have put any such scheme into their mouths—certainly not. But the fact remains that these men had their ideas all running in the same way, and I did everything I possibly could to get out from them how was this thing going to run, what form was it going to take, and they were all agreed that there should be some arbitrator, some person, to meet this difficulty. When this was said to me over and over again, I sat rather thinking over it.

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48,253. Of course, one is obliged to take it in connexion with the other statement you made, that they are all opposed to the land court?—Yes, that is so.

Advisory boards and land courts.

48,254. To all intents and purposes there is very little distinction, I think you have admitted, between the land court and the scheme of arbitration such as you have developed?—I did not think that you asked me the question in that way. I do not know—possibly I am wrong—but I do not remember your having instituted a comparison as between land courts and that to me.

48,255. I think yesterday, in some answers you made to me—I put some questions, interrupting some other member of the Commission—you stated that you saw very little distinction in principle between a land court and an arbitration with compulsory powers, such as was indicated in the scheme; it was really a question of words and of sentiment, rather than any real distinction between them?—You may be right; my memory may be at fault.

48,256. It is extremely important to ascertain what was really in the minds of these people, especially as they condemned the principle of the land court?—Yes, they condemned the principle of the land court, and I am sure, looking through the whole of my books, I will find that the evidence given to me on this point is all of this character; that there is something wanted, and that, although I have not defined it in my note books, never for a single instant thinking of this arising, it was a repetition of the same thing, and it took me all my time to be thinking, What are these men driving at? and trying to get the idea into my own head.

48,257. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Surely compulsory arbitration for the fixing of rent is a land court pure and simple?—I remember saying this: that the objections to a land court, I believe, is more or less sentimental. I think it is the name of the thing, and perhaps the functions of this arbitrator may be just the land court over again. That may be.

48,258. (*Chairman.*) The difficulty is whether they thoroughly understood that this arbitrator was really nothing more than a land court in another name, or whether there was in their minds the idea that these arbitrators would either be only appointed *ad hoc* by agreement, or whether their decisions would be absolutely binding upon both landlord and tenant; the effect being that the tenant might be compelled to give a rent which he was not otherwise prepared to do?—I am sure of this, that although those men's opinions are very badly defined, still at the back of it all there is the fact that if this person, this arbitrator, is to exist, he will have some power which is not possessed by a private individual, and I think that, as you say, amounts more or less to the force of a land court.

48,259. The question is, then, whether they thoroughly understood that?—Yes, I am sure they felt that this arbitrator must needs have some power not possessed by a private individual.

48,260. Would you recommend to us one of these gentlemen as a good witness, representative of the class, whom we might call, so as to ascertain from him himself what his views are?—I have not got through the whole of the evidence yet; I have only got eight names; I know that one or two of these men would be very unwilling to give evidence.

48,261. I do not want to call them all, but one would like to have some good representative man from the district, who would fairly state the views of others in their own words, so that we may gather from a fountain source what their real views are?—Would you mind letting me send a note in about this, because it will take me a bit of time to look through the whole of the evidence? I will do it to-night.

48,262. Certainly. Would you wish to retain the paragraph 189 in its present form or not?—The matter of that paragraph is in your own hands; do with it what you like.

48,263. I do not want to alter it; I only ask, in view of those entries, whether you think the paragraph itself is fully justified?—No; in view of those entries, and feeling that the consequences which might follow such a change from the old custom were not discussed and probably were not thought of, I would ask permission to withdraw it until considerably modified.

Report on Durham and Yorkshire.

48,264. Now we will go on to this other report. With regard to Durham and Yorkshire, you found the condition of things generally very much better there than in Northamptonshire and Bedfordshire?—Yes.

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48,265. That partly has arisen, I presume, from the fact that they have not had the same bad seasons there?—Yes, partly.

Condition of agriculture.

48,266. And partly that they have better markets close by, I suppose?—Yes.

48,267. And partly that the farmers seem to have more readily adapted themselves to the changing circumstances?—I think so, and partly again that there is not such a large extent of strong clay.

Laying land down to grass.

48,268. But even on the strong clay land things do not seem to be so bad as they are either in Northamptonshire or in Essex?—I did not see very much clay land. Most of the strong clay land that I saw was near Darlington. Up in those parts I think that they have succeeded in getting those lands to grass better; altogether, even with the clay lands, they do not seem to be in such a bad plight.

48,269. Is that due to the fact that they have better understood how to farm this clay land, with temporary grasses or laying it down to permanent grass, than the farmers in Bedfordshire and in Essex?—Yes, I think that they are perhaps better grass farmers up there.

48,270. They better understand it?—I think they do.

Demand for farms.

48,271. I think you say that generally throughout this district there is a demand for farms?—Yes, the same thing holds good there. Certain farms are desirable, farms of a certain acreage, with good buildings and with a good class of land; there is a good demand for those farms.

48,272. In paragraph 27, you say: "There is at "present no difficulty in finding tenants for good "medium-sized farms"?—Yes, that is so.

48,273. "Indeed there is a very keen demand for "those favourably situated. This applies to the whole "of the district I travelled"?—It does.

48,274. "No sooner does a good farm come into the "market than there are bidders for it, and, in many "cases, near towns, old rents are obtained"?—That is so.

48,275. One would gather from that that there is a keen demand for very good farms, but there is a fair demand even for the average farms?—Yes, there is a fair demand, and in the district of Darlington, which I went into pretty closely, and round about Middlesbrough, where you get into almost what you would call suburban farms, where milk and hay are sold for town purposes, there is a very keen demand.

Rent.

48,276. You say that in the neighbourhood of towns the rent has not gone down?—I think that farms in the neighbourhood of towns are making the old rent in the case of new tenancies.

48,277. Do you mean the old rents before the reduction took place?—No; I mean the same rent that the outgoing tenant paid. There may be cases of exceptions, certainly.

Type of tenants.

48,278. From what class do these new tenants come; do they come from the farming class; are they the sons of other farmers?—This is a biggish district; do you mean in the Darlington District or down in Yorkshire?

48,279. All about that country?—They are hard-working men, and they are chiefly of the agricultural classes.

48,280. You say there is a demand for farms; are the persons who bid for these farms men of the farming class, sons of farmers, and so forth?—Yes.

Farming capital.

48,281. Do they generally have sufficient capital to manage the farms?—I think that the farmers in the North enter farms with larger capital than they appear to do in the corn-growing counties.

48,282. Then there seem to be a class of people who have a knowledge of farming, and who have capital in hand to devote to the employment?—Yes, I think they are eligible tenants.

48,283. That would seems to indicate that the business is not so bad as at first sight it might appear, and that there are a considerable number of persons who think that a profit is to be made out of it?—Taking Yorkshire and Durham as a whole, I do not think that any person would say that there was a profit to be made out of it; but it is not deplorably bad, as it is in the southern parts.

48,284. Still, apparently a considerable number of people are led to embark capital in it?—Yes, men will embark capital in it, but I think the capital has decreased per acre.

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48,285. That naturally is the fact on account of the low prices?—Yes.

48,286. A farmer coming in now would not necessarily require so large a capital?—No.

48,287. Therefore the area of the class of persons who could compete for farms has somewhat increased on that account?—Yes.

48,288. A farmer coming into a farm under these conditions does so under a certain advantage?—Yes. I do not see that agricultural depression in that district has given people a distrust, or has prevented them from going into agriculture.

Wages.

48,289. Then, I suppose that, owing to competition with the mining and other industries, the wages of the farm labourers have been fully maintained there?—Yes, I think they have.

48,290. There has been no reduction lately in the labourers' wages?—No, I do not think there has.

48,291. Do the wages of labourers range rather high?—Yes, the wages are rather high; up to 17*s.* a week with some extras, such as a cottage. I think that the wages in these districts, particularly the nearer you get to the manufacturing towns, are very much the same as they are in my part of Scotland; that is to say, a ploughman is worth about 1*l.* a week all told.

Arbitration for fair rents.

48,292. Then I do not think that you report from this district to the same extent as you have in Bedfordshire and Huntingdonshire, as to the desire of the tenant farmers for any system of arbitration on rents; but there is a paragraph about it?—The same idea is mentioned to you in a sort of quiet form, and in certain quarters it is very pronounced. I met some men up there who have very decided ideas on those points.

48,293. Paragraph 74 runs, "Anything like compulsory interference between landlord and tenant is objected to"?—It is, indeed.

48,294. "And land courts, although recommended by a few, are not, generally speaking, desired. Tenants prefer to arrange rents, if possible, without the intervention of a third party; but failing a satisfactory arrangement, they feel that arbitration should be at hand"?—I think that is very fair. If I were to write that again, if you were to ask me to do it, I do not know how I would alter it.

48,295. Still I have got to make the same observation upon that as I had upon your report in the other district, namely, that it is not quite clear what the tenants mean by this arbitration, especially when taken in combination with an objection to compulsory interference between landlord and tenant by land courts. Did they clearly understand that this arbitration was to be of a compulsory nature, and binding as between landlord and tenant, even against their will?—I was just thinking over that point before I came in. I think that the feeling of the men is this: Sometimes at a fair you will see a man trying to sell cattle; he cannot do it; the person that is buying from him will not give him the price, or he will not come down enough. Somebody steps in and says, "Look here, you two men, both of you do not know the value of the beasts, but I will get the matter settled for you"; and before five minutes are over, the cattle are bought and sold. I think that is the idea.

48,296. That is a reference *ad hoc* to the particular man with the agreement of both parties, which is a very different thing to the appointment of a person by the State with the name of arbitrator, to whom this matter should be referred, and whose decision should be binding whether either of those parties objects or not. The illustration you give, if that illustrates what is in the minds of those people, would indicate a very different thing from a compulsory arbitration?—It would, I know. On the other hand, of course, this person, this middleman so to speak, must have some power. I am sure that the tenant farmers—I am perfectly sure upon the point—mean that he must have some power.

48,297. Yes, when they both agree to refer the matter to him?—Yes, when they both agree.

48,298. But then the essence of the thing turns upon whether they both agree to refer the matter to him. Of course it may be that what they think desirable is that there should be somebody nominated by the State with the name of "arbitrator," to whom landlords and tenants might, by agreement, refer these matters?—I say the same with regard to the north as the south. I think the feeling of the tenants is the same, that there ought to be some person to whom they could refer, and that if they could not agree there ought to be this person to whom they could refer.

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48,299. Would you name some person in this district who would represent the opinions of the local men?—I think one of the best witnesses I had in these parts was a very well-known farmer, and I believe you had him here as a witness.

48,300. Who was that?—Mr. Hutchison, of Catterick. Mr. Hutchison spoke to me with reference to his own farm, which is a very beautiful farm, and is splendidly farmed. He said to me, "I am paying far more rent than I ought to pay for this place."

48,301. (*Viscount Cobham.*) He told us that, but I do not remember his going beyond that?—He did go beyond that with me. He said, "I know perfectly well that if I gave this place up, it would be snapped up at the old rent, and I feel the insecurity of the position." Mr. Hutchison is a very quiet man. If you ask the farmers, generally, the question, they do not know exactly how they are going to get out of the difficulty, but they say there ought to be something of this kind, and they think that the appointment of this Government arbitrator would be a useful sort of courseto pursue.

48,302. (*Chairman.*) That one can understand, but the question is, whether the arbitrator nominated by the Government is to be appealed to by either party in a dispute, and without the consent of the other, and to give a determination which would be binding upon both. Was that clearly what they understood, or was it merely a permissive system of a somewhat vague character, which both parties by agreement might refer to, that they had in their minds?—I have given you the extracts from my notes so far as they have gone. From these notes it would be impossible for me to answer that question, because I did not go into these questions of compulsion. There was a shady sort of idea in their heads, and I tried to make the best of it.

48,303. I am quite satisfied with that answer, that you did not go into the question of compulsion?—No, I did not, I tried to find out what they were wanting.

48,304. You did not go into the question of compulsion, and therefore it is not clear that they knew what it really meant?—I do not think I mentioned the word "compulsion" to any of them; I quite grant that.

48,305. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The owner of a very large estate said that he had no objection to arbitration I see?—Yes.

48,306. Do you know in what sense he understood the word?—Yes, I remember. It was in the matter of fair rent. He quoted two cases to me where he had settled this question of a fair rent. There was a difference of opinion, and an arbitrator was called in that they had agreed upon.

48,307. That was in the case of a sitting tenant, I suppose?—Yes.

48,308. And not at the entry of a new tenant?—No. Pardon me for interposing this, but I do not think I have met a single person who ever suggested the idea of a new tenancy being submitted to any such thing.

48,309. I asked you yesterday, supposing within six months of his taking the farm, he thought he was paying too much, he could then raise the question?—He is the sitting tenant then.

48,310. It comes to very much the same thing?—I grant you it does.

48,311. You say this gentleman had referred to arbitration an application from the tenant for a reduction of rent?—He quoted to me two cases.

48,312. Was his an estate upon which arbitration had been introduced as a principle. You go on to say, "On another large estate arbitration has already been called upon to settle disputes as to rent"?—That is the very estate you are referring to now.

48,313. (*Chairman.*) Both of those cases are consistent with the idea that the arbitrator is to be selected by agreement between the parties when a dispute arises; which is a totally different thing from an arbitrator nominated for the purpose by the State?—Yes, I quite see that.

48,314. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it in the agreements of these estates, that in every case of difference of opinion between landlord and tenant as to rents, an arbitrator

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should come in whose decision should be binding as to rent?—I am sure it is not, because I had all the agreements before me. There was a difference of opinion; the landlord had a kindly feeling towards the tenant, and the tenant had a kindly feeling towards the landlord, but they could not settle it; and therefore they agreed that such and such a person should be called in.

48,315. In fact that the farm should be revalued?—That is what it amounted to. It was revalued, and they both abided by the decision of the person. I am sure if landlords or agents as a body would agree to do that sort of thing, there would be no further step necessary. I think you asked me about the other estate mentioned in paragraph 74 of my report. I remember right well the other estate. I saw the owner himself, and I have quoted what he said to me, namely, that he would not have any objection at all to some system of arbitration, provided the proper man could be found. These were his words, "Provided that an entirely im- "partial arbitrator could be found, arbitration would "not be objectionable to me."

48,316. But you cannot state whether they would be willing or not to introduce as a principle in their agreement that, in cases of difference of opinion as to rent, an arbitrator should be called in?—No, it would become more what you might call the custom of the country. I have no right to state that I met with any landlord who would like to introduce that into his agreement; I do not think I did.

Railway rates.

48,317. Did you find a strong feeling in favour of equal mileage railway rates?—Yes. I do not think there was any question that seems to excite more attention in the north than this railway rate question.

48,318. Do they send their produce away to London?—No, practically none.

48,319. They consume it in the district?—They have far better markets at hand, for instance, some of the dairy farmers within five miles of Darlington send their milk to Newcastle.

48,320. They have to pay high short distance rates?—Yes, there are a great many complaints on that question there, still it pays them.

48,321. They view the question as affecting their own interests, not as affecting other people's interests?—I think you may safely take it that a farmer generally speaks for number one.

Arbitration for fair rent.

48,322. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I should like to follow up what Lord Cobham was asking you just now. Lower down, in paragraph 74, you quote a tenant farmer who says," "As a general rule I think a landlord and "tenant should make their own bargain, but a land "court, or the appointment of Government arbitrators "would be a very great boon to the farmer to appeal to "in special cases such as I have related." You have had that expression of feeling from a tenant farmer?—That is an extract from a report that was sent to me.

48,323. Is that pretty much what you think is the general feeling?—I think that this gentleman, and I thought it at the time, goes a bit beyond the general feeling, or else expresses his ideas in stronger language.

48,324. Where was the strongest expression of opinion, do you think, as regards arbitration, or the appeal to arbitration—in the three southern counties we were asking you about this morning, or up in these northern counties?—The ideas of the farmers in both instances were very much similar. I think very few expressed themselves in such strong language as this gentleman, either written or spoken. It is very difficult to define between farmers when their ideas are not exactly carried out.

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Importation of cattle disease.

48,325. To go to another subject you say, in paragraph 79, "With reference to the importation of Canadian "store cattle it is generally agreed that were this put "a stop to, encouragement would be given to home "breeding, but feeders argue that already lean stock are "too dear in proportion to beef." Did you find a great difference of opinion between people who breed and people who feed?—A great difference, they were exactly opposed to one another. The breeder wants the price of stores to rise, and consequently wants all importation of store stock to come to an end.

48,326. Was it for the sake of the rise in the price of store cattle, or for the sake of freedom from disease?—I think the price had more to do with it.

Arbitration for fair rent.

48,327. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In paragraph 74 you say, "Both in Durham and Yorkshire, I heard of numerous "cases where landlords had sent away good tenants "owing to disagreement upon the question of a fair "rent, and after a time had been forced to accept lower "offers from strangers." Did you get details in those cases, or were they general statements?—They were all examples of farms mentioned to me.

48,328. Details of rent, with names and so on?—I did not go into the details of the rents. I took the evidence as being *bonâ fide*, and I did not go into the details of the rents. I do not think details of the rents could have been given to me.

48,329. "Even on the largest and best estates such "occurrences have taken place but they are more fre- "quent upon small and poor properties"?—Yes, I recollect that is so.

48,330. You heard details, then, of the estates, I suppose?—Yes, I remember them distinctly at this present moment—I mean to say I remember the names of the estates.

48,331. But, as a general rule, I think, I rather understood you to say that the rents in many parts had been maintained in the neighbourhood of towns in Yorkshire?—Yes, that is to say, there were reductions given within the last 10 years, but I think the letting value of land between 1893 and 1894 has not fallen in districts near towns.

48,332. If the sitting tenant went out another tenant would be got at about the same price?—Yes, I think so.

48,333. In such a case as that do you want anybody to settle the rent? Is that not a proof that the present rent is the market rent?—Of course it is in these particular instances.

48,334. But you would not require in such a case as that to have arbitration?—No, certainly not, no dispute would arise. That is a new taking too.

48,335. Then, in the case that you give lower down, in the same paragraph, you say: "He has arrived at the "conclusion that if he had farmed less well and spent "less of his own upon another man's property, his "rent would have been lower than it now is. He "cannot leave, and he does not know how to farm "badly. His rent he feels is far too high, but were he "to quit, the landlord would take all the buildings, "pay him a small sum for manure and cakes, and get "the old rent from a new tenant"?—That is not near a town at all, that is right away in Swaledale.

48,336. In a case like that, where the farmer considers the rent is far too high, but, at the same time feels quite sure that the landlord would get the same rent from a new tenant, it rather shows that he is paying the market rent?—It is not a very good case, because this is an instance of a gentleman who really farmed the place as if it had been his own property. He has laid out an immense amount of money in building and he probably has very little claim, if any, and that has put an exceptional value on his place. It is a splendidly farmed place altogether, and a most desirable place.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. Hope.

Mr. James Hope re-called and further examined. (*For previous evidence, see Vol. I., page* 348.)

Mr. J. Hope.

Report on Scotch counties.

48,337. (*Chairman.*) As assistant commissioner to this Commission, you have reported to us upon the counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, Selkirk, Peebles, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Banff, Nairn, and Elgin?—Yes.

Tenure.

48,338. Do those counties use the system of 19 years' leases?—Yes, generally; I should say almost entirely.

48,339. Have the landlords in those cases where these leases existed made reductions of rent?—Yes, I think they have almost everywhere made reductions.

48,340. In spite of the fact that they are legally entitled to continue the leases?—To run out the lease.

Reduction of rents.

48,341. What should you say has been the average reduction of rents?—Perhaps 33 per cent.

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48,342. Over the whole district?—Yes.

48,343. From what year should you say this began?—It began about 1882, I think.

48,344. I suppose they did not make the full reductions at that time, but they have gradually made them?—They have been increasing onwards.

48,345. You found little complaint on that head?—No, not much complaint on that head.

48,346. Tenants were generally satisfied that the landlords had met them as far as they could?—They thought the landlords had fairly met the depression.

Tenure.

48,347. Then I think you say that the tendency has been lately to renew these leases but with a break?—Yes, with a break of five years.

48,348. Practically leaving it to the option of either party to make the break?—Yes.

48,349. Therefore it is no longer a lease in the sense of a letting for a fixed period?—It comes very much to a five years' lease.

48,350. I presume you would think that the shortening of the lease is rather a misfortune?—I think it is.

48,351. Because the farmer has not time to turn round and to make the best of his capital within five years?—No doubt they are not apt to make the same improvement that they would if they were sure of the longer term.

48,352. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are the leases often broken?—I know of some that have been broken, some by landlord and some by tenant.

48,353. (*Chairman.*) Should you say that that unwillingness to continue to let farms on lease for the same length of time has come from the landlord or the tenant?—I think, perhaps, it is very much from the landlord; I would say more from the landlord than from the tenant.

48,354. The landlord has been unwilling to let for so long a period as 19 years at the low rents which have prevailed?—Yes; in the hope that things might mend.

48,355. I suppose his feeling might be that, whereas he found himself under a moral obligation to lower the rent during the leases in consequence of the bad times, he does not wish in the future to put it out of his power to raise the rent after a certain few years in the event of a change taking place?—Quite so.

48,356. But still it must be a misfortune to the country that the system of 19 years' lease has been broken in upon?—I think it is.

Judicial rents.

48,357. Have you found any desire among the farmers in any of those counties for a judicial determination of the rents?—Nowhere, except in the north, at Aberdeen, and perhaps at Banff and round some of those places.

48,358. Those, I suppose, would be quite small farms?—Yes, they are generally small farms up there.

48,359. And the holders are perhaps more nearly approaching the condition of crofters?—There was a number of them, and in my last report when I reported on Aberdeenshire, I had to state that they even went for the Ashbourne Act being extended to Scotland. That was brought up again, I think, at Banff. It was only in the north that it was ever mentioned.

48,360. The class of tenants would be somewhat different to what they are in the south?—I do not know; they are perhaps a little more radical up there than in the south.

48,361. Without entering into politics, I mean they are of a somewhat different class of farmers to the farmers of the south?—I do not know; they are a very shrewd class up there.

48,362. But, with that exception, you have not found any such desire among them?—No.

48,363. Has the subject been discussed at the meetings you have attended?—Yes, but there is no desire to bring the Government to interfere between landlord and tenant as to rent.

48,364. That, they think, should be a matter solely between the landlord and the tenant?—Quite so.

Demand for farms.

48,365. Then, I think you say that almost everywhere throughout this district there has of late grown up a demand for farms?—I would not say in every district; in certain districts there has been more demand for farms the last two years. We do not know what it is owing to; it is very difficult to say what it is owing to.

48,366. Which districts are they?—I should say chiefly in the Lothians, perhaps.

48,367. Are they generally large farms or small farms?—Well, some 200 to 300 acre farms, I think; those have been the ones that have let the best.

Farming capital.

48,368. Farms requiring a good amount of capital?—Yes.

48,369. What is the average amount of capital required in those districts?—I think about 10*l.* an acre.

48,370. As much as that?—Say 10*l.* to 15*l.* an acre.

48,371. Are there men of sufficient capital ready to take these farms?—There are not very many of them, but there are some.

Demand for farms.

48,372. Still, there is enough to make a demand?—Yes, there is enough to make a demand.

48,373. And that, I suppose, has had the effect of keeping up rents?—I would not say they have been taking them at increased rents, but they have been taking them at those reduced rents.

48,374. That has been a cause of keeping up the rents?—Quite so.

48,375. How do you account for the fact that there are these men ready with capital to come in to take these farms?—You may account for it in this way: that a man with a lot of sons, perhaps, a year or two ago was sending them out of the country, say to America and those places, but now he would not send them there; they would be worse there than they are at home; I think that is how it has thrown more people into it.

48,376. Are these applicants mostly the sons of farmers?—No, I would not say they are mostly that either, but a certain class of people think it is a fine life; and perhaps a young fellow marries a rich wife, and there is a good residence on this farm, and he comes and gives a bigger rent for it than a practical man would. I know of two or three cases of that sort that have occurred within my own personal observation.

48,377. As a general rule, do these men come from the farming class?—No; those have not come from the farmer class. Then, on the other hand, we have a great many butchers and stockmen; men who have raised themselves. We have a great many of those men coming into East Lothians at the present time and into Berwickshire—men that were not bred to farming; they have made money at their trade, and they are spending it on farms.

48,378. Are there not also the sons of farmers ready to come in?—There are a great many non-practical men who are taking farms in the last two or three years—what we would call an inferior class. The old class of the sort of yeoman farmers are almost all out of the trade.

48,379. What do they go into?—I do not know; they have got broke, I think; that is about it. Some of them go into the poor's-houses.

48,380. Still it seems to me a remarkable fact that there should be a demand for farms in face of the general complaint?—It is, I must say, a remarkable fact. It is thought that, with the low rents and the break of five years, many of them are going into it in the hope that things will turn better, and then in the hope that under the Agricultural Holdings Act they will be able to make up a good claim at the end of the five years; and, perhaps, if the farm has been in good order before that, they will take something out of it, by exhausting the improvements of their predecessors.

Changes in system of cultivation.

48,381. Has there been much change of system of cultivation, or has it been kept up?—Looking to those statistics that I have put before you, you will find in every county there are a great many thousands of acres more in grass now than there were 10 or 15 years ago.

48,382. A greater proportion?—Yes. They have been extending their rotation from four years to five, and in some cases six years.

Reduced cost of production.

48,383. And reducing the amount of plough land in each year?—Reducing the labour bill as much as possible; so that a farm that kept five or six pair of horses in most cases that will be reduced and they will have two pairs taken off.

48,384. Then the farmers have had the advantage of the reduction in the rent, and they have had the advantage of the reduced payment for all the purchases they may have?—Yes.

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40,385. Which apparently, in the case of feeding stuffs and manures, has been very great?—All of it has been cheaper.

48,386. From the figures you give they have been 45 per cent. cheaper?—Yes, they are very much cheaper.

48,387. I suppose the Scotch farmers pay a very large amount for them?—Yes, a large amount; it generally exceeds the rent in many cases.

Position of labourers.

48,388. On the other hand, they have not had any advantage in the reduction of wages?—No, wages have rather been increasing. The landlord is worse off and the tenant is worse off, and the labourer is better; he is improving his position every day.

48,389. The money wages are higher than they were?—Yes.

48,390. And, as he can get more for his wages, the labourer's position is still more improved?—Yes, he can buy everything cheaper and he has more money.

Reduced labour.

48,391. Should you say there is any reduction in the number of labourers employed?—Where they have been extending the rotations, of course, there has been a little saving in that respect, but I would not say much in Scotland.

48,392. Therefore, there has been very little economy for the farmer in that direction?—Quite so, not much.

48,393. He has employed, perhaps, a slightly less number of men, but not much, and he has had to pay them rather more wages?—He has had to pay more wages for women workers; these things have been increasing.

Position of labourers.

48,394. It is, then, a very important factor for all that part of Scotland that the bulk of the population who are labouring people have gained enormously by the low prices?—They have gained enormously.

48,395. That gain, apparently, has been at the expense largely of the landlords, who have had to reduce their rents?—Yes.

48,396. And to some extent, perhaps to a large extent, at the expense of the profits of the farmers?—Quite so.

48,397. Therefore there has been a fresh distribution of the produce of the land?—Yes.

48,398. And the labourers have got a great deal more in proportion than they did?—Yes, it has gone out of the landlord's pocket and the farmer's pocket, and it has gone into the labourer's.

48,399. Do you think that is on the whole regrettable or not?—I do not know; they have got the vote, you see.

48,400. I do not want to enter into that; but, looking broadly at the whole result in the district, do you think it is to be regretted or not?—I do not grudge the labourer his hire—by no means.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

48,401. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is the memorandum you have prepared with regard to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act the result of conferences with farmers?—Yes. *See* Appendix A 1.

48,402. Does it embody very much their views?—Yes.

48,403. It has actually been laid before them and received formal sanction from meetings or bodies of farmers?—Quite so. It is just the gist of the meetings I held all over the country.

Appointment of valuators.

48,404. It is proposed that Scotland should be divided up into districts, and that a valuator should be appointed for each to adjudicate upon all claims and questions under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

48,405. It is also proposed at the commencement of any tenancy that the district valuator should, if desired by either landlord or tenant, be called in to furnish a report upon the condition of a farm?—Quite so.

48,406. That is intended to be optional with either one or the other of the parties?—Of course.

48,407. It is not suggested that this should be imposed upon landlords and tenants?—I do not know. I think it would simplify matters very much in settling the claims that arise between landlord and tenant at the present time, if we had such a system adopted.

48,408. As it is given here in your memorandum, this bringing in of a valuator on the entry of a tenant is a provision which either landlord or tenant could contract himself out of?—Yes, I expect he could.

48,409. Then the court of appeal is to be the whole body of valuators for the country?—Yes, the whole body.

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48,410. There is no provision made for an appeal on points of law?—No.

48,411. None of these men would be lawyers?—No.

48,412. Would you give no appeal on questions of law; there have been a good many questions of law arising under this Act hitherto?—They could take the opinion of a lawyer if it was required; but, generally speaking, we have found it was better to steer clear of the law as much as possible.

48,413. (*Mr. Clay.*) Your idea in keeping clear of the law is not so much with reference to the lawyers, I presume, because you would take, as you generally do in Scotland, counsel's opinion?—Exactly. The object is to cheapen the whole process that we have just now.

48,414. Many important cases are settled upon the basis of counsel's opinion?—Quite so.

48,415. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The five laymen you would appoint valuators are quite likely to commit gross blunders in law occasionally; what would you provide in that case?—I do not think that there is very often much of a law question coming into a claim between landlord and tenant.

48,416. I am afraid we have found that to be so in England?—I do not see why there should.

48,417. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do I understand that the idea is that these valuators are to settle the rent?—No, it is only in connection with references under the Agricultural Holdings Act. There is no wish for that in Scotland except, as I said to the Chairman, in the north of Scotland, and even there it is very partial.

Importation of Canadian cattle.

48,418. I should like to ask you a question or two as regards what you say in your report on the importation of Canadian store cattle. Is there a very strong feeling in some parts of Scotland that they should be let in?—Yes, there is a very strong feeling indeed.

48,419. Without quarantine?—That we should have Canadian stores admitted into the country. It is thought a very great grievance indeed all over the northern counties such as Fife, Forfar, and Perthshire, and the Lothians and Berwickshire as well.

48,420. What do those say who breed their own stock?—Of course a few that breed their own stocks do not want them in, but the great bulk of the farmers engaged in the feeding industry do want them in.

48,421. They have no fear of disease coming in?—No, they have no fear of disease with Canadian stock.

48,422. To the detriment of those who have to rear stock?—I do not know. I do not think we have got disease by Canadians before, and I do not see why we should get it now, although we got them in.

48,423. Would you confine the free importation without restriction to Canadian stock, or would you include any other stock?—I would have the same restrictions as we have always had; there always have been restrictions.

48,424. Would you allow Canadian cattle to come in and not allow American?—I would allow them to come from every country where the stock is reported to be free of disease; I would not admit diseased stock in by any means.

48,425. How are you to prove that they are not diseased?—We have never seen them diseased, the Canadians never have brought disease to us before, nor the Americans.

48,426. Only the other day it was proved that Canadian cattle which were landed in Germany had disease?—It is very much doubted—in this country at any rate.

48,427. However, I understand that the large bulk of farmers in Scotland would chance the disease being brought in?—Yes, they would.

48,428. So that they may get their produce a little bit cheaper?—The cure is worse than the disease.

48,429. Since the Canadian stock has been prohibited have there been no means taken to get stock, of which there is a great deal, over from Ireland and also from England?—We get stock from Ireland, but then you are paying two prices for it just now.

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48,430. Paying too high a price you mean?—A tremendous price.

48,431. Your one object is to get store cattle as cheap as possible?—Yes, it is to cheapen the price of them that feeders want to get the Canadians.

48,432. What is to become of the poor English breeder?—I am speaking for the bulk of the men who pay by far the largest proportion of the rental of Scotland. I think the landlord who breeds his own cattle, chiefly, can look after himself.

48,433. And have disease brought in?—No, we never had it brought in before.

Fruit growing.

48,434. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Fruit growing does not seem to increase at all in the counties you visited?—No. It has generally been a failure whenever it has been tried.

48,435. Even strawberry growing?—Yes. Mr. Gladstone sent them all to growing strawberries, and those who tried it lost money by it. They all did, and had to give it up. They began to boil it, make jam and what not with it.

Market gardening.

48,436. Has it decreased since 1892; I have the returns up to 1892?—I think fruit growing has; and vegetable-growing is decreasing very much too. The price vegetables come over from abroad now, is so low that it is decreasing very much the vegetable farming.

48,437. Except potatoes and small vegetables, I suppose?—Yes, but they are cultivated in the ordinary rotation of a farm.

State loans.

48,438. (*Mr. Clay.*) I see that on page 18, paragraph 16, you refer to State loans; what is the feeling in your district of giving cheap money to landlords, especially for improving their property and dwellings in cases where there is a heavy mortgage?—It always was represented to me, that if money was got at a cheaper rate it would assist in draining, and a great many of those things that simply are not done at all now. There is no draining going on in any part of the country, and it was thought that if cheaper money could be got it would assist very much to keep up the fertility of the soil.

48,439. Do you not think it would even do something more than keep up the fertility of the soil?—Yes.

48,440. It would give a stimulus and an increase to the amount of labour open to the labouring man?—Yes, and better crops would be grown.

48,441. All the money would go to the labouring man?—Yes.

48,442. That would be beneficial to all classes, would it not?—Some people say just now, you can borrow money at 3 per cent., but there are many estates which are so burdened that they cannot borrow the money. If the State were to come forward and lend money, say at 2½ per cent., it would come to be the first charge on the property; it would come in before all bonds. That is where the difficulty comes in; that many estates are so burdened at the present time that they could not raise the money to drain the land.

48,443. Do you consider still that a good deal of money should go in draining, and in making improvements in the buildings that are required in Scotland?—Yes.

Malt tax.

48,444. On page 32, paragraph 42, you deal with the Malt Tax; what was the expression of opinion that you got upon that point?—The feeling that has been expressed to me all over the country, is that the change of the duty from the malt to the beer reduced the price of Scotch barley, and I suppose English barley as well, from 5*s.* to 10*s.* a quarter. It enabled the brewers to use that light foreign barley. There are enormous quantities of foreign barleys, sometimes 30,000 quarters coming in one vessel, and it has opened up a great field for barley being grown abroad. The foreign barley is bought in preference to our fine heavy barleys.

48,445. What is the remedy for that?—I have been talking to some brewers on the subject, and I must say that I have changed my mind very much. At one time I thought it would be very difficult to go back to the old machinery, to put the clock back as they would call it, but in speaking to some brewers I find that it would not be very difficult to do at all, and that we might easily go back to the duty on the malt. Some suggest, on the other hand, a duty on foreign barley, and many people say that the teetotallers would all support it. I do not know whether they would or not.

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Tax on foreign barley.

48,446. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) If you tax foreign barley, do you know whether the taxing of the cheap barley that comes into England, and is bought for fattening cattle, would be felt by those who feed beasts or sheep?—There is a little of it goes to fatten cattle, but I think if the landlord or the tenant got a benefit from going back, say, to the old malt tax, they would not mind, although they paid a little more for this light barley.

48,447. (*Mr. Clay.*) I gather from you that your idea, or the idea of the people that you have seen, is that they would only tax foreign barley used for malt, and not that used for cattle?—Exactly; you could give a drawback. It has always been represented to me that there might be a drawback given on the barley that went for food.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

48,448. Regarding this memorandum that you have drawn up on the Agricultural Holdings Act (*see* Appendix A I), which you have paid great attention to, I know, you have had a good number of valuations through your hands, have you not?—Yes, I have.

Compensation for increased fertility.

48,449. In making these valuations, have you included something more than merely the last two or three years of the lease as regards compensation? Have you included something for the increased fertility?—It has been done in some cases; I had to do with a case some years ago, where a considerable sum was given for increased fertility.

48,450. I suppose the Corsehope case was a very remarkable case?—Yes, in that case a very considerable sum was given.

48,451. How was the point decided in the Winterfield case?—There was nothing given there; it has been thought a great hardship, although it was rather a small case, that the arbitrator did not take into account the great improvement that had been made on the farm.

48,452. Considering your own experience and knowledge, would you say that you might have given allowance for increased fertility?—I think I would.

Official referees.

48,453. Is it your idea of an official referee that experts might get into a better groove and give compensation in a more liberal form under an improved Act?—Yes, and that would cheapen the process very much; it would cheapen the process more than anything else I should say, if we could go into some such thing as I put before you.

48,454. As you have the idea of having five or six official referees in Scotland, if there was anything coming up in the shape of an advisory board, would you have any objection, without compulsory powers, to give them a sort of moral force between the landlord and tenant, and to enable the landlord and tenant to go to them to get a judicial decision?—I think that is quite possible.

48,455. You see no difficulty in working that, do you?—No.

48,456. Your whole object is to have the Agricultural Holdings Act remedied and cheapened? — And cheapened; bring it in so that the small farmer with his 30*l.* claim would get what he is entitled to the same as you and I who had a claim of, perhaps, a thousand of pounds.

48,457. And that would bring more capital into the land?—Yes, I think that is what is wanted at the present time.

48,458. Is it urgently required?—It is, urgently, all over the country where I have been.

48,459. You are satisfied that that report of yours, with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, is based upon the opinions of the great majority of farmers of Scotland?—Quite so; it is put forward as the opinions that I have collected.

Importation of Canadian cattle.

48,460. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You said something with regard to the introduction of cattle; does that feeling not obtain only in a few of these counties—around the Aberdeen and Dundee districts?—I would say all over Scotland where the people buy store cattle to feed. In all the districts where stores are bought for feeding it is very much wished to get the Canadian cattle in.

48,461. In some of these districts that you visited, not only the landlords, but a great lot of small tenants, breed cattle?—They do a few, but I consider that all over the country they want it. You can take Fife, Perth, and Forfar, and you can also take in Ross-shire; there are no counties that are more crying out for

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Canadian cattle coming in than those counties, and the Lothians, and Berwickshire, and Roxburghshire.

48,462. You are referring to the purely feeding farmers?—Yes, these are the great bulk of the counties where the greater part of the rental of Scotland comes from. You may take it that the farmers who pay the greater part of the rental of Scotland are wanting Canadian cattle.

48,463. You will admit, I suppose, that there are other rent payers in Scotland, besides these big beef feeders?—There are, but still I am taking the great proportion. You may take it that the heavy bulk of farmers, where the rent comes from in Scotland, want Canadian cattle.

48,464. Is it not out of these cattle that they breed that most of these small farmers in the north have been able to make and pay their rent within the last few years?—I believe that is so with a few of them, but even if you go to Aberdeen they like to get the Canadian cattle at Aberdeen, where there are a lot of small farmers.

48,465. I mentioned Aberdeen and Dundee particularly. Then you spoke about introducing them from countries where there was no disease; until the cattle come to this country, how can you deal with that?—I suppose if it was reported that there was disease abroad this country would never think of allowing the cattle in.

48,466. If a country had been declared diseased, it would only be when the cattle arrived at our ports that we would have power to interfere with the introduction?—There might be something in that.

48,467. That is just what has occurred in connexion with Canadian cattle, is it not?—There is only one alleged case come into Germany, I believe; it is the only case that has ever been found certain.

48,468. But I say that is exactly the procedure that has been followed by this country in regard to the introduction of disease from Canada, namely, dealing with it at the port of debarkation?—Yes. I say that, if we are not to have Canadian stores in to feed in this country, they should not be allowed to come into this country to be slaughtered. I think it would assist us here if we are not to get Canadians to feed, that we should not have them alive. That is the evidence that I have got all over the country. Why should we have these cattle brought in here to be slaughtered, and you will not let us have them to feed? You are bringing in diseased cattle just now, you see, from your point of view; you say the Canadian cattle are diseased cattle, and they bring disease to this country, and you are bringing them in to slaughter; why bring them in at all?

48,469. I do not see that we are bringing in diseased cattle because we can check them now perfectly; these cattle do not leave the wharves, they are slaughtered at the wharves?—I know they do not leave the wharves.

48,470. Therefore we do not allow them to do any harm in this country?—I think if you give us proper free trade we should not have them in at all. If we are not to have them in for one thing I would not have them in for the other.

48,471. Then you believe in free trade for disease as well as everything else?—No, most certainly not.

State loans.

48,472. It is an extraordinary doctrine. However, you have mentioned about the Government advancing money, and you have pointed out in your report that it is upon the heavily burdened estates where this, of course, is most desirable?—Exactly.

48,473. What security will the Government be able to get in those cases?—It does not matter what bonds are on the estate; if the Government gives the money their claim comes in front of all bonds. That is the law, I understand; and that is how it would be very advantageous for the Government to come in and give the money. The Government would have the first charge.

Restrictions in leases.

48,474. You have said a good deal about these penal clauses in the Scotch leases, is it not the fact that they are only enforced in very glaring cases?—I think they are not often enforced.

48,475. If they are it is a very glaring case?—If so. I have known of them being enforced.

48,476. For that very reason is it not necessary to have some protection against a man who will mismanage land?—My own opinion is that, with all the restrictions you put on a tenant, you will never make a bad tenant into a good tenant. I think it goes all for nothing. That is my own opinion.

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48,477. Can you show from your practical experience how a landlord is to be protected at all if you do not keep in something of a money value against a tenant?—I think he should look to the tenant when he gets him, and trust him. If he cannot get a man he can trust I would not have him there at all.

48,478. You know that two strangers meeting may mistake each other very much?—They may sometimes, but I do not think often. Look at Edinburgh now; just take Midlothian round Edinburgh, where you see the best farming in Scotland or in any country, and take some of the East Lothians. They have no restrictions, or practically none. The tenant always binds himself to a proper course of farming.

48,479. But he is bound even by your own report to bring in a certain amount of manures?—That is done in a great many cases. If a man sells hay or straw, he binds himself to bring back some manure, and very likely, if he is a good farmer, he is bringing back three and four times the manure that he is bound to bring back.

48,480. I notice in your report that you mention that some of the people you examined stated that in their opinion the way the landlord could be protected is that the land should be left in a stipulated rotation at the end of the lease?—Yes, I think there should be some clause of that sort, that he is to leave it in a proper rotation, or in a certain rotation at the end of the lease. I think that would be necessary; otherwise some men might put it all down, say in wheat, or you might have some crochety man. I think you would be bound to have some restriction in the last four or five years.

48,481. You have told us that really leases now are not in vogue. How would you propose to work that rotation, unless a man is bound down to have a certain rotation during the whole five years?—There is some difficulty with a break of five years, I must say. I think the break of five years is a mistake, both as regards the landlord and as regards the tenant. That is my own opinion.

Advertising farms.

48,482. You also point out that the advertising of farms to let seems to be a grievance; how would you propose that the landlord is to obtain tenants for his land otherwise than by public advertisement?—If I have said that, it is not my own opinion. There are always plenty of men wanting farms.

48,483. You have said, in paragraph 22, that it seems to be a grievance with men that farms are advertised?—I know it has always been put forward as a grievance against the landlords who advertise their farms.

48,484. Did these gentlemen tell you how the landlord was to put the land into the public market otherwise?—You will generally find yourself as you are a good landlord.

48,485. That is a matter of opinion?—That you have far more men wanting your farms than you have farms to let.

48,486. (*Mr. Clay.*) The Duke of Richmond is a man, I believe, who never did advertise his farms, and such men have all the best tenants?—Yes. I do not know whether you are aware of it, but on the Duke of Richmond's land he has kept his farms at the same rent for the last 20 or 30 years.

48,487. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) There is another point which I think is very important, talking of the Duke of Richmond's case, namely, that he is a man with an enormous tenantry, and he knows that within his own bounds he can get good men; but an ordinary proprietor is not in that position?—But the Duke keeps his men at the same rent; he perhaps gives them 20 or 30 per cent. reduction, but the rent is always kept the same and appears in the Valuation Roll as never being changed.

Abatements of rent.

48,488. You also point out that the opinion of most of the tenants seemingly was that any men taking farms now should not get any reductions?—I think now when things are so cheap, to go on giving reductions is a mistake. They know what the thing is and those reductions that are being given now are doing a great deal of harm, I think.

48,489. (*Chairman.*) Do you mean by reductions, temporary abatements?—Yes. At the same time if it had not been done during some of the current leases it would have been a very serious matter; but I think

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now, when things are so cheap and times are at their worst, there should be no further abatements.

48,490. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Does that point to their idea that things have reached the bottom?—I think you may take it so.

48,491. Because if matters fell substantially still, would not a landlord who refused an abatement be held up to reprobation by some people?—He might, but we have surely reached the bottom now.

Large and small farms compared.

48,492. I think in your report you seem to have some difficulty, at least it appears so from the evidence, in deciding whether large or small farms have done best?—I think it was generally brought out that if the small farmer had done better than the large one it was principally because he was not paying anything for his labour; he was getting the labour done by his family.

48,493. You also point out, I think, that beyond a certain number in certain localities there is no room for small farms?—There was no great demand for breaking up the large farms.

48,494. Therefore does it not prove really that the natural mode, that is to say, the way adopted in the country, is after all the best, namely, that a mixture of large and small is the best?—Quite so; that was my evidence.

A farm account.

48,495. In the note to a farm account on page 23, I notice that the quantities are exactly the same for an average of 10 years as you take for 1893?—Quite so.

48,496. Is that an actual return; it is a curious coincidence, is it not, that exactly the same quantities are grown in one year?—I expect that the party who furnished this was giving it in a rough way.

48,497. Then it is not much of a guide surely; I notice there is no stock at all?—He was principally showing the quantity of grain; he put the quantity of grain assuming it might be the same; he was showing more the difference in the price than anything else. Of course the return could not be the same, but the price, you know, has altered very much. I think that explains it.

Stock provided on credit.

48,498. About this system, which has given rise to complaint in Scotland, about auctioneers providing stock for a tenant on credit, does that largely prevail?—I think it does to a large extent.

48,499. Was there any suggestion that it ought to be put a stop to?—No, I do not think that there was.

48,500. To whom does the increased price of the stock go?—The increased price would go to the farmer, I take it, for his feed.

Railway rates.

48,501. In regard to the question of railway rates, did these gentlemen lead you to suppose that they considered that a railway company should be compelled to carry retail small quantities at the same rates as wholesale?—Yes, they all objected to what they had to pay for a small quantity, and also that foreign stuff coming from abroad and landed at Aberdeen could be carried very much cheaper to London than the home produce could.

Local rates.

48,502. About rates, I see you mention that they complain about new rates, and talk about the school rates, but surely, as the Education Act was passed in 1872, that is rather a mistake. It was passed 23 years ago, so that it is not a new rate now, at all, and there is no grievance of that kind?—It is not a new rate now, but the school rate was a great hardship at one time, when it was put first on.

Tuberculosis.

48,503. In regard to tuberculosis, which I see you mention, they have been trying experiments in the north, I think?—Yes.

48,504. Have you heard whether those experiments have really given practical results, something that you can go on?—I do not know; I have no statistics as to that.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

48,505. In regard to the question of the home grown produce, do most of the farmers in your district seem to think that they should be paid for corn consumed by horses?—Yes, it was very strongly complained that a man using his own crop got nothing for it, whereas if he bought his neighbour's he would be paid for it.

48,506. None of them proposed compensation for oatmeal consumed by ploughmen, did they?—No, but I think my own opinion would be that what was used in that way, and what was used for the feed of the farm horses should not be allowed for; I would be for excluding that.

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48,507. For farm horses?—What the farm horses consumed, because they are the working plant on the farm.

48,508. Was that the opinion of those who discussed this question with you?—I think it was, generally, that to the extent of what was required to feed the farm horses it should not be allowed for.

Claims and counter-claims.

48,509. About the notices of claim I see what you put here is that the claim should be put in simultaneously?—Yes.

48,510. Would that not lead to a landlord having to make a leap in the dark?—I put it there as it was put before me. My own opinion is that it should not be simultaneously, because, I think, if they have both to be made on the same day, the landlord is bound to make a claim, but if he had time to see the tenant's claim it is quite possible that he would not make one at all. That is my own opinion mind, but I am only giving you other people's in the report.

Local rates.

48,511. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You give a very curious case in the appendix to your Report, showing the anomalies that exist in the present mode of levying the poor rates in some parts of Scotland, according to established usage. It appears from it that by the present mode of assessment tenants of houses in a parish with a rateable value of 1,195*l.*, and minerals, harbours, railways, shooting, &c., amounting to 2,187*l.*, making altogether 3,383*l.*, escape rating?—Quite so.

48,512. Is that at all a common system?—No, it is not common; but of course you know with regard to the poor rate in Scotland that it is put on according to the rent, and we think that that is very unfair. You may be a proprietor, say, having a farm let at a thousand a year, and I may be your tenant. You pay on this 1,000*l.* a year, and so do I pay on it; we pay equally; but there may be a man living next door to you, who is perhaps paying 100*l.* for his house, and he may have five or six thousand a year, and he has only to pay on this 100*l.* house. We think it is not proper.

48,513. That is not the case I am speaking of here?—Of course it is not.

48,514. Is this system of rating according to established usage at all a common system in Scotland? Are there many such parishes?—There are not many parishes as bad as that. The tenant who brought up this grievance I may tell you came to a meeeing I had in Haddingtonshire, and he brought up this as a very serious grievance that he had himself. As it happened he had only been a year and a half on the farm, and after he had read off all the information I give in the Appendix about it, then I said, you have made a very good case out for your landlord, but none for yourself.

48,515. Have you got any information as to the system of classification for the poor rate in Scotland?—No, we think the poors rate should be levied on means and substance.

48,516. In the way that it was levied before the system of rating on means and substance was abandoned in Scotland?—They really had no poors rate at all at one time. It was merely a voluntary assessment.

48,517. Up to 1860 they did levy on means and substance in a good many places, but that was abolished in 1860?—That was abolished. I think we should go back to that. Let the wealth of the county pay for the poor. At present the land simply is paying for the poor; we are keeping the paupers from our own trade, and you may say from all trades.

Income tax

48,518. I do not quite understand the grievance of farmers against the income tax in Scotland. You say that most of the farmers objected to the system of income tax?—They object to it.

48,519. Do they pay any income tax at all now?—They pay largely. I know I pay largely myself.

48,520. But only the larger farmers I suppose would pay anything?—Of course, if you come down to a very small rent, they do not pay.

48,521. With a considerable rent they do not pay, do they?—We have a lot of large farms. I pay over 5,000*l.* a year myself in rent, and I grudge the income tax I can tell you, very much.

48,522. (*Chairman.*) But that, of course, is a very exceptional case. Take the farmer paying 500*l.* a year.

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Does he pay any income tax?—If he appeals he would not.

48,523. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You say in paragraph 89, "Many farmers on being reminded that if their incomes "were not such as to make them liable for income tax "a simple means was provided of obtaining relief, "replied to me that they were quite aware of this, "but that the trouble involved in obtaining exemp- "tion or abatement was so serious that in a great "many cases they were rather prepared to pay the tax "than to undertake the bother of going through the "forms which they would have to face in making an "appeal." Would farmers with rents of 500*l.* a year have to do anything more than show what their rent was, and that a third of it did not amount to the right sum that would make them liable to income tax?—They have to go and make a long mouth and practically almost hurt their credit, and many men would not do it.

48,524. How would it hurt their credit? They would only show that the rent they were paying was only so much, they would not have to show accounts or anything of that kind?—I expect they would have to show accounts, and it would be a good deal of trouble. They would go through a good deal of trouble rather than apply for it.

48,525. Any farmer who can show that his rent is 575*l.* or under would not have to pay income tax; what can be the hardship in showing that he pays a rental of 575*l.* or under, if that is all he has to do?—It is very much objected to in Scotland, I can assure you, very much.

State loans.

48,526. (*Mr. Elton.*) Did you say that in Scotland by the general law drainage charges came before bonds and family charges and mortgages?—I believe so. If the Government was to advance money, I believe it would not matter how the estate was burdened; they would have the first charge; I am told that is the law, because it would be considered in borrowing this money that this money went to improve the property, and they would say the property should be that much better. I suppose that is the way the Government would have a prior charge.

48,527. Do you not mean that they would probably take care, or that they might put into an Act of Parliament authorising them to advance money for this purpose, that their charges should have priority?—I do not know that they would need to do it; I think they have priority as the law is at present.

48,527*a*. Have you ever heard anything in support of your contention that there is priority, except under special Acts of Parliament?—I am told by the lawyers that that is the law in Scotland.

48,528. I do not presume to say anything about the Scotch law, but I will tell you what the English law is. The English law is that these charges are advanced under special Acts of Parliament which have special clauses giving this priority?—I am told the law in Scotland is the other way.

48,529. That there is a general rule to the contrary?—Yes.

48,530. That whenever Acts of Parliament are passed allowing Governments to give drainage moneys, they always have priority?—That is my information in Scotland.

48,531. That is what all the lawyers tell you?—Yes, that is it.

48,532. I was rather hoping that you would modify what you said. Of course you know best what happens in Scotland, but I was hoping that you would say that you thought drainage would probably have priority given to it, and that that would in your opinion be advantageous?—I think it would be very beneficial.

48,533. In the part of the country which you reported on, I do not think they do much dairying, do they?—There is not much dairying in the part that I have been reporting on.

48,534. Then you have not considered the subject of the oreign barley importation with regard to the dairy and baking business for which it is used so much in the south of England?—No, I have not.

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48,535. (*Chairman.*) How much land do you farm yourself?—I farm, I think, about 1,100 acres arable.

Acreage and rent of witness' farm.

48,536. Altogether?—Yes, and I pay about 5*l.* an acre for it on the average.

48,537. Five pound an acre?—Yes.

48,538. That is a very heavy rent?—I have paid it, I may tell you for 18 years, and I have never got a reduction; I never asked one, and never got it.

48,539. Are you paying the same rent now that you did?—Yes, I am.

Assessment to income tax.

48,540. What have you been assessed at to the income tax?—I pay on a third of my rental.

48,541. You have never claimed exemption?—No, I never claimed exemption. I have sometimes lost a lot of money, but I have never made a claim.

48,542. Of course you know you are entitled either to claim exemption, or to claim to be assessed on your actual income, I believe?—Now we can do so, I believe.

48,543. You have not thought it necessary to do that?—No, although I have lost money.

48,544. On the whole do you think you have gained rather than lost by the present system?—No, I have lost a great deal of money by not claiming exemption.

Results of farming.

48,545. Would you say that for 18 years you have gone on farming on this scale losing money?—Yes, I am the only man in East Lothian who has not got a reduction of rent who took a farm 18 years ago.

48,546. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Have you had any remissions?—No, never a farthing.

48,547. (*Chairman.*) And you are paying 5*l.* an acre?—Yes.

48,548. Is there a great deal of land in that district paying 5*l.* an acre?—No, there is not. I believe I farm it all myself.

48,549. (*Mr. Giffen.*) You told us a little time ago that you have been paying income tax?—Yes.

Assessment to income tax.

48,550. How does it happen that you have been paying income-tax if you have been losing money?—Because I had to pay on a third of my rental, of course. If I had appealed and made a long mouth, and gone through a lot of forms, I do not know but what I might have got something back.

48,551. (*Chairman.*) You would have got all back if you had been losing money?—There are many men such as I am who have been paying right through, rather than make any bother about it.

48,552. But the income-tax on 5,000*l.* is a very large item?—Yes, the Government has been a very great gainer, I can tell you.

48,553. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Perhaps you thought they would come and look you up another year, and find things a little different?—Yes.

Railway rates.

48,554. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You say that the people who consign meat to London from Galashiels complain of the Aberdeen rate?—Yes, they complain bitterly, because they say they pay more from Galashiels and Hawick than they do from Aberdeen.

48,555. They say the meat ought to be carried on the equal mileage rate principle?—Yes; they say we are nearer London than Aberdeen; why should we pay more?

48,556. Do they hold the same views with regard to the Yorkshire or the Northampton consigners of meat to London?—I do not know what their views are.

48,557. I mean if their contention is right as between themselves and Aberdeen, of course it ought to apply equally as regards places nearer to London?—Of course it should; most certainly it should.

48,558. Have they thought of that?—They would only be looking to themselves, I think.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

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Ninety-third Day.

Thursday, 16th May 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. Baron RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., *Assistant Secretaries.*

Mr. GEORGE EDWARD BRISCOE EYRE called and examined.

Mr. G. E. B. Eyre. 16 May 1895.

48,559. (*Chairman.*) I understand you are a landowner residing in the neighbourhood of the New Forest?—Yes. I was born and bred on its northern border, and I am lord of two manors having wastes connected with the Forest.

Common rights in the New Forest.

48,560. For many years past I believe you have given great attention to the condition of the people who live in that district, and the bearing upon them of a large amount of common rights which they enjoy over the Forest?—Yes, I have. In 1882 I read before the Economic Section of the British Association, which met at Southampton, a paper on "Cottagers and Open Wastes in the District of the New Forest," written by request of the President, the Right Hon. G. L. Sclater-Booth. It was published in the Report of the Association.

48,561. The Forest waste consists of about 63,000 acres?—Yes.

48,562. A very large portion of that is not forest in the ordinary sense of the term, but is common land with comparatively few trees upon it?—By nature the whole Forest was open heath, bearing little woodland. At the present time there are about 43,000 acres of open heath land which has never been touched in any way.

48,563. And over that land the commoners in the neighbourhood have the right of turning out cows, sheep, ponies, and pigs?—As you are probably aware, there is a body of commoners that were registered by Act of Parliament in 1854, and the register defined their rights so far as they needed defining. The rights consisted of a right of pasture for various animals, especially for cowkind and ponies; then there were the fuel and turbary rights, and there was also the right of pannage, that is the right of turning out pigs in the mast season. Sheep rights for about 9,000 acres of private property, and a few goat rights were registered.

48,564. Do they have to pay for each head of cattle they turn out, or is it absolutely free?—It was free until the year 1878; that is to say, until the New Forest Act of 1877 reconstituted the Verderers' Court, and empowered it to levy fees for the purpose of the administration of the business of the court. There was no head money until then. The head money, or, as we call it, "marking fees," is at present fixed at the Verderers' Court from time to time; I may say there are two ranges of payments, because there are two classes of people who pay; there are the commoners registered in 1854, and then there is a small body of persons who are admitted under the Supplementary Act of 1879, and they pay head-money, and for a licence in addition to the above marking fees.

48,565. What would the supplementary list be composed of? Are they persons who have not the same equality of right as the others?—In 1854 a commission came down into the Forest, and people were called upon to claim their rights, and to prove them; there was no general organisation for making these claims or defending them, and a great number of people did not know what they had to do. They had no legal advice, and a great many of them in consequence either did not make claims or failed to support them properly, but the Crown did not interfere with these people, who had become, so to speak, non-commoners.

48,566. And they continued to exercise the right though not registered under the Act?—Yes, they continued to go on as before. Then, in the year 1878, when the New Act came into operation, the Verderers found themselves in this difficulty: that these people were on the Forest, that they could not recognise them, and that they could not take any money from them or mark their cattle. After two years of considerable difficulty, a Bill was passed to enable the Verderers, for administrative purposes, to bring this body of people under the control of the court, and the Verderers levy head money and mark their cattle now in virtue of the Act of 1879, though these people are not, and cannot become, commoners.

48,567. In respect of what extent of land have the commoners these rights of common over the Forest?—The acreage registered in 1854 was about 65,000 acres.

48,568. And was there a still larger amount under the later Act?—There is no registration of that.

Number of New Forest commoners.

48,569. Then what is supposed to be the total number of commoners who now have the right of turning out on the Forest?—That is a very difficult question. The Verderers were empowered to make a register of commoners, but they have never had sufficient funds to incur the expense, and therefore we really do not know the number. We believe that the freeholders are now more numerous than in 1854, but as to the number of occupiers one can only form a general idea. We know that the electorate, which consists of the parliamentary electors within the perambulation and the commoners who choose to put themselves on the Verderers' register, amounts in all to about 6,000. I take 5,000 of these to be householders, and from that one can infer, by the ordinary rule, I suppose, that is multiplying by five, the number of people who are affected; but the right, of course, would only be exercised by the head of the family. But a deduction would have to be made for the freeholders, who amounted to 1,050 or 1,100 in 1854, to get a fair estimate of the number of occupiers.

48,570. How many freeholders have got rights of turning out?—There is no current record; but a statement has appeared once or twice in evidence which is approximately correct, namely, that the register of 1854 shows about 860 "claims," made, of course, by freeholders, as substantiated, and that 628 of these were for holdings under 30 acres each.

48,571. Are you yourself a Verderer of the Forest?—Yes; but I do not appear here as a Verderer.

Number of animals in the New Forest.

48,572. What is the number of animals of different kinds which are turned out?—There are about 5,500 animals turned out in the Forest that we know of, and of course there is a fringe of animals which are not brought to account. This is exclusive of pigs.

48,573. And of those, are about 2,000 cows?—That is about the proportion.

48,574. And 3,000 ponies?—Yes.

48,575. With a few donkeys?—The donkeys are really an unknown quantity, but we mark about 150.

48,576. Then I believe there are about 1,300 pigs?—That is in the pannage time. There was one year in which

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there was a Swine Fever Order in the Forest, and in consequence we got a very accurate return of the number of pigs that were turned out then; the total was 3,069. The number turned out varies with the season, but in a series of years has averaged 1,300.

Turbary rights.

48,577. Are the turbary rights extensively used?—The turbary rights are used very largely where the cottages remain in their primitive condition. Where the open hearth remains the "turf" is used, but where the cottages are improved and the people have grates and ranges (which they are beginning to do now) of course the "turf" is not so much used. We find that as soon as the price of coal goes up the demand upon "turf" revives.

48,578. These rights are used more by the smaller occupiers, I presume, than by the larger ones?—Yes. The Forest or common is used in the inverse ratio to the size of the holding; the smaller the holding the more they use the rights in proportion to the acreage.

48,579. Do the cottagers exercise the right?—Everybody, nearly, who has got a right exercises it. The cottager class is a very large one.

Classes of commoners.

48,580. May you divide the persons using rights in the common into two classes, namely, cottagers and those holding little pieces of land up to 20 acres?—Those two classes would use the Forest and the adjacent commons most. The wastes are the cottager's farm; they are the source of his livelihood or of his comforts, and of his capital. He makes it his business to acquire the proper stock and to work his holding and the wastes to the best advantage. But from the larger holdings it is open to the farmers to turn out dry stock and ponies, both of which are very profitable, if they have enough capital, and their milch cows, if they live near enough.

48,581. Is there a large body of small occupiers having from 6 acres up to 15 who exercise their rights in the Forest?—The sub-division in the Forest runs rather threefold, namely: 6 acres, 12½ acres, and 20 acres. Those are about the three classes of smallest holdings. You may say that everybody who lives on the Forest or within reach of it turns out something. The ideal "little place" is about 12½ acres. Six acres is not a living, but is preferable to about 15 acres elsewhere at the same gross rent; 12½ acres in the Forest is a living, and some shrewd men decline to hold more.

48,582. Then beyond that you get to small farms of from 20 acres to 50 acres?—Yes.

48,583. Then large farms of from 50 to 100 acres?—Or, perhaps, to 120, but I think 100 is about the extreme size of what we call a large farm in the Forest district. Larger farms exist there, but they are unsuited to the locality: they are difficult to let, and are often badly farmed. The consolidated farms up to 500 acres cannot be let. The policy of consolidation has failed.

Effect of common rights on small holders.

48,584. Does the right of turning out on the Forest form a very important adjunct to their small holdings?—Yes, to the smallest holdings in particular; but as the farms get larger, and as they lie further from the Forest, the Forest is used less. Of course men cannot turn out their cowkind very far; if they are a mile or two from the Forest they cannot very well turn out their cowkind, and then they get another sort of cow, they go in for the more ordinary dairy stock. But I have known men earn the rent of their farm by the dry stock and ponies that they turn out, although they live two or three miles from the Forest.

48,585. Then do you consider that these rights of turning out in the Forest have largely conduced to enable these small occupiers to get through the bad times?—They could not live on the smallest holdings without either a common right or a forest right, but with it they make a very good living.

48,586. And have done so all through the last 15 years?—Yes; the only set-back that they have had was the failure of the hay crop in 1893.

48,587. Apart from that they have got through all the bad times during the last 15 years?—Yes; as far as I can judge they have steadily progressed; they have not gone back, but have progressed.

48,588. How do they make their money generally—is it by the sale of cattle and ponies?—First, they have got to make their living; then after that they accumulate stock, making sales from time to time; but they are always accumulating one way or the other, either in money or in stock.

Effect of common rights on labourers.

48,589. Do the labourers of the district turn out pigs and cattle?—Everybody turns out something. Many labourers double their wages by stock-keeping, and some have been known to save all their wages for a series of years, making their living by their rights. A labouring man will get hold of one animal somehow, either a cow, or a mare, or a heifer, and then that makes the foundation of his fortunes.

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48,590. It is a great inducement to him to save money to exercise this right, I suppose?—The thriftiest will do almost anything to get hold of an animal, and they generally succeed. When once they have something like 5*l.* in value, either in stock or in money, they then steadily go up in the social scale.

"Pannage."

48,591. Is the right of turning out pigs for pannage considered a valuable one?—That is a very valuable right, but, of course, all seasons are not equally good.

48,592. (*Mr. Everett.*) What is the meaning of the word "pannage"?—That is a word derived from the Late Latin; it is said to be connected with *panis*, bread, food.

48,593. Does it mean the acorns and the beech-mast, and that kind of thing, is that the practical meaning of it?—It really means the picking-up of the mast and the acorns by pigs.

48,594. What drops off the trees?—Yes. They reckon that if a man turns out a lot of pigs of all sizes in a good mast season he can clear 10*s.* per pig; and if a man can only turn out one or two pigs he can sometimes make, directly or indirectly, as much as a couple of pounds on each.

48,595. (*Chairman.*) Do the labouring men save up their money to buy pigs in order to turn them out and avail themselves of this right?—Yes, they turn out their own, of course, to begin with, and then if they can afford to buy any they buy.

Cottages and the common rights.

48,596. Now take a cottager who can afford to buy a heifer; does he turn it out in the early summer?—Yes; he would turn it out in the early summer, and it would keep itself until the autumn; it would cost him nothing, except just keeping an eye on it from time to time, and the money that he paid to the Verderers' Court.

48,597. At the end of the summer does he sell?—He either sells it then, or else he keeps it through the winter and sells it at a much improved rate with a calf the next year.

48,598. If he paid 5*l.* for the heifer originally, he might sell it again at from 12*l.* to 14*l.*?—He would do that, but her keep through the winter would cost him about 50*s.* out of pocket.

New Forest ponies.

48,599. Then as to the ponies, is there a large number of ponies kept in the Forest in this way?—The pony business is a very large business. People begin in very early life. If a man can get hold of a mare, perhaps a broken-down mare, cheap, he will turn her out; and if she will live on the Forest at all, she will begin to pay him very shortly. Of course they do not sell their mares; they sell the yearling colts and accumulate the mares so to speak, and so it goes on. There is an immense deal of money made in the Forest by ponies. I do not know whether you would be interested to know anything about the efforts which have been made lately to improve the breed, but a good deal has been done, and even Her Majesty the Queen has taken an interest in it.

48,600. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In this breed of ponies, do you mean?—Yes.

Effect of common rights on small occupiers.

48,601. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that these rights of turning out in the Forest and the right of pannage, and so forth, have resulted in there being a large class of small occupiers?—The Forest is quite full of them.

48,602. In that respect it differs from the ordinary rural districts of England?—Yes.

48,603. Because there is this large body of small occupiers of from 1 to 2 acres up to 50?—Yes; but they are especially numerous in the lower grades in the first two classes. Under 12½ acres there is a very large number of holders.

48,604. And these various classes have been able to get through the last few years without suffering from the depression in the same way as agriculturists in other parts of the country have?—Yes.

Rent and value of land in the New Forest.

48,605. Has the value of land and the rent of land been maintained in the neighbourhood of the Forest?—Ordinary agricultural land has fallen, I find, about one-half at a little distance from the Forest since 1877; but the small holdings have not gone down at all in value.

48,606. When you say ordinary agricultural land, do you mean land for comparatively large farms?—Yes, and

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land which is sufficiently far off from the Forest not to be much affected by its neighbourhood.

48,607. In the neighbourhood of the Forest have these small holdings and small farms that you speak of kept up their value?—They have up to the 20 acres limit.

48,608. Up to the 20 acres limit?—Yes, and even a little beyond the 20 acres limit.

48,609. Has rent been maintained?—Yes; and as far as I know from experience the rents are paid with absolute punctuality.

48,610. Has the selling value of land been maintained in the neighbourhood?—The selling value of small holdings is very high; it certainly has not gone down. I think it has, if anything, gone up.

48,611. What should you say is the selling value of land per acre?—Small holdings (up to 20 acres) even at a little distance from the Forest, fetch about 40*l.* an acre; the same land sold in larger holdings would not fetch ordinarily more than 20*l.* to 25*l.* an acre. I know two little holdings of about 12 acres each that have lately been sold. One was bought by a small holder himself for investment; he gave 450*l.* for 11½ acres.

48,612. With a house or without?—With a house and a little steading. He reckons to make 5 per cent. on his money. In the other case a little place of 12½ acres was sold for 480*l.*, and was thought to be remarkably cheap. That pays over 4 per cent. Small holders, who are really the sons of labourers of the past generation, are actually investing their savings in these little holdings if they can buy them to pay 4 or 5 per cent. Up to 500*l.* there seems to be money forthcoming for all these little holdings.

Subdivision of holdings.

48,613. Was there recently a sale of a small estate in the middle of the Forest, called Burley, which has been broken up into small holdings?—I advised the owner of Burley, when I heard that he was going to sell, to break up his property. The idea was a little novel, but he did break it up. When he put it up the first time the lots were too large, and very few sold; he then subdivided it again, and the bulk was sold within three months afterwards.

48,614. What size were the holdings?—At the second sale the largest were a farm of 118 acres and another of 100. I have not got the particulars by me unfortunately, but I know that many small lots were sold.

48,615. Did they realise good prices?—The all round price at the first sale was over 42*l.* per acre, and at the second nearly 32*l.* per acre; some of the smallest lots fetched 90*l.* and 100*l.* per acre; of the larger lots, those which were sold fetched from 20*l.* to 34*l.* per acre.

48,616. This was purely agricultural land, I suppose?—Yes.

48,617. And had no residential value?—Of course there was one lot containing the residence, but that I exclude because I believe it was not sold.

48,618. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Were there no buildings upon these plots?—The large farm which fetched the highest price, I believe, had exceptionally good buildings, and that accounted for the price it fetched. In the prices quoted, the buildings are included in each case.

48,619. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is this estate near Ringwood?—It is about half way between Ringwood and Brockenhurst.

48,620. (*Chairman.*) It is a kind of island in the middle of the Forest, I think, of about 800 acres?—Yes, the whole parish is about 1,600 acres, and the property is about half the parish. There has been another sale on the adjacent commons as distinguished from the Forest, part of the Canterton Estate; I do not know whether you would like me to go into that whilst you are speaking of the price of small holdings. I could show you the particulars of the sale and the map, if you are curious to see it. A little plot there of 14½ acres had been granted out in 10 lifeholds within living memory; the reversion of this 14½ acres was sold, and it fetched 1,495*l.* The 11 lots were bought by the tenants All the buildings upon them, with the exception of about three cottages in brick, were of the order that you would expect in lifehold cottages on a common. It was a property which I, for one, would not have bought at any price; I could not have faced the liabilities; but the tenants bought the lots themselves, and in this particular plot the price works out at over 100*l.* an acre.

Value of small plots.

48,621. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In what year was this?—In 1887. I know another plot of the same size which is, perhaps, worth comparing with it. It is a place called Nomansland. It was a little bit of waste on the edge of the Forest which was not owned by the Crown or anybody, and it was settled by squatters. That 14½ acres now fetches, when there is a bit for sale, 200*l.* an acre for cottage and orchard.

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48,622. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does it carry rights in the Forest; I suppose it does?—Yes, for the most part; and licences under the Act of 1879 can be obtained for the rest.

48,623. That is what really gives it its value?—I suppose so.

Subdivision of estates.

48,624. (*Chairman.*) Have you subdivided your own estate into small holdings for the purpose of meeting the requirements of these small people?—When I came into my property in 1887 I had had a certain amount of warning that I should have a difficulty in letting the farms, and I had already begun with some property of my own, which I had in the Forest, to subdivide just before. As soon as I let people know that I was willing to subdivide, people used to come to me, and I had at one time as many as 27 applications on my book for little places. So I sorted out the farms and the people, and eventually I cut up the whole place, until I have now got about 68 holdings, of which the largest is 83 acres, and the smallest is about one acre. As far as possible, I adapted the holdings to the requirements of the smaller local men who would use the Commons or the Forest or both.

48,625. What is the total acreage of your property?—Excluding common, about 2,700 acres.

48,626. So now these holdings average about 40 acres each?—I could give you them in classes. I have 18 holdings of 6 acres and under; 20 holdings of 12½ acres and under; 7 holdings of 20 acres and under; 14 holdings of 50 acres and under, and 9 holdings over 50 acres and under 84, making 68 in all.

48,627. Do all these tenants exercise the rights of turning out into the Forest?—They all have either a forest right or a common right of some kind, and all, almost without exception, use it in some way.

Effect of common rights on the condition of the population.

48,628. Do you consider that the effect of the attachment of these rights to these small holdings and the existence of these small holdings themselves have had an important effect upon the general population of the district, in the direction of stimulating thrift and industry?—The general effect is quite extraordinary to anyone who was not brought up in it. It is extraordinary to me; the more I look into it and the more I learn about the state of things in the New Forest, the more astonished I am. The way in which these people work, and the way in which they save, and the way in which they seem to have money whenever they want it for their own purposes, is sometimes quite a mystery to me—how they do it; I know they do do it.

48,629. Do you consider the system, by giving inducements to thrift, so that the smallest occupier might buy a cow or two or three pigs and hope to improve his position, results in forming habits of industry and thrift throughout the district, and provides stepping stones by which the people in the lowest position are continually bettering themselves?—Everybody in the New Forest may be said to have a chance; parishes without rights are described by the New Forest people as "parishes without chances." I could give numerous instances of how these chances are used. I have known a boy owning a mare whilst he was still living at home, and so laying the foundation of his rise. I have had young men of 25 come and ask for "a "little place," and I have said, "How can you take a "place"? "Oh, I have got a little stock, and I have got a "little money." "What sort of place can you take"? "So "many acres, sir." "Well, what have you got"? "Oh, "sir, I have got 65*l.* in stock and money." That has happened to me twice. Then I can give you another instance. The son of a labourer was dairy boy to my father; whilst he was about 17, he somehow or another scraped together enough money to get hold of a heifer; that was the foundation of his success. That man is now a dealer in the Forest, and he deals sometimes to the extent of 500*l.* in a week; he has bought sheep of me, 200*l.* worth at a time. This man had nothing but the chances of the district. That, of course, is rather an extreme case, but I could give you another one of the same sort. I know labourers, who worked at 10*s.* to 12*s.* a week, who are in holdings of 12½ acres; one, in fact, is in a holding of 50 acres.

48,630. Then you would say that there are numerous cases in which labourers rise from being merely day labourers into the position of being small occupiers?—Yes; and even freeholders. For instance, a day labourer bought his lifehold house, a little cabin he had built himself on an acre and a half of land, giving for the reversion

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200*l.*; and 400*l.* of money was found in the house when his widow died.

48,631. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In actual cash?—Yes.

Pauperism in the New Forest.

48,632. (*Chairman.*) Is one result of the better condition of things there, that there is no pauperism in the district?—I took out the statistics of parish relief in my own village in 1882, and I have taken it out again in 1894. The population is 823. In 1882 the Wiltshire parish had no indoor paupers, and only three outdoor paupers; the Hampshire parish had three indoor and eight outdoor. In 1894, in the Wiltshire parish, we had no outdoor pauper, and only four indoor paupers, and in the Hampshire parish we had one indoor and five outdoor paupers; and all this relief was given to cases of old age with infirmity, and to widows with families. That is a fair sample of a New Forest parish. Many instances could be given of widows, and of aged or infirm persons, who keep themselves independent of parish relief by a Forest or a Common right.

48,633. Has the population of the district been maintained or has it been reduced as in other parts of agricultural districts?—I am told that the young men are getting a little restless and going away, but I should think, on the whole, that the population remains very much what it was, because I find that if I try to induce the numerous sons of one family to separate and go away, they are very unwilling to go. They have learned that they cannot do better elsewhere, even in the Colonies.

48,634. What are the unions in which the Forest is situate?—They are the New Forest Union, the Fordingbridge Union, the Ringwood Union, and the Lymington Union.

Population of the New Forest Union.

48,635. I see that the population of the New Forest Union slightly increased between 1871 and 1891, namely, from 13,400 to 13,900, and that the value of land has been reduced only from 35,000*l.* to 33,000*l.* a year, according to the actual assessment. I think you told us that out of the Forest 43,000 acres are open and not enclosed for timber?—Yes.

48,636. I believe 30,000 acres consist of very poor land indeed—heath?—The Government surveyor, Mr. Clutton, gave in evidence, I think it was about the year 1849 or 1850, that those 30,000 acres in his opinion would starve Scotch fir. These are mainly the upland heaths, consisting of gravel on Barton clay, and the lowland heaths, namely, those about the 100 feet contour, consisting of Upper Bagshot sands.

48,637. The remaining 13,000 acres consist of somewhat better land, I suppose, where the cattle can get?—Yes, that is better land, that is mixed land. But there is no very good land in the Forest; the term locally applied to these middle lands between the upper and lower heaths is "patchy"; there may be three qualities or four qualities of land in a small field, because these lands are a mixture of clays and sands, with more sand than clay. There is some, however, of the poorest land, mixed in with these middle lands.

48,638. I suppose the ponies and rough cattle can pick up something on this very poor land?—They eat the rough herbage, furze, &c., but the heather is their staple food, in the same way as it was with the deer in former days, when the best venison in the Forest was called "heath-cropper venison." It is on working the Forest as a whole that these animals make a good living. If they were confined to one particular part they would not succeed, but they can change according to the season and the wind, and sometimes they are on the high ground and sometimes on the low. The ponies range the whole Forest. If one turns out a pony outside one's own door there is nothing to prevent his being 10 or 12 miles off in a day or two. They go to whichever place happens to suit them at the time of the year, more particularly when the fly is very strong; and also they go to where the water is. Water in the Forest is very scarce, and that governs very much the movements and haunts of the animals.

Effect of common rights on agricultural depression.

48,639. Then would you say generally, as the result of the condition of things in the Forest, that these forest rights under which the small occupiers of land have the power of turning out cattle, and so forth, as you have described, have enabled them to overcome the difficulties of the agricultural depression which has been felt so much in other parts of the country?—The Forest now contains an exceptional population, enjoying exceptional prosperity. It makes a very large annual income off even these "hungry" heaths" and "patchy" middle lands. Indeed, economically regarded, the soil is thus, probably, put to the best use. The lower strata of the agricultural population, in particular, are rising socially or in the scale of comfort, and are even accumulating what is to them wealth.

48,640. And they have not suffered so much from bad seasons?—No, they do not really suffer by bad seasons; one reason is that, generally speaking, the Forest goes the opposite way to the manors, so that if there is a bad time on the manors the Forest may be better than the average. This was notably the case in the great drought of 1893. It is a very curious thing that the animals generally do well in the Forest when they would be doing poorly on the manors; so that the two things work together and balance one another. Then these commoners, being very rarely in what you may call difficulties as to money, are not obliged to sell in a bad time, and if prices go down they wait till prices recover themselves. On the point of thrift, might I put in a return on the subject of the savings banks?

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Bank savings.

48,641. Yes, if you please?—I have taken the last published return for 1889. Of course I estimate that the Forest people as a rule re-invest their money in stock because of the high interest that they get; but this abstract will also show that they do put their money away in cash as well. The table shows an average amount to each depositor's credit of 17*l.* 7*s.* 11*d.*, the average amount for the whole of England and Wales being 14*l.* 12*s.* 2*d.* (*See* Appendix A II.)

48,642. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is that in the Post Office Savings Banks?—Yes, through the offices situate in the New Forest and its vicinity. The table shows the number of depositors, the amount to their credit on the 31st December 1889, and the proportion of depositors to the population, which is one in six.

48,643. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Are there any other savings banks in the district besides the Post Office Savings Banks?—I should hardly like to say; there used to be. The County Friendly Society and the Benefit Clubs operate in the same sort of way, and there were some savings banks in former days, but I really could not tell you whether they are maintained or not.

Subdivision of common rights.

48,644. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do the number of people who are entitled to these rights increase; can they increase or does the number remain much the same?—The rights run either with the house or with the land; if the land is subdivided the number of people who can exercise the right increases.

48,645. Then on that estate which you mentioned being cut up into so many small holdings, so many more people were entitled to the rights of the Forest?—So many more families exercise the right; the right is not increased, it is subdivided.

48,646. (*Mr. Little.*) Is the right subdivided?—The right is subdivided, it is not increased.

48,647. Practically, the right of stocking remains the same?—Yes.

48,648. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Take a holding of 100 acres which has been cut up into six divisions; formerly the rights we will say were restricted to 100 animals; would those rights be divided by six when the holding was cut up?—The ultimate legal right, of course, would be levancy and couchancy, and if it became necessary to ascertain the proportion per acre, the number of animals that could be kept in winter on the land to which rights attach would be the measure of the right of turning out animals in summer.

"Levancy" and "couchancy."

48,649. (*Chairman.*) I suppose the principle of levancy and couchancy is not really practically observed, but every occupier turns out as many cows as he can maintain on his land?—The legal doctrine is in the background, but it is not brought to the front so long as there is a sufficiency for all the commoners who want to turn out. If there were more animals turned out than the Forest would carry then the doctrine of levancy and couchancy would be brought up, and no doubt would have to be enforced. But the custom of the country is for a man to turn out what he can, because if one man does not use his rights nobody is the worse off if his neighbour profits by this non-use. In fact, the commoners work the common in common, and this fact operates as an important stimulus to industry, thrift, and enterprise, especially amongst the smallest holders.

48,650. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Who checks the number of animals turned out? Do the Verderers do that?—There is no stint, but if any necessity for interference occurred, it would be the duty of the Verderers to interfere.

48,651. (*Mr. Little.*) There is no periodical drift of cattle in order to ascertain the number?—No, there is no stint, and therefore there is no drift.

48,652. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In your recollection has there been no taking of a census of the ponies or cattle or anything else by the Court of Verderers?—The Court of

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Verderers mark every such animal that is turned out, and therefore they know more or less how many animals are turned out.

48,653. (*Chairman.*) Supposing a small occupier came to you with more cattle than seemed reasonable with reference to his holding, would you say he was turning out too many, and would you refuse to mark more than a certain number, or would you mark all the cattle that he brought before you?—Each individual case would be dealt with according to the circumstances.

48,654. Supposing a man with only three acres were to come to you with, say, 10 cows, would you say: "No, that "is too many for your holding, and we will only mark two "or three?"—A point of that kind would be referred to the Verderers.

48,655. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) To whom?—It would be referred to the clerk in the first instance by the marksman.

48,656. (*Chairman.*) Has the case occurred?—I do not know that it has.

48,657. Then in practice, I suppose, the right is more favourable, so to speak, to the small occupiers than to the larger ones, because they can practically turn out more cattle in proportion to their holdings than the larger people can?—They cultivate their holdings to such a very high pitch that they are entitled to turn out more per acre than the larger farmers.

48,658. Even on the principles of levancy and couchancy?—Even on that principle. If a man works his place up to garden pitch of course he might keep a very large stock proportionately to its acreage on winter food grown upon it.

48,659. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Take an enterprising man—I will not use the word unscrupulous—supposing he has only a right to turn out three cows, we will say. Do any such individuals turn out six or five, and not get found out—I mean not get checked? Is there a good deal of that?—The custom goes for a great deal, and hitherto the custom has been from time immemorial that people should turn out what they can. Of course if a man did anything very unreasonable he would be given a gentle hint.

48,660. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But at present the case has never arisen where there have been too many animals turned out?—The Court has not had occasion to interfere.

48,661. The difficulty has not occurred yet?—The difficulty has not occurred.

Subsidiary occupations of small holders.

48,662. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I suppose there are a great many of these small holders who gain a very good livelihood in other ways; I mean to say with their ponies and with carts?—They haul a certain amount; they cart timber, and so on.

48,663. They do a good deal of work like that do they not, and get paid for it?—They are very keen on getting a supplementary business, so to speak.

48,664. And there is a good deal of that done?—Yes. Of course ponies are very cheap, and men knock up a rough cart and they cart gravel for the highway board and fir poles for the Crown and so forth.

48,665. Hauling work in that neighbourhood is done very much by the piece, is it not?—Yes, it is 5*s.* a load. For that, they will fetch chalk from the Downs.

48,666. So that there is an outside element of gaining a livelihood besides what they actually get from the land?—Yes. A really active small holder will have three livings. He will have the land, he will have his common rights, and then he will have some small industry which he follows, whether it is hauling or whether it is dealing in small goods, what we call higgling, or dealing in stock. They are very ingenious at finding other employment, for which the peculiar rural economy of this self-contained district affords numerous opportunities.

Improvement of ponies and cattle.

48,657. You mentioned that efforts have been made to improve the breed of ponies; but are not the ponies kept out all the winter and thereby their growth very much checked, and what would be better animals are very often three parts starved?—The foresters have a very strong opinion that it is no use to have a large pony. They do not wish to see the size increased. They say directly of an "improved" entire pony, "he is too big for the Forest," and they maintain that the proper pony for the Forest is the small pony, 12½ hands pony.

48,668. Does that mean that he will not live in the Forest?—He will not thrive there. It is the same with the special breed of cattle. Heifers and cows brought from a distance would not live in the Forest, but the forest-bred cow lives and thrives. Highland cattle do well during the summer run. Even in winter, except in a heavy snowfall—snow is not very common in the Forest and does not lie long—the Court of Verderers has ascertained that the native ponies which do not leave the Forest do better there than those taken in upon the manors.

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48,669. Then you think it is not much use trying to improve the breed either of the ponies or of the cattle in the Forest?—It is of use up to a certain degree; for instance, a better looking pony, a better class pony, can be sold as a yearling at a better price. But as regards the permanent stock, I do not think the commoners would care to see the mares very much altered. I think that these recent efforts to improve the breed have probably added about 20 per cent. to the quality of some yearlings.

48,670. And to the market value of them?—And to the market value if the market is the same one year with another, but prices are low just now, and it is a little difficult to estimate what the benefit has been. One can get certainly a 20 per cent. better pony than one could four or five years ago.

Freeholders in the New Forest.

48,671. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Are most of the 5,000 occupiers in the Forest that you speak of in your proof freeholders as well?—Many are, and an increasing number, because, as I was saying just now, as men save money they will very likely buy a small holding as an investment, or to make a home of their own.

48,672. But you would not say that most of them are freeholders?—Not most of them; there must be a much larger number of occupiers than of freeholders.

48,673. Then if they exercise rights in the Forest, I suppose it is not as occupiers, but as deriving the right from somebody else who is a freeholder, is that so?—Yes, they exercise the right of the freeholder.

48,674. Can you tell me what is the proportion of small freeholders to large freeholders? In your proof you state there were in 12 parishes on the east of the Forest 493 freeholders in 1854, I think, and out of those 493 only 142 have holdings above 20 acres?—That is so.

48,675. Is it not the case that the people under 20 acres, although they are so much larger in number, only have 10 per cent. of the land, or something like that?—I am afraid I do not quite follow you. You think that they hold 10 per cent. of the land?

48,676. That is about all that it comes to, if you work it out?—Most Forest estates contain holdings of different sizes, and I should think all contain some small holdings, the only exceptions would be where the farms have been consolidated, notably in the corner of the Forest next the Isle of Wight.

48,677. But can you tell us how much of the land is held in small holdings and how much in large holdings?—There is nothing to go upon but the register of 1854, and that is not a very orderly document, and it is a laborious task to make calculations from it.

48,678. But that is the effect of it, that, if these figures are general throughout the Forest, only 10 per cent. of the land is held by freeholders of under 20 acres, or something like that?—I am afraid I could not answer that question.

48,679. (*Chairman.*) Those 493 freeholds are apparently in a district where there are 17,800 acres of waste?—Yes, and 34,000 acres of property registered as having rights.

48,680. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Is it the 34,000 acres to which the 493 freeholders apply?—That is so.

48,681. If you work it out you will find that the number of acres held by people holding under 20 acres cannot very well amount to more than about 1,700 acres or something like that, it is a very simple calculation indeed; so that out of 34,000 acres you have only 1,700 acres held by people with holdings under 20 acres. I merely wish to have some idea of the extent of the small holdings as compared with the surface of land, not merely the numbers in proportion to the total number of occupiers, but the total extent of land held by the small occupiers?—I am afraid I cannot give you any fresh data. I have never had occasion to complete the detailed list to which you refer, and, unfortunately, I have not with me the acreages of the 493 freeholds.

Mode of living of small holders.

48,682. Can you tell us anything of the mode of living of those small occupiers; what food they live upon, and what crops they cultivate?—Of course all the smallest holdings are in pasture, with the exception of the little strip in the garden or orchard or field on which they grow roots, mangels, swedes, turnips, and cabbages.

48,683. Potatoes?—Yes, they crop their gardens thoroughly for all their wants.

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48,684. Do they live very much upon potatoes, do you know?—They do, a great deal. The style of living is rising very fast. The consumption of butcher's meat is increasing very much.

48,685. If they consume butcher's meat I suppose that is an article which they purchase?—Yes. The shops also sell largely tinned meats and fruits.

48,686. But you cannot tell us much in detail as to the mode of living of the small occupiers?—Some years ago I should have said that they lived chiefly on bacon and potatoes and a little tea.

48,687. And milk?—Yes, and milk; they have got their own cows, but if I may descend to such particulars they do not generally drink their tea with milk. There has been a great rise lately in the style of living. Of course they benefit by the cheapness of food like everybody else; but I have noticed that some sit down to very comfortable teas, to cakes and things of that kind.

Improvement of ponies.

48,688. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) What class of stallion has been proved to be the most useful lately for crossing with these Forest mares?—The experiment is rather new, but the general impression is that an Exmoor would be the best. We have had Cumberland stallions, and we have had Dartmoor, and we have had Welsh.

48,689. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you had Arabs?—I was coming to that; we have had what the foresters do not care very much about, that is, we have had Arabs. The Arab strain is not liked until the third or fourth generation.

48,690. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have they tried Hackney stallions?—We have only had one that was on the book: FitzGeorge II., H. S. B., No. 4265.—Sire Sir George, No. 778.

Effect o common rights on small holders.

48,691. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The gist of your evidence would point to the fact that it is the great privileges these people have of pasturing where no labour is required, and where consequently there is no labour bill at all, which enable them to do so well on a small holding of this size?—Yes; and there is also the stimulus that a man instead of having to put his money away at 2½ per cent. can turn it over in seven to nine months, and make 25 per cent. out of it, as, for instance, is constantly done by buying in heifers for the summer run.

48,692. With your knowledge of how it has worked and produced these advantages, have you taken any interest in studying the experience of holdings of similar size in other parts of the country where they have not such privileges?—I am afraid I have not had time to go into that. I have taken a great, but only a general interest in it, and I have no special knowledge on the point.

Rent and cultivation of small holdings.

48,693. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I see that in your proof you classify the holdings under two heads; first, "Cottage "holdings with land up to five or six acres," and second, "Little places up to 20 acres," and these cottage holdings and little places let for about 2*l.* an acre you say?—About 2*l.* an acre all round tithe-free.

48,694. What sort of soil is it; is it pretty good?—It is a fair soil; you cannot say it is very good, and you cannot say it is very bad.

48,695. Then it is a highish rent for it?—It is a high rent; you could not get the rent anywhere else.

48,696. What do they cultivate on it; do they cultivate extremely highly?—Very highly; of course it varies with the man; one man will work his holding very much better than another.

48,697. But that is the general characteristic?—The general characteristic is that.

48,698. Is it done with spade labour as a rule?—Yes, you would not see a plough upon these little holdings, except perhaps on some of the comparatively larger ones.

48,699. How much of the holdings as a rule, taking the holdings of 20 acres say, would be cultivated; the greater part, you say, is in pasture?—Not more than a fourth.

48,700. Would they cultivate as much as a fourth?—They would cultivate about as much as a fourth or a fifth on holdings of from six acres up to 20 acres.

48,701. And that they would cultivate extremely highly?—Yes.

48,702. They grow vegetables, I suppose?—They grow winter food and things for the cows.

48,703. Not for the market?—No, for their own consumption.

48,704. Entirely for home consumption?—Yes.

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48,705. They do not sell?—They sell fruit, apples, &c.

48,706. If they wanted to sell, is there a good market within reach?—Yes, the dealers come round and they sell over the gate.

48,707. The dealers come to the door and buy the produce if there is any spare produce to sell?—Yes.

48,708. Is there much spare produce?—They sell dairy-fed pork, eggs, some poultry and butter. A very large quantity of butter is made in the Forest.

48,709. Is it good butter?—It is good butter. I do not say that it is made according to the best modern system, but I think we shall come to that.

Dairy education.

48,710. Have they any advantages for dairy education in that district?—They have, but they are very wedded to their old methods.

48,711. That is the case usually, is it not? But you think their butter may be improved?—I think it might be improved. Hitherto they have been supplying Southampton and Bournemouth. One side of the Forest supplies Bournemouth and the other supplies Southampton.

48,712. So that if their butter-making was improved there would be additional opportunities for their being prosperous?—Yes.

48,713. They have escaped depression to a great extent, I understand?—Practically altogether, the little men.

Subsidiary occupations of small holders.

48,714. And that you attribute mainly to the fact that they are not wholly dependent on agriculture?—Yes; then they get the full advantage of the modern cheapness of necessaries, because they buy their own food and their clothes, and feeding stuffs, at greatly reduced rates, compared with what they used to pay years ago.

48,715. They are nearly all, I understand, engaged in some other business or occupation in addition to the management of their little holdings?—Yes, mostly; they ought to be, especially in the smallest holdings, where the wife can do most of the work and management.

48,716. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the Small Holdings Act been put in force at all in the Forest by the County Council?—I have not heard so.

Small Holdings Act.

48,717. Do you think there is any necessity for it, or that there would be any advantage in it; are there small holdings that would be bought up by means of it?—These small holdings are so readily bought by the people themselves that I should have thought it was a pity to interfere with a system that worked so well.

48,718. They already have sufficient money to buy small holdings without borrowing?—As a general rule, I believe a New Forester has got money. "Little places" find a ready sale, and are, I believe, very seldom encumbered.

Allotments.

48,719. Are there many allotments in the district?—Yes. There is no demand for more allotments in my own parish, where there have been allotments for a century; the people prefer a good garden, and several of the allotments are now held together, practically as little strips of meadow.

Area of cultivated land.

48,720. Has most of the cultivated land in the Forest been long under cultivation?—I think mostly immemorially. Afforestation, that is, the introduction of forest law, would tend to fix the *status quo ante* afforestation.

48,721. The area under cultivation does not increase?—Of late, arable land has rather been let down to grass.

Subdivision of holdings.

48,722. Do you think there is much room for breaking up more farms into small holdings?—I believe it is undoubtedly the right thing to do, and I understand that in various parts of the Forest people are beginning seriously to talk of doing it, especially where farms have been thrown together.

48,723. Would the Forest carry many more animals than it does at present if this system of breaking up the farms was largely increased?—I think it would, because one generally finds on such wastes that the harder in reason they are fed the better the feed.

48,724. Then there is room for having a larger population there by breaking up the farms and practically increasing the amount of the Forest rights?—Increasing their exercise rather. I imagine that we are only going back to the original state of things, are reverting to the almost prehistoric agricultural system of the district. I think we shall eventually come back to something like the old system of small holders, which prevailed before the consolidation of farms and the enclosure of commons, and that we shall have gentlemen's residences, residential estates, and small holdings, and little else in the Forest.

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48,725. Is the population increasing much?—The Chairman, I think, gave some figures upon that point.

Proportion of Forest land in different unions.

48,726. Yes, with regard to particular unions, and I was going to ask you about those unions; is any one of those unions entirely situate in the Forest or do they take in land outside?—Every union would have an outside margin of land not in the Forest, or not abutting on it.

48,727. Which union contains the larger proportion of Forest land, do you know; some of them, I think, extend a considerable distance beyond the Forest?—Generally speaking, if you imagine the district containing the Forest—that is, S. W. Hampshire between the Downs and the sea, and between the Salisbury Avon and the Southampton Water—as a square, and divide it into four pieces, each union would have so much waste in the middle, and so much cultivated land, and so much inhabited land on the outside. The towns lie on the outer edges, by the rivers or the sea.

48,728. But they would also have a certain number of parishes, would they not, lying altogether outside the Forest?—Yes, outside the perambulation, but not outside the reach of the Forest—that is, not outside the limit of the rights.

Pauperism.

48,729. I have not got any statistics of the pauperism here, but the statistics as to the poor rate show that the rates in these four unions are not at all below the average. Indeed, I think they are rather above?—You would find a town in each of these unions; Totton and Eling, for instance, in the New Forest Union, Lymington in the Lymington Union, and the towns of Fordingbridge and Ringwood in their respective unions. I feel quite clear as to what I call "real" Forest parishes. There was an inquiry three years ago before Mr. Pelham in the Forest, and he stopped the evidence on the subject of pauperism; he said he was quite satisfied from the evidence that he had already received that there was next to no pauperism in the New Forest proper.

Proportion of Crown to private property.

48,730. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does the great bulk of the Forest belong to the Crown?—The soil is in the Crown, subject to the common right.

48,731. Of the whole of it?—The whole of the waste is in the Crown, but there are parts of the Forest which are private property; the Office of Woods, &c. alleges that 25,000 to 26,000 acres of private property are within the perambulation, and states that the Crown owns about 2,000 acres of freehold in the Forest.

48,732. Is that private property freehold?—That is freehold.

48,733. And it carries common rights on the other parts besides?—The common right extends over the whole Forest. I do not know whether all the 25,000 or 26,000 acres have rights, but probably the bulk is on the register of 1854. The common right attaches to property also in Wiltshire and in Dorsetshire.

48,734. Are the old parish boundaries of the parishes which were laid waste to make this Forest still kept up?—I am afraid they never existed for parishes that William the Conqueror is supposed to have laid waste.

48,735. He is supposed to have levelled 60 churches or so?—I do not think they were ever there; there is no evidence of such. The physical conditions of the district, including the scarcity of wholesome water, must always have prevented its settlement.

Religious provision.

48,736. What is the religious provision made for the people in the Forest now—are there places of worship?—Every place, as far as I am aware, has its place of worship. Moreover, the Nonconformists are very active, and they have chapels everywhere.

48,737. Are there parochial churches?—There are 27 parishes and each has its church, and there are districts being formed from time to time.

Tithes.

48,738. Are tithes levied over the Forest?—Not over the Forest itself; but over the cultivated lands in the Forest, yes.

48,739. As land is brought into cultivation it becomes titheable, I suppose?—Not if it was waste before.

48,740. I think if waste is brought into cultivation it becomes titheable still anywhere?—I believe that the lands subject to tithe are a fixed quantity, so that if waste is brought into cultivation it would not become subject to tithe.

Land tax.

48,741. I am not sure since the commutation how that is. Is the land tax payable in the Forest?—Yes, where it has not been redeemed; but not on the waste, only on the private property.

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Cost of maintaining ponies in winter.

48,742. In your proof you say that these ponies in the winter cost 1*s.* or 1*s.* 6*d.* a week; in what way is that money spent? Are they taken out of the Forest and put on to the private lands?—Yes, when they begin to wander, and when they are liable to get pounded in the roads, then the people find that it pays them better to put them into a park or somewhere, and they get them taken in at about 1*s.* a head in winter. Some mares are never taken in, and never leave the Forest.

Freeholders and common rights.

48,743. Can outsiders now with money in their pockets get hold of a bit of land in the Forest and become occupiers or freeholders?—If you buy the land you buy the rights that go with it; in the same way if you buy the house and it has got a fuel right you buy the fuel right of turf or of wood with the house.

48,744. It is not confined to people born in the district?—No.

Subdivision of holdings.

48,745. (*Lord Rendel.*) You spoke of having subdivided into small holdings some 2,700 acres of your land; how was the question of buildings provided for?—As there were small holdings in the neighbourhood I was sometimes able to let land without buildings, otherwise I used to improve a cottage—that is, I took a labourer's cottage and built a third bedroom and a dairy under, or I added a lean-to and sometimes a wide verandah for outside work to a three-bed-roomed cottage, and so got a small farmhouse. Then if there were no buildings one had to put up a small building. But, generally speaking, I found that where the farms had been put together the old farmhouse survived as a cottage, and perhaps a barn, or some relic of the old buildings—very often these old oak buildings are nearly indestructible—and I converted them. In fact, I dealt with every holding according to its special circumstances just as I best could.

48,746. Then so far as these 2,700 acres were concerned, you met with no special difficulty?—No; the change gave me personally a vast deal of trouble, but by suiting the land to the demand I succeeded in the course of about 13 years.

48,747. So far as your interests as an owner are concerned you do not think you have been prejudicially affected, do you?—Of course it has involved a very large outlay, and, of course, one would not naturally have spent that money on the land, but if one has got a property one must either sell it or make the best of it, and I found that I should not have been able to sell mine in its then condition, but now that I have cut it up I believe I have made it comparatively a realisable asset; I believe I could sell it if I wished to, with success, taking time to do it.

48,748. And a sufficient interval has elapsed for you to form a pretty fair opinion on that point?—I think so. I have watched them all very carefully and I have really no reason to be dissatisfied with any of my tenants; they are all doing well so far as I can see. And, being mostly natives of the Forest, they are not likely to leave their farms.

Tenure.

48,749. What is the nature of their tenure, what is the form of the agreement under which they hold?—Those who have not got agreements will not take any, but to new tenants I give an agreement. I have not got a form here, and I do not know whether you would care to see it. I have a very simple agreement—just an annual agreement.

48,750. Do you think in the case of the small holdings there may be more liberty in regard to occupation given to a tenant?—More do you mean than the general law gives them now?

48,751. More than the form of agreements as between landlord and tenant; in the case of small holdings, will there be a larger liberty of cultivation, for instance?—I should leave them, keeping an eye on them, to do what they thought fit; I should not tie my tenants to a four-course system, for instance.

48,752. In regard, therefore, to the whole of these holdings you would say that the relations as between landlord and tenant were freer and more elastic than they would be in the case of larger holdings?—Yes, I think they are.

Effect of common rights on occupiers of land.

48,753. I think you said that the secret of the comparative success of the whole of the New Forest district lay in the great advantages which all the occupiers of land derive from the Forest rights and privileges?—Yes, or from rights over the adjacent commons, and in the inducement thus given to them to exert themselves.

48,754. But I think you have also pointed out that the land generally is rented much more highly in reference to its agricultural value *per se* than it would be rented were

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it without the advantage of these rights?—Certainly. The lowest estimate the tenants put upon the beneficial value of the land is that the value of the land is doubled by the rights. That is the lowest estimate. Of course if the beneficial value to the tenant is as much as that, the landlord gets some benefit in the way of rent.

48,755. And to the extent to which the landlord gets the benefit in the way of rent, to that extent the benefit to the occupier is discounted?—Yes, it is; but then he can well afford to pay it.

48,756. I am assuming that if on the balance of the whole transaction there is a favourable result to the tenant then there is also a favourable result to the landlord?—There is; he gets a very much better rent than he would get in any other way.

48,757. The whole credit of the success of the district is not to be debited, therefore, to the advantage due to the rights enjoyed by the occupier; I am merely suggesting that these are deductions from your evidence?—I am not quite sure that I apprehend your meaning. Of course a man pays a higher rent for the same article, so to speak; there is no doubt he does that; but then he get advantages with this land which far more than compensate him for that.

48,758. Then may I put it this way, that you consider that the Forest rights, so far as land is rented, take the shape, to some extent, of higher rent?—Yes, the land carries a higher rent.

48,759. And so far as the land is sold it takes the shape of a higher price?—Yes, it does so.

48,760. So that the freeholders, so far as they have bought, stand at a higher capital for their land than they would do in the absence of these rights?—Yes, certainly.

48,761. And the occupiers, so far as they rent, stand at a higher rent than they would do in the absence of these rights?—Yes.

48,762. And to that extent, if not more; but to that extent the benefit of these rights has not had to do with the general prosperity of the district?—No That is so; the tenant is handicapped to a certain extent, as regards the comparison which you suggest.

Subsidiary occupations of small holders.

48,763. Then with reference to the ancillary occupations, you have pointed out that most of the occupiers have had some other small business in addition to what might be strictly called agricultural; you have mentioned, I think, three, viz., dealing, higgling, and hauling?—Yes.

48,764. I suppose those would be called agricultural in the broad sense. Dealing, for instance?—Yes, those are agricultural occupations, part of the rural economy of the district.

48,765. Higgling?—Yes.

48,766. And even hauling, I suppose?—Yes, even hauling.

48,767. Therefore the prosperity of the district cannot be attributed wholly to the circumstance that the farmers have other occupations than farming?—No, it is due to three things put together—the land, the rights, and the chances of making also some third livelihood—which enables the smallest men in particular to better their condition. You have no doubt taken into account that there are artisans and tradesmen in the district who are also commoners.

Landlords and small holdings.

48,768. As a rule, you say the landlords are generally inclined to prefer a system of small holdings from the economical point of view?—I think they will come to do so. I do not think hitherto all have studied the question of these Forest rights. I think some of them have overlooked the value of the Forest rights. I have heard large owners of property say that Forest rights were worth nothing to them—probably because they turn nothing out themselves and own few small holdings.

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48,769. To the extent to which they do adopt your view and practice, the functions of the landlords I assume will become less important to the prosperity of the district?—Yes, the independence of the population of the district will increase.

Expenditure on buildings &c.

48,770. (*Chairman.*) I understand that you have spent a considerable sum of money in providing houses and buildings for these small holdings?—I have spent a considerable proportion of the income of the estate thereon, and in putting things in order.

48,771. Can you form any idea of what you have spent in that direction?—I am afraid I could not, because there has been such an amount of conversion, and I have done so much with my own staff and stuff.

48,772. Does it represent some thousands of pounds?—I think it represents about as much capital as I have got interest upon in, so to speak, increased rent.

Rent.

48,773. What do you consider the increased rent that you have got in that way?—In some cases I have got 15 per cent.

48,774. Taking the whole property of about 3,000 acres, how much have you increased the rental by?—I reckon that the rental remains what it was about 20 years ago, but it has been maintained at the cost of the expenditure of capital.

48,775. If you had left it in large farms, would you have been obliged to take a lower rent?—I should have been obliged to take something between 12*s.* and 18*s.* an acre for it, because I should have had to let it to ordinary tenant farmers, probably strangers, and not to local men who understand the use of the commons and the Forest.

48,776. What does it fetch now?—The small holdings, buildings included, average 2*l.*, and the larger holdings 30*s.*, tithe free. That is the current rate in the district.

48,777. Then you have realised this by spending a certain amount in erecting buildings?—Yes, and by subdividing the holdings to suit the circumstances of the local farmers.

48,778. And you consider that the interest on the money you have thus expended is about equal to the difference between what you might have let the land at in large holdings, and what you now get from the small holdings?—Yes; I think I am neither better nor worse off.

48,779. Then on the whole it has about paid you?—It has about paid me. I look particularly to the fact that the property is realisable, which it certainly was not before.

48,780. Do you have to maintain the repairs of the buildings?—Yes.

48,781. Is that considerable?—That will come in, I suppose, about 16 or 18 years' time.

48,782. You have not begun to realise that?—I have not begun to realise that yet, but one carries that in one's mind, of course.

48,783. That may be an important item in a few years hence?—If my successors find it so they can sell the property and get out; there are plenty of people willing to buy small holdings in the Forest with their liabilities as regards repairs, if the holdings are of the proper size.

(*The witness handed in a table of results attained. See Appendix* A III.)

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. H. Rew.

Mr. Robert Henry Rew called and examined.

Mr. R. H. Rew.

Report on Heathfield district of Sussex.

48,784. (*Chairman.*) As an Assistant Commissioner you have visited the Heathfield district of Sussex, and reported upon it to this Commission?—Yes, I have reported upon the poultry industry of that district.

Poultry farming.

48,785. I gather from your report that although there has been a very great extension of the poultry industry in that district, yet there have been no farms, or very few farms at all events, devoted exclusively to poultry?—That is so. I did not find, and I could not hear of, any farm at the present moment devoted exclusively to poultry farming. There have been such farms in existence, but I could not hear of one existing at the moment in the district.

48,786. The industry is rather ancillary to other industries connected with the farm?—That is so.

48,787. But in that respect it has become an extremely important one, and apparently has largely accounted for that district not suffering so much from agricultural depression as other districts have done?—Yes, I think that is undoubted.

48,788. Did you inquire at all as to what the effect of it has been upon rents and upon the demand for farms?—No. In that district there are no farms unoccupied.

Demand for farms.

48,789. Did you hear whether there was a demand for farms in the district?—I should gather that there was a

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fair demand. There were no farms vacant, and I heard of no difficulty, but I ought to say that I did not make any special inquiries into the agricultural conditions, and that I confined my attention exclusively to the poultry industry.

Effect of poultry industry on agriculture of district.

48,790. I am afraid you a little misunderstood the instructions—perhaps rightly—in thinking that you were confined to an inquiry into the poultry industry?—I entirely understood that.

48,791. Of course it is a rather important element in the matter as to how far this particular industry has affected the general agricultural condition of the district, but you did inquire into that?—No, only incidentally.

48,792. I observe that on page 29 in Appendix VIII. you show that in all 13 parishes where this industry has grown up the rateable value of the land has increased during the last 10 years instead of falling off as in other parts of the country?—Yes.

Rateable value of land.

48,793. I see from that Appendix that the rateable value, I will not say of the land, but of the parishes, has increased from 96,500*l.* to 112,000*l.*?—Yes.

48,794. Turning to another return which I have in my hand showing the difference in the rateable value of the land as compared with houses, I find that in the Union of Uckfield, which appears to be the main union where these parishes exist, the assessment of the lands has increased from 47,000*l.* to 55,000*l.* between the years 1871 and 1894, showing a considerable increase in the rateable value of the land, and that in the Union of Battle, which is another of the unions affected, the value of land has increased from 34,000*l.* to 39,000*l.* in that interval. Those facts would tend to show that the growth of this industry has had an important effect in maintaining the value of land?—Quite so.

48,795. At all events, without having inquired deeply into the matter, you can say that there is a demand for farms, and that rent has been fairly maintained, I suppose?—Yes, that was the impression I gathered.

Poultry fattening and rearing.

48,796. Then I understand from you that there are two very distinct industries, one the rearing of this poultry and the other the feeding?—Yes.

48,797. Did you ascertain which on the whole was the most profitable of the two?—Some of the persons engaged in the fattening industry were not communicative as regards the financial results of it, and were rather apt to give a somewhat gloomy view, but I do not think that their statements were fully supported. I should say that it was a fairly profitable industry.

48,798. One would gather that an industry which is growing so rapidly must, almost as a matter of course, be fairly profitable, otherwise people would not continue to increase their interest in it?—Quite so. They complained a great deal of the new men who were going into it; that is to say, those who were already established complained of the increasing competition, but of course the increase in competition showed that it had been fairly lucrative.

48,799. But you cannot say which of the two industries, the rearing or the fattening, has been the most profitable?—It is very difficult to judge. I should judge them both to be fairly profitable. I am bound to say on the part of those who only reared them, almost all admitted that it was quite profitable. I think in all cases they admitted that.

48,800. And you say that throughout this district either the rearing or the fattening of poultry formed a very important element in every one of the farms?—Certainly. There are some farms I believe where it is carried on to a very slight extent indeed, and those of course I did not go to. I went to those where it is conducted on a larger scale.

Profits of poultry farming.

48,801. I observe that in your Appendix you mention the case of a farm of 200 acres, where the profit for the year 1891 was 268*l.* after paying wages to the extent of 249*l.* (and I suppose the accounts were kept separately for the labour) and interest at 5 per cent. upon 600*l.*?—Yes.

48,802. That is, I suppose, more than sufficient to pay the rent of the farm?—Yes.

48,803. As it consists of 200 acres, I presume the rent is not more than 200*l.* a year?—The rent would be about a pound an acre in that case.

48,804. Is that the general average of rent—about a pound an acre?—It is about the average of agricultural holdings in that district.

48,805. What other produce would the farm produce; was it mainly pasture farm or arable farm?—It was about half and half, if I remember aright.

48,806. Did the tenant grow much of the corn himself with which he fed his poultry?—Yes, a considerable quantity; he fed a lot of his corn to his poultry.

48,807. Is the value of the corn that he has produced himself taken into consideration in this poultry account; for instance, there is an item of 739*l.* for oats; was any of that grown by himself?—As I understood, these figures were for corn actually bought; but this is a case in which the man combined the rearing and the fattening, and of course in the fattening a very large quantity of oats would be used. They fatten almost exclusively on oats.

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48,808. It is important to know whether in this account the corn which he produced on his own farm, and which he gave to his poultry, is included or not, because of course its value would make a considerable difference. In that account has he valued the corn which he produced himself?—I do not seem to state that in my report; and I should not like, without a reference to my notes, to speak with confidence on that point.

48,809. Of course it is a very important element. In this account the items are mentioned as so much oats bought and wheat bought and maize bought, but if in addition to that he gave to the poultry a large quantity of corn grown upon the farm, the account ought to be somewhat different?—Yes. I am sorry I cannot speak at the moment confidently without reference to my notes. The account was sent on to me after I left the district. I have no doubt, looking at the figures now, that it does include the corn that he fed.

48,810. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) That he has charged for everything, you think?—Yes.

48,811. Whether he grew it or whether he did not?—Yes, I have no doubt it is so.

48,812. (*Chairman.*) I see that an occupier—I think it is the occupier of this farm—has said that a hundred hens properly looked after will yield as large a return in 12 months as a hundred breeding ewes?—That is not the occupier of this farm; it was the occupier of a farm somewhat outside the district who sent me that statement; he is not a man whom I met myself.

Prices of poultry.

48,813. Have you any figures which show what the prices of poultry year by year have been, and whether the price has been maintained during the last 15 or 20 years, or whether it has fallen in proportion to the fall in the price of food?—No, I am afraid I have not any figures that go back so far as that. I give figures for 18 months back.

48,814. It is important to ascertain that, because it would be important to know whether the price has fallen or not?—No doubt it would have been possible to obtain it, or rather it would be possible for Messrs. Oliver, and people like them—the fatteners—to give it; but Mr. Kenward, for instance, who gave me a lot of information, I think, would only go back about five or six years.

48,815. If you can get somebody in the neighbourhood to give you a return of what the average price of chickens has been, unfattened and fattened, over a series of years it would be interesting to the Commission, so that one might see what the effect has been as compared with general prices?—Quite so. The price of fowls at the market could, of course, be got from the "Times" in the same way that I give the returns here for 18 months by reference back.

48,816. Will you try to get that, and add it afterwards to your evidence if you can get it?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A IV.)

48,817. Of course the very low price of food must have been a very important element in the prosperity of this business?—Yes.

48,818. I observe that you state that chickens are sent over in considerable numbers from Ireland to be fattened in this district?—Yes.

48,819. Are they sent from other parts of Great Britain too?—No, it was rather curious to find that they should come so long a distance when there seemed to be no reason on the face of it why they should not have been obtained nearer at hand.

Extension of poultry industry to other districts.

48,820. From what you have seen in this district do you consider that there is no reason why it should not be increased and extended to other parts?—I think, as I have pointed out in my report, that there are various circumstances which make the district favourable for the industry. It has grown up in the district, of course, and all the conditions so to speak are favourable to it; for instance, they have organised a very excellent system of collecting and of sending away to market, and, of course, all those conditions would have to be created if it was proposed to transplant it to another district.

48,821. That, of course, especially affects the fattening; but one does not see why the buying of chickens for the

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purpose of fattening should not be equally carried out in other districts as in Ireland?—Quite so; there is no doubt that that might be done in the same way as in Ireland, but at the same time if they are introduced into another district, if the farmers of a particular district, for instance, were to combine to set up in some convenient centre a fattening establishment, and then were to organise a system of collection in the same way as the higglers collect in the Heathfield district—if the farmers agreed to that and were willing to go into the industry, it might very reasonably be undertaken in a great many districts of this country.

48,822. Then I rather gather from you that you think this system could not well be extended to other districts without some organisation of the farmers of the district with a view to common enterprise, if they were to organise in the same way as these Sussex farmers have done, or if we are to advise them to introduce an industry similar to that which has prevailed in this district?—Yes, I think it might quite probably be done.

48,823. I suppose there is nothing very peculiar about the soil of Sussex which is particularly suitable for this industry?—A good part of it is light gravelly heath land.

48,824. There must be a good many other parts of England which would be equally suitable, I suppose?—Certainly.

48,825. The fact of this industry seems to have had an important effect upon the labouring population, for I see that you state that a young labourer can rapidly save money, and that it has had an effect upon early marriages in the district?—That was a remark made by the Vicar of Heathfield.

Effect of poultry industry on labourers.

48,826. Which shows, I presume, that small occupiers or even labourers can derive benefit from the whole system?—Yes. There is no doubt that it has provided a sort of ladder by which the men have been able to rise, and have risen in many cases.

48,827. Should you say that it is a district of small occupiers or not?—I think it is so.

Small and large poultry farms compared.

48,828. Do the small occupiers, as a rule, do better in this business than the larger ones?—It would be very difficult for me to express an opinion whether a small holder with poultry would do better—probably he would—than a larger occupier without poultry. I think it is probable that he would, but I can hardly say so with certainty.

48,829. It is an industry which lends itself rather to the smaller occupier than to the larger one. I suppose?—Certainly. It requires great personal attention from whoever is responsible for it.

48,830. (*Lord Rendel.*) I gather that you find that poultry-farming pure and simple cannot be said to have paid in that district?—That was the evidence I received.

Disadvantage of large poultry farms.

48,831. Is it a business which must be conducted on a very large scale to be successful?—Do you mean as a poultry farm?

48,832. Yes?—I am informed that the largeness of the undertaking is what eventually brings it to grief. The land gets fouled, and that is, I believe, a very common cause of the failure of poultry farms; I have understood so; I do not speak, of course, of that from personal observation.

48,833. In that sense it is very precarious, owing to chicken cholera and other pests sweeping off the stock upon the over-used land?—Yes, that is so, I believe.

Poultry farming a subsidiary occupation.

48,834. In short, it is looked upon as a subordinate industry, or only as an accompaniment of other forms of agricultural industry?—Certainly; that was what was stated to me by several practical farmers who have been going in for poultry; they said that they would not undertake to go in for poultry alone.

48,835. That applies both to breeding and to fattening, does it?—Yes, certainly. Of course the fattening may be undertaken by a man who has not an acre of land; it may be undertaken in a house, so to speak, and was; I found it existed on a small scale in a labourer's cottage.

Poultry fattening.

48,836. (*Chairman.*) The chickens do not roam about at all, do they?—No, they do not get any chance; after they once go to the fattening establishment they never touch the ground again.

48,837. They are put into hatches?—Yes.

48,838. Therefore it does not need a farm for that purpose?—It does not need land at all.

48,839. (*Lord Rendel.*) It is hardly a farming process at all then?—Not the fattening itself.

48,840. Are foreign practices of fattening adopted much, such as revolving hatches, for instance?—No, the staging and cages, so to speak, in which they are penned while they are being fattened, are of the most primitive kind; there is no attempt at any elaboration of plant in that way.

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Sale of eggs.

48,841. Then so far as the egg industry is concerned, is that treated sometimes as a separate part of the business of poultry farming?—The sale of eggs?

48,842. Yes?—I heard very little about it; it is only incidental. Of course a man might sell eggs occasionally, and does sell a few eggs, but it is quite subsidiary to the fattening of chickens.

48,843. And subsidiary to poultry farming?—That I could not say, but I should imagine so.

48,844. Did you find that those engaged in the industry were satisfied with the railway conveniences given them?—Yes, there was no complaint.

Price of Irish lean poultry.

48,845. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) At what age do they buy the lean poultry?—At about three months.

48,846. Three months?—Yes. It varies slightly, according to the time of year, but I should say generally from three to four months is the average age.

48,847. Have you any idea of what they pay for the Irish fowls?—I give the prices in my report. They vary somewhat according to the season. I cannot put my hand on it at the moment, but I think from about 1*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*, or something of that sort.

48,848. How do they bring them over?—In "tops" containing 50 each.

48,849. Part of the way by rail, or all the way by sea?—I do not know where they are landed; I think they are landed at Milford Haven.

48,850. How long does it take to fatten them when they are put into these hatches?—It varies slightly, from three weeks to four weeks.

Poultry cramming.

48,851. When do they begin to cram them?—About half way through the time of their being penned up.

48,852. Did you see them crammed?—Yes.

48,853. Would you say it is cruel?—There is certainly no indication on the part of the birds that there is any cruelty in it, and they do not seem in the least to object or to protest in any way against the operation.

48,854. How many times a day do they cram them?—Three times a day, I think, is the usual practice.

48,855. Do they require much labour for it; I mean to say where a man keeps 500 or 600 poultry how many men would he require to feed them and cram them?—I am not sure that I could say exactly how many fowls to a man it would be.

Mr. Oliver's farm.

48,856. Did you visit Mr. Oliver's farm?—Yes, I went to Mr. Oliver, and I think I give the number of men he employs, but I forget at the moment how many. Mr. Oliver turns out about a hundred dozen a week.

48,857. He fattens only?—Quite so.

48,858. Did he complain of foreign competition—of Russian poultry, for instance?—Yes, he complained of the competition of Russian partridges.

48,859. Does he carry on his business to the same extent now as he did formerly?—Yes, I think so. There has recently been a change; the father died and it has come into the hands of the son; he spoke as though he might be giving it up, but I think that was not seriously intended.

48,860. Do they fatten turkeys and ducks?—Messrs. Olivers fatten turkeys at Christmas time to a small extent, but not to a very large extent I gathered.

Rateable value of land.

48,861. In your Appendix you have got a statement of the rateable value which the Chairman has already questioned you about, is it not a fact that a great many houses have been built in this district which would account for the increase of the rateable value?—That is so. I think I have drawn attention in my report to the fact that these figures of rateable value as given in the report include houses, and that there has been a very considerable increase in the number of houses from people going there to live.

48,862. (*Chairman.*) I was quoting from the return of the assessment of land only as distinguished from houses?—Yes, I gathered that those figures you mentioned were so, but my figures in the Appendix include houses of course.

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48,863. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Do you know how much it costs to send this poultry from the Heathfield district to London, including the collection of them?—It is 2*s.* 6*d.* to 3*s.* a dozen.

Cost of carriage of poultry.

48,864. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you found that the prosperity of these people was limited to a few very skilful men, or did it seem capable of general development by men of average intelligence?—So far as the rearing is concerned there is no reason why anyone of ordinary intelligence should not undertake it successfully. The fattening industry, of course, is especially a skilled industry, but it is one which could be easily learned.

Extension of industry to other districts.

48,865. Do you think the industry could be spread so as to cut out the foreign competition?—That is rather a difficult question to answer.

48,866. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Russian chickens sell for 1*s.* each, do they not, now?—I am not sure what the price would be now.

Rents.

48,867. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are the rents asked for this bit of land high?—No, I had no complaints of the rents being high. In many cases, of course, the poultry rearing is carried on by a single occupant of a cottage, who has no land at all, and the chickens go out in coops on the roadside.

48,868. So they are producing them at something like the lowest possible cost of production now in fact?—I should think so.

Rates.

48,869. (*Mr. Dalton.*) On page 16 of your report you give two instances in which the rates are very high; in one parish you say the highway rate is 1*s.* 8*d.*, and in another 1*s.* 2*d.*; would you give me the names of those parishes—they have most exceptional rates I see?—I am afraid I could not from memory; I know it was one of two informants who gave me that information, but I forget for the moment which it was.

Report on North Devon agricultural depression.

48,870. (*Chairman.*) We will now go to your report upon North Devon. I gather from that report that that district has not suffered so severely as many other parts of England have?—No; of the districts covered by the reports upon which you are examining me to-day that certainly has suffered the least.

48,871. Apparently the Unions of Crediton and South Molton have suffered more than those of Bideford, Barnstaple, and Tiverton?—That is, judging by the rateable value?

Increase in rateable value.

48,872. Yes, judging from the reduction or otherwise in the rateable value?—Yes; but I point out in the report, I think, especially in the case of the unions of Bideford and Barnstaple, the enormous increase and attractiveness for residential purposes of the district. All the villages along the coast, for instance, I believe, have very much increased in rateable value owing to that.

48,873. This return which I have, which distinguishes the assessment of rent apart from buildings and other property, shows, comparing 1870 with 1894, that in Barnstaple the value of land was 127,000*l.* in 1870, and 128,000*l.* in 1894, which is practically the same; there may have been an increase in the value of land between 1870 and 1879, there probably was, but comparing the 24 years there has been no reduction in the value of land; in Bideford the same is the case; it has risen from 40,000*l.* to 40,100*l.*; in Tiverton the assessment in value has decreased from 121,000*l.* in 1870 to 117,000*l.* in 1894, which is an inconsiderable reduction; whereas in South Molton the reduction in the assessments has been from 93,000*l.* to 84,000*l.*, and in Crediton from 95,000*l.* to 79,000*l.*—a very considerable reduction in both those unions. These figures would seem to indicate that there must have been some circumstances in those two unions of Crediton and South Molten different from the circumstances in the other three unions?—I went over a considerable part of the South Molton Union, but I am bound to say as regards the Crediton Union that I visited very few of the parishes there.

48,874. In what respect did South Molton differ from Barnstaple and Tiverton?—In Barnstaple and Tiverton and Bideford they have greater access to the markets for one thing, and I should say, on the whole, better land.

48,875. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Better land than at Crediton?—In regard to Crediton I am saying that I am not able to speak really with confidence because I went very little in the Crediton Union.

Demand for farms.

48,876. (*Chairman.*) In all these districts that you have been in there appears to have been a demand for farms?—Yes.

48,877. Is there any difficulty in letting the farms?—Not on the whole, except of course in some cases.

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48,878. You say you were told of two farms on a large estate, which were just relet. In the one case there were 13 tenders and 12 in the other, one being 60 acres and the other about 200 acres?—Yes.

Reductions and abatement of rent.

48,879. Apparently in a considerable part of these districts there has been no permanent reduction of rent, but there have been from time to time temporary abatements of rent?—Yes, there have been temporary abatements, and in some cases there have been permanent reductions. I put the reduction on the average from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent. taking all things into account, that is as from 1881.

Competition for farms.

48,880. Then the farmers apparently rather complain of the competition for farms?—Yes; that complaint was very general.

48,881. That would tend to show that there is a demand for farms, and that there are people ready to give rents at the old rates?—Yes, that was particularly so in the neighbourhood of Barnstaple and Bideford.

Arbitration for fair rents.

48,882. Then apparently in the South Molton district there was a desire on the part of the tenants for some form of arbitration between themselves and their landlords on the question of rent?—Yes; that was not confined to the South Molton district, in fact it was a subject which was mentioned at more than one of the meetings and mentioned by several of the witnesses.

Tenure.

48,883. What is the general system of tenure there; is it yearly agreements?—Yearly agreements are increasing, but there are a large number of leases still running.

48,884. A large number still running?—Yes, I gathered so.

48,885. Are they running out or are there new tenancies?—The new tenancies are not so much under leases.

48,886. The new tenancies are generally yearly tenancies?—Yes.

48,887. Is that because the tenants are unwilling to take leases?—I think there is rather an unwillingness on both sides as far as I could gather.

48,888. Owing to the uncertainty as to what the future may bring?—Certainly.

Arbitration for fair rents.

48,889. What did you understand that the farmers meant by arbitration?—I think I pointed out in my report that it seems to me that in many cases they were not very clear as to whether they meant such arbitration as that which takes place for instance when a man quits a farm and when a subject is referred by mutual consent to a valuer appointed and agreed to by both sides. That was the sort of arbitration which seemed to me to be in the minds of a good many of them.

48,890. A kind of voluntary arrangement entered into at the time by agreement of both parties referring it to a particular person?—Yes.

48,891. But not an arbitration in the sense that either party would have the right of referring to an arbitrator appointed by the State who should have the power of determining as between both and binding them both as to what the rent should be?—No. I am bound to say that those to whom I referred as, I think, having in contemplation what may be determined a voluntary reference, also thought that it ought to be to a person who was appointed officially either by the State or by the County Council, or by some authority. Then of course there was that further class of people who would be prepared to refer matters to a court which should have compulsory powers. I gathered that many of those who in a general way, so to speak, advocated a reference on a question of rent would not be prepared to follow out to its final conclusion a reference to a court having compulsory powers.

48,892. What they meant was a kind of voluntary arrangement to be entered into at the moment by agreement between the parties just as they might refer any other matter of dispute which might occur at the moment?—Yes.

48,893. (*Mr. Lambert.*) By agreement between the parties?—Well, by consent of both parties.

48,894. But presuming that the one party did not consent was it not then to be referred on the application of the other party?—As I say, in many cases I came across witnesses who were prepared to take that view.

48,895. (*Chairman.*) What I understand you to say is, that there were two kinds of opinion among the tenant farmers; some were in favour of the reference to a court or

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to an arbitrator who should have compulsory powers and to whom either party might have the right of appealing in a manner which would bind the other?—Yes.

48,896. And the other and more numerous body were in favour of an understanding or an arrangement under which the two together by agreement might refer to a particular person or an arbitrator appointed by the State?—Yes, and in those cases they thought it would be an advantage to have a person who was officially appointed, so to speak.

48,897. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Did you go into that subject? Presuming on a question of rent the landlord and tenant did not agree as to the amount of the rent, would it be likely that they would agree to bring in another, and an outside authority, to determine how much rent should be paid?—It arose, as I gathered, in this way, and of course I am speaking now rather from impressions gathered, because one did not discuss the whole question of land tenure with every witness; it would not have been possible. The impressions I gathered were these, that there was certainly an idea among many of those with whom I came in contact that it would be quite possible for landlords and tenants not agreeing at the moment as to what the market value of the farm was, to agree to a valuer. Of course, as you are aware, it is very common—at least not uncommon—for a valuer to be called in to determine at a particular moment what the rental value of a farm is.

48,898. Yes, it is possible as you say; but do you think it would be probable?—I can only say that in many cases I believe it is done at the present time. When there is a dispute as between the agent and the tenant a valuer is occasionally called in and puts a value on the farm. It does not follow that his valuation is necessarily accepted by both sides, but that is a practice which I think a good many witnesses had in view, and they thought of extending that principle.

48,899. (*Chairman.*) That is what you think many of them contemplate?—I gathered that.

48,900. Not a reference to a court or to an arbitrator to whom either party might appeal in a manner which would bind the other?—No, but I should say that in that case they would certainly think that that person should be a person who was, so to speak, a public official.

Local rates

48,901. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I see that on page 28 you say that one man who bought a farm for 6,000*l.* some years ago, thinks that he is very unfairly taxed as compared with the owner of 6,000*l.* worth of Consols?—Yes.

48,902. Would not the fact that he would have to pay rates on the farm be taken into account in fixing the purchase money of the farm?—Yes, of course, that would be in any case taken into account.

48,903. The rates are now 2*s.* 4*d.* in the £?—Yes.

48,904. Did he mention whether they had fallen or risen since he bought the farm?—No.

48,905. Clearly if it had been free from rates he would have had to pay more than 6,000*l.* for that farm, is that not so?—Presumably he would.

48,906. In Appendix B. III., on page 49, where you give the rate in the pound of the poor rate in the six unions of Okehampton, South Molton, Barnstaple, Torrington, Bideford, and Holsworthy, the figures show that, as a general rule, the rate in the pound has considerably fallen; for example, in Okehampton it has fallen from 2*s.* 10*d.* in 1881 to 1*s.* 10½*d.* in 1893?—Yes, but the other falls are not by any means so great.

48,907. In South Molton it has fallen from 2*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 9½*d.*; in Barnstaple from 2*s.* 4¾*d.* to 2*s.* 2¾*d.*; in Torrington it has fallen a halfpenny, namely, from 2*s.* 9¾*d.* to 2*s.* 9¼*d.*, and it has fallen fourpence in Bideford, namely, from 3*s.* 4¾*d.* to 3*s.* 0¾*d.*; and it has risen three farthings in Holsworthy, namely, from 3*s.* 1½*d.* to 3*s.* 2¼*d.*?—Yes.

48,908. So that, on the whole, there is a considerable fall in the rates, and in only one case has there been a rise, and in that case it is only three farthings?—That is so, comparing 1881 with 1893.

48,909. Consequently if this farm had been bought in 1880 or 1881 and the rates have fallen since, he could not have been damaged at all by the rates?—Those figures that are given in the appendix only refer to the poor rate, I imagine.

48,910. What does the poor rate include there?—These are figures taken from the local taxation returns.

48,911. The poor rate appears in these unions to include nearly everything; it includes the contributions to the highway boards?—Yes.

48,912. Can you say whether there are any separate highway parishes in these unions? If these parishes in these unions are all under highway boards I take it that these figures do include the whole of the rates raised in the unions?—For the most part there are highway boards, I believe.

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48,913. Therefore, the only rates that would be excluded in this case would be in those exceptional parishes, if any, where the highways are under separate highway surveyors?—Yes, and, of course, school boards.

48,914. School boards are included here, I think, you will find; the school board rate is certainly included in that table; you have the item of school boards, and you have got a figure in every case?—Yes, I beg your pardon.

48,915. Therefore, it would include every rate unless you happened to have separate highway parishes?—Yes.

48,916. (*Mr. Little.*) Or urban sanitary rates?—Yes. I came across one or two instances where there were special sanitary rates which would I think not be included here.

48,917. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Not the urban sanitary ones; but you were speaking of rural rates, were you not?—Yes, that is so; there would be no urban sanitary rate in this particular instance.

48,918. Therefore in the district that you have been reporting on here, the rural rates have fallen very considerably?—Of course the fall has not been universal, for instance, in one case it has absolutely increased. You could not say that for the whole of the union.

48,919. In one union there is a rise of three farthings, but there is a fall of nearly one shilling in another, and in all the other unions there has been a fall?—Yes, there has been a decrease.

Abatements of rent.

48,920. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Generally speaking should you say that the reductions of rent have been given in the nature of temporary abatements?—Generally speaking yes, with exceptions, of course.

48,921. The phrase is used that they get a reduction "as long as the bad times last"?—Yes, that was rather a common phrase.

48,922. In some cases you found that some reduction was entered as by the gift from the landlord to the tenant?—I quote one case in which I saw the receipt in which it was so entered.

48,923. That was rather in the nature, well, of a charitable view of the matter taken by the landlord, was it not?—The phrase might possibly be open to that construction.

Letting of farms by tender.

48,924. You say that there are cases in which farms have been let at a higher rent than the old tenant paid?—Yes, I was informed of such cases.

48,925. Recently?—Yes, quite recently.

48,926. To what do you attribute that fact?—No doubt they would be cases in which the farms had great advantages in the way of situation and market, and so on. There is no doubt about it, as far as I could gather, that certainly in the Bideford and Barnstaple Unions, and to some extent, I should say, in the South Molton Union, there is a considerable competition still for farms.

48,927. And the fact of which you were informed, which I presume would be a not uncommon case, that there were 13 tenders for one and 12 tenders for another farm would show that there is an enormous deal of competition for farms there?—Yes, I should say that those were perhaps a little exceptional, but they were cases given to me by the agent.

48,928. Are the farms usually let by tender?—Yes.

48,929. Then those 12 or 13 tenants would be bidding one against the other for these farms?—Yes.

48,930. And sometimes a tenant who was considered to be a good man who had not put in the highest tender was induced to give the highest price?—Yes, there were witnesses who spoke of that being done in some instances.

Arbitration for fair rents.

48,931. Now, as regards the arbitration being called in and both parties being bound to accept his decision; you mention in paragraph 40 that there was a case in which an occupier had been occupying 500 acres for 35 years; that up to four or five years ago he held it on lease, that it was then re-valued by a well-known valuer who put it at 520*l.*, but that the agent asked 570*l.*, or 50*l.* more, and he was obliged to agree to pay this. Do you imagine that the farmers meant to call in an arbitrator whose decision was not to be at any rate in some degree binding upon both parties?—Of course, you are putting that case to me; in that case the witness who gave me that instance

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(it was his own), was prepared to go to the length which I have indicated certain witnesses did go, that is to say, that there should be a reference which should involve the compulsory fixing of rent.

48,932. (*Mr. Little.*) Was he prepared to make it compulsory upon himself to accept at the rent named?—I am not sure that I put the point to him in particular, but I do not think that even in those cases that they quite accepted the absolute results of the practice that they recommended.

Disinclination of tenants to quit.

48,933. (*Mr. Lambert.*) But, still, the tenants show a very considerable disinclination to leave their farms?—A disinclination to leave their farms, certainly.

48,934. Owing to the possibility of the difficulty of getting into another through the great competition?—There are many reasons why they are unwilling to leave their farms. Some of them were leaving and going into other parts of the country. I came across cases of men who had left the district and gone to Suffolk, but I do not know whether you could say that the main cause of their disinclination was because they could not take other farms in the district.

48,935. Perhaps the disadvantages that are always incident on a man's quitting his farm and having to go into a new neighbourhood weighed with them also?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

48,936. You say that in some cases there has been no reduction of rents?—Yes.

48,937. The old rents are exacted?—Yes.

48,938. But they are not willingly paid by the tenants?—They would all like their rents reduced.

Condition of buildings.

48,939. You found the condition of the buildings on the smaller estates was generally indifferent, and in some cases very bad?—Yes.

48,940. Would that be at all usual in the district?—No, I should not say that to call the condition very bad would be a description that you could apply to the district generally.

48,941. Would you say generally indifferent—do not let me press you?—I am speaking now from impressions rather, and I should say certainly, as applying to some of the principal estates in the districts that you could not say they were indifferent, but to a few estates which might almost be named, perhaps, I dare say that would apply.

48,942. Up to recently the landlord has always charged the tenant for the improvements he has made?—Yes, that had been the practice.

48,943. And since the tenants were unable to afford this, the landlords have shown a great disinclination to make these improvements?—Yes, and as I say in paragraph 17 "Consequently less outlay has been undertaken in this direction." I think it almost follows as a matter of course that if the landlords cannot get interest they would not be quite so willing to do it.

Deterioration of cultivation.

48,944. Then in paragraph 30 you say, "The common "opinion among farmers was that the general state of "farming had deteriorated since 1881"?—Yes, that was a subject that very often gave rise to very animated discussion. There was considerable difference of opinion on the subject. I am speaking of course of discussion among the farmers themselves. A few of them objected—I am not sure that I indicated it in the report—but the general balance of opinion was that there has been a deterioration.

Changes of cultivation.

48,945. You say that in the district a very considerable change has been made in the system of cultivation and in the manner of disposing of the produce—that is by fattening rather than by selling store stock?—Yes.

48,946. And there is a considerable increase of permanent pasture?—Yes.

Compensation for laying down permanent pasture.

48,947. Did you find a number of instances in which farmers complained that they had not sufficient security under the Agricultural Holdings Act, for being compensated for permanent pasture at the termination of their tenancies?—That was a point mentioned in discussing the Agricultural Holdings Act, and one of the amendments suggested was, that a tenant should have power to claim for the permanent pasture laid down notwithstanding that he had not received the consent of the landlord.

Relations of landlord and tenant.

48,948. Now the relations between landlord and tenant are friendly except as regards rent, and in some cases game?—Yes, I think that is a pretty fair description; that was given by somebody whom I quote.

48,949. Still there is a considerable amount of dissatisfaction as regards the rents in the district?—Yes, there was a good deal of dissatisfaction expressed to me as regards rent. Many of the tenants, I suppose the majority of the tenants who came to me, considered that the rents were too high in view of the times.

48,950. And thought that they had not been fairly dealt with by the landlords or that a sufficient reduction of rent had not been given to them?—I am bound to say that many of them did admit a difficulty—I am not sure that I refer to it, but I think I do somewhere in the report—they did refer to the difficulty of a landlord reducing rents in face of competition for farms at the same rents. Where a large number of tenants were willing to come forward and take the farms at the same rents the tenants themselves admitted it put the landlord in rather an awkward position when asked to reduce the rents.

48,951. It is not unusual for a man to take a farm possibly at a higher rent than the old tenant and as soon as he gets into it to ask for an abatement?—Yes.

Sporting rights.

48,952. Now there was a considerable amount of dissatisfaction expressed with the attitude of the landlords on the game question, was there not?—Yes.

Estate management.

48,953. And also a great deal of dissatisfaction against the agents who were employed to manage the estates?—Yes. So far as there was what one may term anything like an unfriendly feeling I should say it was displayed more to the agents than it was to the landlords themselves.

48,954. There were a considerable number of agents who were solicitors managing estates against whom a strong prejudice was manifested?—Yes.

48,955. And there were a considerable number of estates managed by solicitors, I suppose?—Yes. I think the majority, one may say, are so managed.

Effect of arbitration courts on relations of landlord and tenant.

48,956. You say as regards the land courts, or arbitration courts, or solicitors' courts, whatever you like to call them—"it did not seem to me that those who took this view"—that is that the court should have the power to compulsorily reduce rent—"fully appreciate the altered "relationship which would exist between a landlord and a "tenant who was compelled by an outside tribunal to "accept a rent less than that which he considered himself "entitled to"—What do you mean by the term "altered relationship"?—That is an impression which I gathered, and I am bound to say that it does not seem to me, expressing my own opinion, possible that the position of a landlord and a tenant could be the same after a landlord had been compelled to let his land at a rent which he considered to be unfair, as it was before.

48,957. That is, there would be less friendly feeling manifested by the landlord?—I should say certainly the relationship would become strained.

48,958. Do you not imagine that the relationship might become strained if the tenant was paying more than he ought to pay?—Yes, but at the present time I suppose rents are at bottom fixed by competition, and therefor a tenant cannot be paying more than theoretically some one is willing to give for the land.

48,959. If you go into the economical conditions, if you have 13 men bidding for one farm, you can scarcely get a fair economic rent?—I do not want to go into it, but I should have thought the greater the competition the more likely you are to arrive at the true value of a farm, because no man would offer to pay too much rent for any property, a farm or anything else.

48,960. That might be so in a competition for a free commodity, but land of course is a limited commodity especially in North Devon?—Yes, but after all nobody wants to have a limited commodity I suppose unless they can make it pay.

48,961. Certainly not; but still they are tempted—and I think I have brought it out in your evidence before—and sometimes go into it when they cannot make it pay, but trust to the generosity of the landlord. Now I want to come to the point as to whether you think a tenant would not be very much more friendly disposed towards the landlord if he had a sufficient reduction of rent?—"More friendly disposed"?

48,962. Yes, and that the ill-feeling that would be generated on the part of the landlord would be dispersed on the part of the tenant, and between the two there would be the same mutual good feeling existing?—No it does not seem to me that it would be so, it seems to me that if tribunals were set up to which either side might appeal to have rents fixed, which one side, of course, would necessarily consider to be unfair, the alteration in conditions which would result would entirely change the whole of the conditions between landlord and tenant.

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48,963. Yes, but there would be a considerable dissatisfaction felt by a tenant now who was paying too much rent?—Yes, and in many cases no doubt they had been met by the landlords, as I have shown by the cases which I quote. I have quoted cases where a farmer has offered a certain rent, really presuming, if one may say so, on the leniency of the landlord when he gets in. That, of course, is a condition of things which could not possibly occur if the rents were fixed by an outside tribunal.

48,964. No; because the man would have it at a fair rent, and he would not have to trust to the generosity of the landlord?—Then, of course, you get to the definition of a fair rent, which is a subject for controversy.

48,965. Of course, that is really pressing you too closely?—No; if it is the wish of the Commission I should be pleased to express my opinion.

Law of distress.

48,966. As to the question of the law of distress, there was rather a general feeling that it should be abolished, was there not?—Yes, that was certainly the general balance of opinion.

Restrictions on cultivation.

48,967. Now I suppose you found a great cause of dissatisfaction was owing to the antiquated agreements and obsolete restrictions that were placed upon tenant farmers cultivating as they pleased?—Yes, I think that was a ground of legitimate complaint in many cases as far as I saw some of the agreements.

48,968. Very legitimate indeed, I presume?—Yes, quite legitimate. They seem to me needlessly complicated and antiquated.

Freedom of cultivation and sale.

48,969. Tenants wanted to have freedom of cultivation and freedom of sale, provided they did not deteriorate the fertility of the holding?—Yes.

48,970. I presume there was a strong opinion expressed all round in that district that no tenant should be allowed to deteriorate the fertility of the farm?—I think most of the witnesses would take that view; they did not all of course express it in that way but I think if it were put to them they would all admit that it was necessary.

Ground game.

48,971. On the question of ground game you quote a resolution to the effect that the tenant should be allowed "to kill and take the ground game when, where, and "how he likes" on his farm?—Yes, that was, as I say, a favourite phrase.

48,972. I take credit for that phrase, I think I was the father of it?—Yes, so I understood.

The currency.

48,973. (*Mr. Everett.*) I notice that on page 33 you seem to have met with one gentleman in Exeter who anticipated that the price of wheat will come down to 2*s.* a bushel or less?—Yes.

48,974. And he attributes what has happened, and what he fears will still happen, to currency changes, and regards that "as the most surpassingly important political "question of the day"?—Yes.

48,975. Do you know whether that gentleman was one who stood in good repute among his neighbours as a man of intelligence, or was he supposed to be only fit for an asylum?—I know that he is a gentleman who takes a considerable part in discussing public matters, and as far as I know he is in very good repute in his district, though I did not have the pleasure of meeting him personally.

48,976. (*Mr. Lambert.*) He does not live in North Devon, does he?—No.

Depression in North Devon.

48,977. (*Mr. Little.*) The district which you visited in Devon, you say, was rather more favourably dealt with than most parts of England that you visited?—Yes.

48,978. It had less depression?—Yes.

48,979. Does that arise very largely from the fact that it is a great cattle breeding and rearing district?—Yes, I should judge so.

48,980. They are less dependent upon corn there?—Yes.

48,981. There is a large proportion of the land in pasture, and the arable land takes very kindly to grass?—Quite so.

48,982. The soil and the climate are both very favourable to the production of grass?—Yes.

48,983. Then they have also sheep breeding to a considerable extent?—Yes.

48,984. And they have as a small industry orchards and cider-making?—Yes.

48,985. Which gives a variety to their agriculture greater than is found in some parts of the east of England?—Quite so.

48,986. There is still a considerable competition for farms at rents pretty nearly equal to what they have been?—Yes.

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Competition for farms.

48,987. Notwithstanding that there have been voluntary remissions and reductions of rent to the extent of 10 per cent. or 15 per cent. on the average?—Yes.

Fall in prices.

48,988. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How much do you say the produce had depreciated in per-centage?—I am not sure that I worked out the per-centage, but I have given some figures, I think, showing the decrease in prices.

48,989. There has been a very considerable decrease, I presume?—There has been a decrease in prices, of course, especially in regard to corn. Then I give figures showing a great reduction in wool.

48,990. And cattle?—Cattle, of course, as you know, vary a good deal; I suppose the level of prices is somewhat lower.

Tenure.

48,991. (*Mr. Little.*) Some years ago it was very unusual to let a farm from year to year; they were all let upon leases, were they not?—Yes, that was so.

48,992. Where those leases have come to an end the agreements recently entered into have been from year to year, have they not?—Yes, generally speaking, but I found some cases of leases even at the present time being taken.

Restrictions on cultivation.

48,993. Are the restrictive covenants that were imposed in cases of leases continued in modern agreements from year to year?—In many cases I found they were—practically the same form being adopted in the case of yearly tenancies.

48,994. Exactly the same form?—Practically and substantially the same form.

48,995. Do you know whether they are enforced?—No, I should say not on a good tenant, of course.

48,996. Could it be said, generally, that they are held as a rod over the tenants' back, but they are not really enforced?—Yes, I think that would be a fair description.

48,997. They may be made the subject of a claim on the tenant quitting?—Yes.

48,998. But so long as he goes on they are not observed?—Yes.

48,999. You mentioned one particularly onerous condition, namely, that the tenant should "dress every acre "broken up or tilled with 60 bushels of lime," and that that would cost about 7*l.* an acre?—Yes.

49,000. Do you know whether that means land broken up out of grass?—No.

49,001. Do you think it does not?—"To dress every "acre which shall be broken up or tilled with 60 bushels "of lime of 224 lbs. to bushel, and after every such dressing to take but two crops of corn and one of roots or "a mowing of grass," that refers to breaking up land which has been for some years under pasture, does it not?—Under temporary grass.

49,002. You are aware that in the West country there is not that rigid distinction drawn between permanent pasture and arable land that there is in the eastern counties?—That is so.

49,003. And that it is questionable whether land which is let down for 6, 8, or 10 years is to be regarded as permanent pasture or as arable land; are you not aware that disputes have arisen on that point?—Yes.

49,004. Whether a tenant who had laid down land to grass and had kept it down for some 10 or 12 years had then a right to break it up?—Yes, cases have occurred I know, of course.

49,005. May not this be intended to refer to cases where land has been laid down and kept down to grass for some time, and then when it is broken up again has to be dressed with lime. It goes on to provide that after that dressing only two crops of corn and one of roots or a mowing of grass should be taken, the inference being that it should then be laid down again?—That might be so in that case.

49,006. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is not "broken up" a common term for ploughing land that has been down for two years ley in Devonshire?—Yes, I heard it used; I was thinking that it referred to land in temporary grass.

49,007. In the common phraseology of the district it would mean usually a tenant breaking up what is termed a ley in Devonshire?—Yes, that is what I gathered.

49,008. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the same agreement it is provided that an additional rent of 20*l.* per acre per annum

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should be paid for any meadow or pasture broken up?—Yes.

49,009. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Then it clearly could not refer to that?—It struck me that it was breaking up what they call the leys in Devonshire.

Demand for farms.

49,010. (*Mr. Little.*) Then you said that the present demand for farms encourages the landlord to maintain his present rent?—Yes.

49,011. It acts to him as an inducement not to make any substantial reduction, does it not?—Yes.

49,012. Of course that would apply with still greater force to an agent who has to advise a landlord?—Yes.

49,013. He is obliged to say there are half a dozen people who want this farm and who will give the present rent, and I cannot therefore advise you to take less; the competition of course keeps up the rent?—Yes.

Arbitration for fair rents.

49,014. Do you imagine that an official valuer if appointed an arbitrator could disregard the fact of this competition?—No, I do not know on what principle an official valuer could fix rents. It must be either on competition or not on competition.

49,015. Given the competition, and given the knowledge which a local man must possess, of the desire of a dozen people to have this farm at the present rent, he could not fix any other rent less than what other people would give?—If a tribunal of that sort was set up, and if they adopted competition as the basis of rent, I think the probable result would be that rents would be raised in many parts of Devonshire.

Inequality in rents.

49,016. Notwithstanding the competition that exists there is a very great inequality in the rents, taking into consideration the intrinsic value of the land, is there not?—Yes.

49,017. You give an instance in paragraph 39 of two small farms in the same parish, one of 55 acres and the other of 62 acres. The 55 acres is rented at 14*s.* 4*d.*, and the occupier of that land has had 25 per cent. abatement, which reduces it to 10*s.* 9*d.* an acre, and the 62 acres is let at 28*s.* per acre, but that occupier has had no reduction, so that the rents are as 10*s.* 9*d.* against 28*s.*, but your informant thinks that at an equal rent he would sooner occupy the one which is at the lowest rent?—I am afraid that is not what I intended to convey. The rent at the present moment is 14*s.* 4*d.*, including the abatement.

49,018. I misread it; but, still there is a difference between 28*s.* and 14*s.* 4*d.*?—Yes, that is so.

49,019. The farm let at 14*s.* 4*d.* per acre, being rather the better of the two in the opinion of your informant?—Yes, quite so.

49,020. Then it is quite clear that there must be a very great difference in the rental in proportion to value?—Yes.

49,021. Then as bearing upon a question which has been frequently mentioned here; if assessments for rates were based entirely upon rental, the occupier of the highly rented farm would pay double the rates that the occupier of the low-rented farm would?—Yes.

49,022. Would there be any justice or fairness in that?—No, there does not seem to be any reason why one should pay higher rates than the other.

49,023. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Nor does there why one should pay a higher rent than the other?—No.

49,024. (*Mr Little.*) That is a matter within his control and the other is not?—Yes.

49,025. The one is a burden assumed, and the other is a burden imposed?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

49,026. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, what was the specific grievance except the formality and costliness of the procedure under the Act?—There was a sort of general grievance that the Act was as many people thought inoperative, because it was so complicated for one thing, so difficult to put into operation, and I give a few cases in the report of more specific grievances.

49,027. You think it is desired that the scope of the Act should be enlarged?—Yes.

49,028. Do you imagine that it is possible when the legislature interferes between landlord and tenant to have anything but a formal and costly proceeding?—No; it must be, I suppose, costly, but I think it is too costly.

49,029. It must be formal?—Yes, it must be formal.

Scheduling the value of improvements.

49,030. And probably it will be costly?—Yes.

49,031. There is one suggestion I did not quite understand; perhaps you can explain it. On page 24 you say:

"Three farmers whom I met together, at the house of one "of them, in discussing the Act suggested that there "should be a schedule of the value of improvements "added to the Act,"—what does that mean?—That is a suggestion which I believe has been made before; that is that Parliament should, in point of fact, draw up a schedule which should show practically what the valuers are to give in a rough way.

49,032. That would be a uniform per-centage within certain limits?—Yes.

49,033. Of the cost of the improvement?—No, of the value.

49,034. How would that be got at?—It would be a per-centage.

49,035. On the basis of cost?—It would have to be.

49,036. Is that not exactly one of the things that many object to in regard to the practice under the Act, namely, that the same per-centage is given under all circumstances—that one half of last year's cake is given whether the man has used it for many years or for only one; is that not one of the subjects of complaint?—Yes, I have heard that made a subject of complaint, but not in this district.

49,037. The object of this suggestion is that the Act should specify the proportionate part of the original cost which should be paid to the tenant for the consumption of cake and corn and the use of manures?—Yes.

49,038. That would be considered by others a retrograde step, would it not?—Yes, in my opinion it would.

49,039. It would be going back rather to the principles of the Duke of Richmond's Act?—Yes, it is going back to the principle of the Act of 1875; if I remember rightly.

Decrease in rates and value of produce.

49,040. Mr. Dalton has pointed out to you the decrease in the rates in certain Unions; would you say that the decrease in the rates has been as great as the decrease in the value of produce, out of which the rates are paid?—No, certainly not, as I think the figures I give would prove.

49,041. The capacity for payment has been reduced to a greater extent than the demand?—Very much greater, I should say.

49,042. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But then the rent has not fallen, if that is the case, in the same proportion as the produce?—Yes, I have already said that.

49,043. That it had not fallen?—Yes.

Scheduling condition of farms.

49,044. (*Mr. Channing.*) I want to ask you whether there was any reference at these meetings to the principle of scheduling the condition of the farms in Devonshire?—The question has been raised, but I forget whether it was raised in Devonshire; I think it was.

49,045. Was there any strong feeling as to the usefulness of the practice?—The suggestion of a record of the condition of the holding to be taken by a competent valuer, and endorsed on the lease or agreement was brought forward by the Bideford Committee.

49,046. Did you have any representations from any farmers in Devonshire embodying a practical scheme?—I did discuss it with two or three competent men; men whose opinion I think ought to be considered, and they thought it would be a very good plan; they thought that, supposing a record of the farm could be taken on entry, that would form a very good basis, so to speak, upon which to make the valuation between the incoming and the outgoing tenant on quitting the farm.

49,047. They did not see any special difficulties?—No.

Report on Dorsetshire. Unlet farms.

49,048. (*Chairman.*) Now, turning to the report which you have prepared on Dorsetshire, did you, in that district, find any land unlet?—There was not very much actually unlet in Dorset, or rather I should say there was not very much land not farmed; there was a good deal of land in the landlords' hands.

49,049. Lots of farms on hand, comparatively speaking?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

49,050. Was there a demand for farms in that county?—Yes, but nothing to the same extent as there was in Devonshire.

49,051. Still land could be let?—Yes.

Land courts.

49,052. Was there a demand there on the part of tenants for land courts?—The question was brought forward by a few witnesses and I think at one or two meetings—at the Wool meeting for instance.

49,053. But not at other meetings?—That was the only meeting at which the subject was brought forward in that way, and very few witnesses really referred to that matter or brought it forward.

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49,054. I suppose that yearly tenancies prevailed there?—Yes.

49,055. Had leases been common at one time and had they gone out?—Yes.

49,056. Now the farmers are only inclined to take yearly tenancies?—Yes.

49,057. Was anything said as to whether this land court should decide upon rents for a term of years, or was the land court to determine the rent only for one year?—The way in which it was put was that a court of appeal "should be formed to which a tenant might apply, without "prejudice to his occupation, for a re-assessment of his "rent, or for the adjustment of any other grievance."

49,058. What is the meaning of the term, "without "prejudice to his occupation"?—It was difficult to arrive at that, and the subject was not, I am bound to say, very fully discussed. It was adopted at a meeting at which a large number of other subjects were brought forward first, and only voted upon by a comparatively few of those present: what those words actually mean I cannot quite explain.

49,059. Do you think that the tenant farmers who are unwilling to take leases from their landlords would be more willing to take a lease on the determination of a land court?—No, I do not think so.

49,060. Then if not that would mean that the land court, whenever applied to, is to determine for a year what the rent should be?—Yes.

49,061. And it might be applied to year by year?—Quite so; that would I think be the meaning.

49,062. You think that was what they meant?—Yes, that was probably their view.

Subdivision of holdings.

49,063. There is a very interesting statement on page 32 of your report of the sale of a farm of 343 acres in a number of small lots—30 lots ranging from 1½ to 31 acres. I think the general result of that is that the purchasers, though belonging to the agricultural class, generally had some other occupation, I suppose either as labourers or as higglers, or as carriers or something of that kind?—Yes, that was so.

49,064. Was it in a purely rural district?—Yes, it is about four miles, I suppose, from Dorchester.

49,065. The terms on which the purchase was made were that the purchase money was to be paid off in equal annual instalments in 10 years?—Yes.

49,066. I think you have stated that this occurred in 1888, but so far the instalments have been paid and the money has been found by these purchasers?—Yes, there were, I think, one or two exceptions which are referred to in the report, but, generally speaking, that was so.

49,067. And generally the tenants in these small holdings seem to be doing fairly well?—Yes.

49,068. And many of them have built houses?—Yes; they were then building several.

49,069. Is there anything exceptional about that place favourable to the success of a project of this kind?—No; I do not know that there was anything that one could say was exceptional.

49,070. Do you think that if in other parts of the country land were put up in a form convenient for the purchase in small lots by people of this kind there would be a similar demand?—Yes, I think there might be in many districts. I could see nothing exceptional in the conditions which accounted for its being successful there.

49,071. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is it near a town?—It was near a town, and I am speaking of course of similar circumstances.

Cultivation of small holdings.

49,072. (*Chairman.*) What kind of cultivation do they carry on in these small holdings; do they lay them down in grass, or do they cultivate them with garden cultivation to a certain extent?—It varies; some are all in grass, but the majority cultivate them as gardens more or less. There is one case I mention in the report, I think, in which a man had been a gardener—evidently a very skilled gardener—and he had put up houses and gone in for growing tomatoes very largely. He was I should imagine making it pay.

49,073. But most of them either lay them down in grass, or cultivate them by intense cultivation?—Yes.

49,074. They do not grow corn upon them?—Except in one or two of the larger holdings.

49,075. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is there anything you wish to call our particular attention to in this report on Dorsetshire?—No, I do not think so.

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The currency.

49,076. (*Mr. Everett.*) I see that you found rather a strong feeling in Dorsetshire on the question of the influence of the currency upon the prices of the produce?—Yes, I was rather surprised to find—perhaps I ought not to have been surprised, but at any rate it did surprise me to find—the amount of interest that was taken in the subject there.

49,077. At two or three meetings it came up and resolutions were passed upon the question?—Yes.

Rates.

49,078. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You say that you found in Dorsetshire a general opinion that rates had increased in recent years, and that in fact many witnesses stated this was the case; but, as you point out, the statement that you give in the appendix to your report referring to 12 unions shows that in all those cases with one exception where the rates remained the same, there had been a fall in the rate in the £ of the poor rates including the county rates?—Yes.

49,079. In some of those unions the fall was very considerable, for example in Poole from 5*s.* to 3*s.* 4½*d.*, and in Blandford from 2*s.* 8*d.* to 1*s.* 9½*d.*?—Yes.

49,080. In every one of the cases there was a fall with that exception of Cerne, where it remained stationary?—Yes. Of course in such a place as Poole it would be very largely due to the houses; there is a great increase of rateable value there which would account for it in that particular place.

49,081. The rates in Poole no doubt include the borough rate, and that is why they are so high in that union?—Very likely.

49,082. But there are many purely agricultural unions in this Dorsetshire district, in fact I suppose this list in the appendix includes the whole of the unions you visited in Dorsetshire?—Yes.

49,083. Therefore it is quite clear that the very common opinion which prevailed in Dorsetshire, as well as in other places, that the rates have increased, is not in accordance with the facts?—That is so, the rate in the £ has not increased.

49,084. On the contrary the rates have fallen very considerably, speaking generally?—Yes, I have no doubt that the opinion which farmers express as regards that, namely, that the rates had increased was simply because in these times they feel the burden so much more although the amount in the £ of course might be less.

49,085. The rent had fallen too, I suppose, in Dorsetshire; —Yes.

49,086. Therefore if the rate in the £ had also fallen, they must be paying a very much smaller amount than they used to pay in the shape of rates?—The total amount that they paid would probably be less, but still, as I say, they would feel it more.

49,087. Have you made any calculations for the purpose of ascertaining whether the amount they pay in rates really bears a larger proportion to the value of the produce than it formerly did?—No, I have not any calculations here in that respect.

Reduced rates and value of produce.

49,088. It is impossible to say so without a very careful calculation, is it not? You would have first of all to see to what extent the rent had fallen, and then if the rent had fallen in proportion to the produce, and the assessable value had fallen in proportion to the produce, even assuming that the rate in the £ had not fallen, the actual rates would have fallen in proportion to the produce; but in this case we have the fact that the rate in the £ has fallen, and you cannot say off-hand, without calculation, that the amount of rates has not fallen to the extent of the value of the produce, can you?—I give it here in this particular instance as accounting for the general impression of farmers which, as pointed out is not accounted for by the figures of the rate in the £, but there is no doubt a very general impression among farmers that rates have risen, and I say I account for that impression prevailing by the fact that they feel the burden so much more.

49,089. Is it not quite as common for urban ratepayers to think that the rates have risen when as a matter of fact they have fallen in a particular town? Do you not find it very seldom that anybody without going into it very carefully and looking at the figures knows whether his rates have risen or fallen?—Of course it is a very much larger proportion in the case of the farmers than it is in the case of even an ordinary resident in town. I should not have thought that explanation would quite account for it.

49,090. There was a general impression that rates had increased, and we have had that from many places; but I

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do not see how they could have that impression if they had looked at the figures and seen that they had fallen so considerably as they have done here?—As I say, the impression was evidently in itself not supported by the figures, but the fact that that impression prevails very largely seems to me to prove that they do feel the outlay—the outgoing—so much more than they used to do.

49,091. (*Mr. Little.*) Do you think that rent does immediately adjust itself to a fall of produce?—Not immediately.

49,092. If the fall was continuous from year to year it would be impossible, would it not, for rent to be adjusted at once to the value of the produce?—Yes, at once.

49,093. Then do you believe that assessments are adjusted to rent at once?—No, they are certainly not.

Fall in prices.

49,094. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You found evidence of very severe depression in Dorsetshire, I believe?—Yes.

49,095. What did they attribute the main cause of that depression to?—The fall in prices was the main thing; that was the first thing everybody said.

49,096. I observe that you make this statement on page 9, section 18, as having been made at some meeting:—"'Give us back the prices of 20 years ago and we want "'nothing more' is the main burden of the cry from every "farmer"?—That represents practically the evidence that I received.

49,097. That would be the general view, as far as you could ascertain, of Dorsetshire farmers?—Yes. Of course it is not literally correct that they would not want anything more, but broadly speaking it is.

49,098. Still, if they could only have back the old prices there is very little they would have to complain of?—Yes, that is so.

The three "F's."

49,099. I understand from your reference to the question of the three F's in sections 56 to 59 that it met only with very moderate support, and was only advocated by a very few persons?—Yes.

49,100. Therefore, probably, that sort of cry and demand would die away altogether if there was a return to better prices?—Yes, if they got back to the prices of 20 years ago I do not think they would very much trouble themselves about those subjects, at any rate not to the same extent that they do now.

49,101. You do not think there is any serious feeling in Dorsetshire in favour of extreme changes in the law like that as far as you can ascertain?—No, I think there is a feeling in favour of fairly free sale of produce and of fair freedom of cultivation; but beyond that I do not think there is any evidence of any feeling on these subjects.

Freedom of cultivation and sale.

49,102. What is meant by free sale there is freedom from restrictions on the sale of produce?—Yes.

49,103. And being allowed to crop pretty well as they like?—Yes.

49,104. But it does not at all mean what is represented by free sale in Ireland, that is to say, that they are to have the right of selling the succession to the farm?—Oh! no; that is not what is understood by free sale in Dorsetshire.

The currency.

49,105. Then I observe that there appears to have been a much greater feeling in favour of some dealing with the currency laws than you expected to find in that district, that is so, is it not?—Yes, that is so.

49,106. I notice that you devoted one chapter of your report very much to that subject, and I want to ask you one or two questions about that. You say in section 76: "Three questions shared the distinction of being the "subjects of resolutions at three meetings. One was the "amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, the second "was bimetallism, and the third was the burden on land. "I confess I was somewhat surprised to find the "amount of general interest the question of bimetallism "excited." Could you give us any information as to how long that had been a subject of interest, is it quite recent?—Quite within the last two or three years.

49,107. Do you gather from what you heard that farmers are really beginning to take a rational interest in that subject?—There is no doubt that all the farmers I met seem to have given a good deal of consideration to it at any rate.

49,108. And they begin to think that it is a subject very important in the interests of agriculture?—Yes, that was the feeling of the majority certainly—and of a large majority.

49,109. It was being very much discussed at some of their meetings, I understand?—Yes, it was discussed at practically every meeting that I attended.

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49,110. I suppose this is entirely new—within the last few years?—Yes, entirely, I should say.

49,111. In your statement I observe that you quote the evidence of one gentleman, Mr. George Wood Homer who appears to have been the chief antagonist of those proposals, is that the gentleman who stood quite recently for Dorsetshire?—Yes.

49,112. Then apparently his views on that subject did not meet with very great support. On the whole may I take it from you that as far as you could gather the majority of the agriculturists in that district attached importance to this question and were in favour of its being dealt with?—Undoubtedly.

49,113. What other recommendations do they make as remedies for agricultural depression?—They referred to the burdens on land, local taxation, and then I think I have already referred to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act upon which they make various suggestions. There is a good deal of feeling also, no doubt, on the question of railway rates.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Appeals.

49,114. In what direction is it that they propose amendments in the Agricultural Holdings Act chiefly?—The chief point in Dorset that was brought forward was the question of appeals. In Dorsetshire, they had two or three cases, and one certainly of the cases was taken to the Court of Appeal. That was almost the first point which anyone who began to speak about the Agricultural Holdings Act would bring forward. They considered that it was very prejudicial to the interest of tenants that there should be facilities for taking a case up to the Court of Appeal.

49,115. They think that the case ought to end with the decision of the umpire if the umpire is called in, is that so?—Yes. I am not sure if it is in the report, but I think the proposal that the decision of the arbitrator on questions of fact, or the decision of the County Court judge on questions of law to be final, would be something like what they would propose.

49,116. Now, as far as you could gather in the complaints which were made of the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act, were these founded upon an insufficient understanding of the provisions of the Act? Do you think that the people who made complaints as a rule were really acquainted with all that the Act contains and does, or were their complaints to some extent founded on a misapprehension of the Act?—I think in many cases—in the majority of cases one might almost say—that those who complain of the Act have not very carefully studied it.

49,117. We have had some curious evidence before this Commission on that point; for instance recommendations have been made to amend the Act in respects for which it has been found that the Act already provided. Do you think there is anything of that sort at all in what you heard in Dorsetshire?—Yes, one finds that I think quite constantly. Certainly in Dorsetshire I found that people did complain of things which are in the Act, and in other cases where they made complaints they showed that they had not really studied the Act, and very often complaints made against the Act were really complaints against the practice of a particular valuer.

49,118. Were they acquainted in Dorsetshire with the recommendations of the Committee of the Central Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes, it so happened that three of the bodies which are connected with the Central Chamber of Agriculture were in my district, and they had considered these recommendations in all those cases.

49,119. What was the general impression with regard to the recommendations of that Committee?—On the whole they were endorsed, I think, in all cases; there were one or two minor criticisms.

49,120. But apart from being endorsed, were they considered to be sufficient; were they generally regarded as likely to prove satisfactory and adequate amendments of the Act?—Yes, they were so taken, so to speak. When they were discussed I do not think the bodies that discussed them suggested material alterations; they suggested one or two minor alterations on points of detail, but they did not make suggestions that went to extend their scope.

49,121. Generally speaking they agreed with the recommendations of the Committee then?—Yes.

49,122. Should I be right, then, in saying that, as far as you could ascertain, if those amendments recommended by the Chamber were adopted that would be regarded in Dorsetshire as a fairly satisfactory solution of the question?—I think so.

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Paul v. Portarlington.

49,123. (*Mr. Little.*) On page 26 you mention a case where a good deal of feeling was created by the result of an appeal from a decision under the Agricultural Holdings Act in the case of "Paul *v.* Portarlington"?—Yes.

49,124. That introduces a great difficulty, does it not, in the case of tenants like Dorsetshire tenants where a tenant holds a farm very often for a considerable period?—Yes.

49,125. The effect of that decision was that a notice on the 10th of December was held to be a sufficient notice under the Act although the tenant quitted the main parts of the occupation on the 10th of October?—The notice was given on the 10th of December in respect of a claim for compensation over the whole holding.

49,126. But his occupancy was considered to be continued till the 10th February?—Yes, quite so.

49,127. There is a general feeling in the district, is there not, that if that be the law it ought to be amended?—Yes, that was brought forward by several people.

49,128. It is very difficult for a valuer to value improvements on land which has passed for some months out of the occupation of the tenant practically, though he has a certain right over it for some months after the conclusion of his tenancy?—Yes.

49,129. The determination of the tenancy ought to be the period when his rent ceases?—Yes.

49,130. And when the main part of his occupation is given up?—Yes, though they think provision should be made, so that a man could claim in respect of the overholding and therefore that a supplementary claim might be allowed in respect of that part.

49,131. For example, that he should be allowed to make a supplementary claim for the consumption of feeding stuff after his original claim had been made?—Yes, that the claim itself—the substantive claim—should be made in respect of the whole holding up to the time at which rent ceased, and that that supplementary claim should be allowed in respect of the land over-held.

Effect of depression on labourers.

49,132. Then the effect of the depression has been to considerably diminish the employment of labourers, has it not, in Dorsetshire?—Yes.

49,133. There has been a large decrease in the agricultural population?—Yes.

49,134. Which, I think, you show to be 25 per cent. in 20 years?—Yes.

49,135. And yet there is an abundance of labour for the requirements of farmers?—Yes, quite.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

49,136. (*Mr. Clay.*) In regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act you say that one great drawback complained of was the liberty to appeal?—Yes.

49,137. What cases do you refer to?—I am stating that that was a complaint made by several witnesses, but I think it was based a good deal on "Paul *v.* Portarlington," and on "Farquharson *v.* Morgan." "Paul *v.* Portarlington" went to the Queen's Bench of the High Court, and "Farquharson *v.* Morgan" went to the Court of Appeal.

49,138. Were there any others?—Of course there is "Black *v.* Clay" under the Scottish Agricultural Holdings Act, which points to the same fact. It was objected that it was possible to take cases through so many courts. In that case, of course, it went so high as the House of Lords.

49,139. They object that the tenants were dragged into these expensive courts, and that really it frightens many tenants against making a claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, that was the view. Of course, speaking generally, the landlord is the person with the longest purse, and therefore it is, as a rule, detrimental to the tenants that there should be the power of appeal to such an extent.

49,140. Acquainted as you are with these cases, do you think that it is rather a cruelty to tenants that the landlords should be allowed to drag these cases so far into the higher courts?—I think so, certainly.

49,141. It has been advocated here that there should be a final decision on the point of law by a county court judge or a single referee; that would simplify the Agricultural Holdings Act, would it not?—Yes.

49,142. Would that please the majority of men that you met in Dorsetshire?—Yes; I think the intention of the present Agricultural Holdings Act was to have done that but it does not seem to have done it.

49,143. I can speak a little on one case you have referred to, namely, "Black *v.* Clay"; it cost nearly 2,000*l.* in the House of Lords and the Court of Session; that is a pretty stiff business to face, is it not?—Yes. I met the Mr. Morgan who was concerned in "Farquharson *v.* Morgan," and he objected on the ground of the great cost he had been put to.

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49,144. The different people you saw regarding this Act thought the procedure should be simplified and the expense lessened?—Yes, that was the general view.

49,145. Was there much said about a special referee, a single referee, being appointed to settle matters?—Do you mean to say a single referee in the place of the two referees and an umpire?

49,146. Yes; was that ever brought forward?—No, I do not remember that it was in Dorsetshire particularly; I do not think it was.

Reduction of rents.

49,147. What has been the general fall of rents in North Devon and Dorset?—In North Devon I think I arrived at the conclusion that it had been something like from 10 per cent. to 15 per cent., in Dorsetshire the fall on dairy farms has been from 10 to 20 per cent., and on mixed farms from 20 to 30 per cent.; and there are cases on the poorer soils in which the reduction has been as great as from 40 to 50 per cent.

Fall in prices.

49,148. Will you give us the opinion you have formed upon the fall of farm produce all over, from wool to grain and other produce?—I am afraid I have not worked that out in per-centages. In the case of wheat I suppose it has been a fall of 50 per cent., has it not?

49,149. Wool has fallen 50 per cent., has it not?—Yes, I should fancy it has.

49,150. In one of your tables you say wool has fallen from 1*s.* to 6½*d.*; that is nearly 50 per cent.?—Yes, that would be.

Fall in rent and prices compared.

49,151. After considering all these things, have you anything to say as to whether the fall of rent has been in proportion to the fall of agricultural produce in value?—I should say that in Dorsetshire there is not a very great deal of difference. I should not have gathered that there had been. I should think the fall in rents has pretty fairly met the times, so to speak; that was the evidence which was laid before me.

49,152. Do you think the fall of rent has been in proportion to the general fall of farm produce, which you pay rent by?—You see in Dorsetshire so many of the farms have dairying attached to them, and the fall in dairy produce has not been so great.

49,153. And how in North Devon?—In North Devon of course the fall there has not been so great as the fall in wheat.

49,154. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) North Devon is where they grow cattle?—Yes, but it is more difficult to speak if you take cattle as an index; though there I should say, speaking generally, the fall in rent has not been quite equivalent to the fall in produce.

49,155. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is it your opinion, or is it not, that the fall in rent should have been greater to meet the fall of farm produce on arable land?—How do you mean it should have been?

49,156. I mean has the rent of land fallen in proportion to the fall of produce—that is coming back to the old question?—I say that in North Devon I do not think it has been quite equivalent; in Dorsetshire I should say, on the whole, that it would be fairly represented by it.

49,157. Because it is a dairy country?—Yes, that would be one of the reasons.

49,158. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You should add to the fall of rent the fall in manures, foods, and so forth, which are other economies that farmers can make?—Yes; that is pointed out in the Devon report.

Rates.

49,159. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If the fall of rent has been there equivalent to the fall in the value of the produce, and the rate in the £ of the rates has fallen, surely the burden of the rates must be very much lighter than it was proportionately?—I am afraid I do not quite follow that.

49,160. It is clear from the table that you put in that in the Dorsetshire unions the rate in the £ has fallen very considerably?—Yes.

49,161. I understand that, in answer to Mr. Clay, you consider that the rent has fallen in proportion to the produce?—Yes.

49,162. And if the rateable value, as presumably is the case, has been fixed in these unions in proportion to the rent, and the rate in the £ has fallen, then the amount of the rates must have fallen to a greater extent than the

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value of the produce?—What I meant just now is that the burden of the rates has not fallen. For instance, supposing there is a fall of 40 per cent. in the price of produce that means a much greater fall in the profits from it, because of course the cost of production of a particular article of produce does not fall in the same proportion.

49,163. I understood that the cost of production had diminished in two ways—by the fall in rent and by cheapening manures, and so forth?—It has no doubt been reduced, but I do not think it leaves the same margin of profit, and the rates must cut down the margin of profit.

49,164. The profit is a new point; I understood that both in Devonshire and in Dorsetshire it was contended that the fall in rates was not equivalent to the fall in the value of the produce?—I do not think I put it in that way. I think I put it that the rates now, notwithstanding that they had fallen, were felt as a greater burden.

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Subsidiary occupation of small holders.

49,165. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I want to ask you whether those who hold the small holdings referred to by the Chairman actually live off the land or whether the majority of them do not have other work to do, such as hauling or letting out carts and horses?—The large majority of them have other occupations, except in the case, of course, of some of the larger holdings—there is one of 38 acres.

49,166. The majority have other occupations?—In the majority of cases they have other occupations.

49,167. (*Mr. Little.*) The man who failed was the one who attempted to live on the occupation, was it not?—I do not think he was the only one who attempted to live on the occupation; but one of the men who did do so failed.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

(For Mr. Rew's further evidence, *see* page 430)

Ninety-fourth Day.

Friday, 17th May 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. } *Secretaries.*

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Mr. WALTER WHEELER BERRY called and examined.

49,168. (*Chairman.*) You are a hop grower and farmer living at Gushmere Court, Selling, in the county of Kent?—Yes.

49,169. You represent the Canterbury Farmers' Club and Chamber of Agriculture and are one of the delegates from that body to the Central and Associated Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes, that is so.

49,170. You are a member of the Council and Executive Committees of the Mansion House Association on Railway and Canal Traffic?—Yes.

49,171. And of the English Hop Growers' Association and the Kent Fruit Growers' Association?—Yes.

49,172. You have had considerable experience in regard to railway rates and were the complainant in a successful application made in 1884 on behalf of the hop growers of Kent to the Railway Commissioners questioning the legality of excessive rates charged for the carriage of hops to London by the London, Chatham, and Dover Railway Company?—Yes, that was so.

Railway rates.

49,173. Are you of opinion that the high railway rates are an important factor among the causes of the present depression?—Yes.

49,174. Can you give instances where the railway rates on agricultural produce have been excessive?—Original rates, or increased rates, do you ask me for?

49,175. I think we must not deal with the increased rates of the beginning of last year, because that matter has been dealt with by legislation, but we should like to hear generally of preferential rates?—There are many increased rates now on agricultural produce. There is a very big difference which has not been remedied by legislation.

49,176. I suppose the time has not yet come for it; I presume action is being taken under the Act of last year, and those cases have not yet reached their stage of decision?—We fear they never will.

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49,177. But at all events there is an opportunity?—Complaint has been made, of course, to the Board of Trade. I have some instances here. I had the notice that my presence would be required here to-day so recently that it has been impossible to cover a very large area, because I found that the railway companies have recently somewhat altered their through rates for foreign produce, and I felt it was necessary to bring the particulars which I had up to date. I have taken steps to get information. I have got an expert to go to certain ports to get me the particulars up to date, which were brought up to last night, and I have here just two or three instances. A great number of particulars I would be prepared to send in, in tabulated form, if you required them, but I have not got them with me. These instances are instances of preferential rates. Take butter; the through rate from Calais to London is 1*l.* per ton; the water rate, Calais to Dover, with dock charges of all kinds, is 15*s.*, leaving 5*s.* as the local rate from Dover to London; whereas the English farmer pays a rate of 12*s.* 3*d.*

Examples of preferential rates.

49,178. From Dover?—From Dover. I do not think much butter would come from Dover, however, but from Canterbury the farmer now pays 11*s.* 9*d.* as against 5*s.* the station-to-station rate. Dover to London for foreign butter.

49,179. Do you mean to say that the water rate from Calais to Dover is 15*s.*?—Yes. If I import butter to Dover for consumption in Dover, the cross channel rate, including the dock charges on either side, is 15*s.*

49,180. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is that for quantities of not less than a ton?—I should imagine it would be so, but I am not quite clear on that point; I should imagine it would be for quantities over 3 cwt. at the tonnage rate.

49,181. And the Canterbury rate?—That would also be for quantities of over 3 cwt. at the tonnage rate, at

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least I believe that is so. Then take as another illustration, onions; the through rate, Calais to London, is 14*s.* 5*d.*, owner's risk, and the cross-channel rate is 13*s.* 4*d.*, owner's risk, which shows that the 72 miles, Dover to London, is covered at the rate of 1*s.* 1*d.* per ton; whereas the rate for English onions is 12*s.* 3*d.*, company's risk.

49,182. (*Chairman.*) Are you quite certain of your facts there, because it seems—— ?—It seems absurd, does it not? I can vouch for these figures; they were brought up to date only last night, and it is for any quantity—there is no special quantity—but it is for any quantity over 3 cwt. Then potatoes; the through rate, Calais to London, is 13*s.* 9*d.*, company's risk, and the water rate is 8*s.* 4*d.*, owner's risk. The difference between company's risk and owner's risk is only a small matter of insurance, and two per cent. or three per cent. would cover that, and the difference between the rate is therefore very slight. The difference between the water rate and the through rate for potatoes leaves 5*s.* 5*d.* for the local rate, Dover to London, whereas the English rate, Dover to London, is 10*s.* 6*d.*, company's risk, and Canterbury to London 10*s.*, company's risk, as against 5*s.* 5*d.* as I said before, for the foreign potatoes, which leaves 4*s.* 7*d.* per ton in favour of the foreign produce between Canterbury and London.

49,183. Do you know what the water rate from Calais to London would be?—No; I have no knowledge of that.

49,184. I suppose the rate from Calais by Dover to London is to a large extent regulated by the cost of the water rate from Calais to London direct?—Undoubtedly it would be to some extent.

49,185. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If it pays the companies to carry it so cheaply through competition, or if they do not make a loss by carrying it at the foreign through rates, they ought to carry the home produce at the same price?—I think it is reasonable to suggest that they ought to do so.

49,186. (*Chairman.*) It might be absolutely impossible for them to lower the rates on their English line, and it would be better for them to raise the other rate, even though the effect might be that they would lose all the traffic?—I have no doubt they would say they would lose the traffic if they raised the rate; but on the other hand, it is particularly hard to us, as farmers, that we should have these foreign potatoes carried past our door at 5*s.* a ton less than we are charged for a less distance.

49,187. Would it benefit the farmers to raise the rate direct from Calais to London, *viâ* Dover?—It would benefit them to some extent, I am sure. The foreign potatoes would come by water, you are suggesting, all the same.

49,188. Yes?—I think the point rather indicates that the companies would not carry the potatoes, Dover to London, by this through rate, if it did not pay them so to do, and that being so, they are charging an unreasonable rate to the agriculturist.

49,189. Of course, there are two ways in which the thing might be met, one is by lowering the inland rate, and the other is by raising the rate from Calais?—Certainly.

49,190. I do not see how the farmers would be benefited by the companies raising the rates from Calais?—I do not think the farmer would be very much benefited by raising the through rate.

49,191. The effect would be that the goods would go direct from Calais to London by sea?—Yes, quite so; but on the other hand, if the 5*s.* reduction was given, or if the price was reduced to what the foreign now is, it would reduce the cost of getting our crop to London by about something like 2*l.* an acre, and 2*l.* an acre in these days and——

49,192. (*Mr. Little.*) Is the rent of the land?—Quite so.

49,193. (*Chairman.*) It might be that the company could not possibly afford to do that?—I think it is evident that they can afford to do it. If they can carry foreign goods at the price they can carry ours, it is like for like.

49,194–6. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are the conditions of the carriage the same?—Exactly identical. The rate quoted is for any quantity, which means any quantity over 3 cwt.

49,197. Are the inland consignments as large as the foreign?—I can quite understand that very large quantities come by ocean steamers to various ports, but in this kind of traffic I do not think that larger consignments come than are consigned locally. *Mr. W. W. Berry.* 17 May 1895.

49,198. (*Mr. Little.*) There would not be a train load?—No, one or two truck loads every day would be something like it.

49,199. You only want to have the same rate under the same conditions?—Quite so.

49,200. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But is it clear that the railway company carries for the difference between the through rate and the water rate? Does the steamship company take the entire water rate in those cases?—It is the same company.

49,201. The same company?—It is presumably the same company.

49,202. Then you do not mean to say that it necessarily costs the railway company the entire amount of the water rate to carry it between Dover and Calais?—I am giving you the actual extracts from the rate-book.

49,203. Yes, but you are supposing that the water rate is a fixed charge and the other a fixed charge?—Quite so; I am saying that the through rate for potatoes is 13*s.* 9*d.*, and the water rate 8*s.* 4*d.*, which leaves 5*s.* 5*d.* for the railway carriage.

49,204. Yes, but you do not know that they are not getting a large profit on the water carriage from Calais to Dover?—8*s.* 4*d.* does not appear to me to be an unreasonably high rate for the loading into the boat and out of it, and for the dock charges on both sides; 8*s.* 4*d.* appears to be a reasonable charge.

49,205. (*Mr. Little.*) Have they a definite rate from Calais to Dover?—Yes.

49,206. Stopping at Dover?—Yes.

49,207. And you have taken that as the cost?—Certainly. I have taken that from the rate book. There is, of course, considerable local consumption; there are the barracks, for instance, Shorncliffe Camp, and Dover Castle with the troops, and all that kind of thing. A great many tons are consumed which are grown abroad, and this is the rate for those potatoes across the channel.

49,208. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Where do they deliver them when they bring them across the channel for local purposes; do they take them to another station?—They deliver them in Dover town.

49,209. In Dover town?—Dover harbour.

49,210. Then is the cost of delivery included in the water rate?—No; if a trader in Dover pays this 8*s.* 4*d.* rate he takes delivery on the quay.

49,211. (*Chairman.*) Can you quote some other cases?—There is one other similar case with apples. The through rate, Calais to London, is 15*s.*, owner's risk. The water rate to Dover only is 13*s.* 4*d.*, which leaves simply 1*s.* 8*d.* for the railway charge on this side.

49,212. (*Viscount Cobham.*) At whose risk?—Owners' risk in both cases. The English rate, Dover to London, is 12*s.* 3*d.*; Canterbury to London (and I quote Canterbury because it is a station at which large quantities of fruit would be likely to be despatched) is 11*s.* 9*d.*, which is 10*s.* a ton in favour of foreign apples, and taking an estimated crop of five tons to the acre, that is 2*l.* 10*s.* per acre against the British agriculturist, or fruit grower.

49,213. What service does the consignor render in those cases?—A consignor at Canterbury?

49,214. Yes?—He has to put the goods into the truck.

49,215. Without any assistance, is there not one man?—You are supposed to have assistance, but as a matter of fact, it is just oversight in loading.

49,216. And at the London end?—The rate I am quoting to you is simply from station to station; there would be a trifling terminal cost, of course.

49,217. (*Chairman.*) Was the case you brought against the London, Chatham, and Dover about hops a case of preference?—No, it was a question of local rates.

49,218. Have you brought any case of preference against them?—No.

49,219. You are aware, of course, that there has been a recent case of rates from Southampton?—Yes.

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49,220. Have you studied that case to see what effect it would have upon the particular cases you have mentioned?—Yes; it would appear from the decision in that case that further legislation is necessary.

Existing legislation and preferential rates.

49,221. I am asking now, not with reference to that case, but have you considered what effect the law, as laid down in that case, would have upon these particular cases that you have mentioned to us?—Well, I am an agriculturist, and I have had some experience in railway rates, but I confess, after very careful reading of the judgment in that case, I am not competent to give an opinion as to what our position is.

49,222. Have you taken legal advice upon it, because there the law is laid down as to what can be done under existing Acts in favour of the English producer?—I have not taken advice formally, but I have discussed the matter with lawyers who have been engaged in the case, and with parliamentary agents and gentlemen who understand these matters — I did so only last evening—but I cannot get three gentlemen to agree.

49,223. Still a certain remedy is given in that case, although perhaps not in the opinion of some people a sufficient remedy; and is it not worth while to consider carefully the bearing of that case upon such cases as those that you have mentioned to us?—Yes. Whereas with fresh meat, and hops, and cheese, the applicants were successful, the case appeared to me to be on all fours with the cases which I put before you.

49,224. Then if that was so, you have got a remedy under the existing law?—In some of those cases we probably have, but in the present position of agriculturists I take it that we shall be compelled to smart under the existing state of affairs, for we have no money to fight these cases out—and every one of these cases have to be fought.

Board of Trade and railway rates.

49,225. But you are aware that you can make an appeal to the Board of Trade in these matters, and the Board of Trade have some power of intervention, I think, have they not? — You are referring to the conciliation clause of the Act of 1888?

49,226. Yes; under the conciliation clause you could represent your case to the Board of Trade, and without entering upon litigation the Board of Trade have power to intervene as conciliators?—I quite admit that that conciliation clause is very useful, but in the present congested state of business at the Board of Trade it is impossible to get any assistance. I have been to the Board of Trade on other matters, and I have always had the very kindest attention and sympathy in regard to all the cases I have brought before them, but I have never got any redress. The gentlemen of the Board of Trade tell me that their position is this: they have power, and they are directed by Parliament to advise railway companies, but they have absolutely no control; they can only suggest.

49,227. You yourself admit that the clause is a valuable one, and the question is, whether you and those whom you represent have endeavoured to make use of the facilities which the Act has given you through the Board of Trade?—Yes, we have endeavoured frequently.

49,228. I understood that you objected to going to law on the ground of the want of money?—Quite so.

49,229. This clause that I have referred to is especially to meet those cases?—Quite so; and if some authority were given to the Board of Trade to insist on their decisions it would be extremely useful.

49,230. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do not the operations under the Act of 1894 take up the whole time of the Board of Trade now?—I have just stated that the present state of business at the Board of Trade is so congested that it is impossible to do anything.

49,231. You are referring to the complaints as to increases under the Act of 1894?—Quite so, and also under the conciliation clause. I think if I were to apply now to the Board of Trade it would be months before I could be heard. I am told that that is the state of business.

49,232. (*Chairman.*) I understand that you are unwilling to go to law yourself on the ground of the expense of it?—Quite so.

Existing legislation and preferential rates.

49,233. But have you formed a definite opinion as to what would be the effect of reduction of charges in the instances that you have mentioned upon the principles laid down in the Southampton case?—I have not gone into that, because I felt this: that the Southampton case has by no way cleared the ground, and the whole thing will have to be begun again and fought out again. The mere fact that in regard to the three items upon which the traders were successful in the Southampton case the companies were able to justify the difference in their charges of 300 or 400 per cent. on the ground of services rendered, and so on, makes it absolutely necessary, in my opinion, and in the opinion of the Central Chamber of Agriculture, that no redress whatever can be given to agriculturists until the law is so altered as to put the English produce on something like all fours with the foreign.

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49,234. It seemed to me, on the facts you give, that the case of the apples from Calais to London, and from Canterbury to London, was on all fours with that of the potatoes or the hay, in the case of Southampton?—Yes, I think that is so.

49,235. Therefore it would appear that there is some remedy under the existing law?—Quite so. I have given you these three or four cases as representative of many across-channel cases; some of them are probably covered by the Southampton case; but I suggest that there may be very many hundreds of instances of rates of this kind which are not covered by the Southampton case. This I should say, certainly, is covered.

49,236. Have you any other cases that you would like to mention?—As you are excluding the question of raising the rates I do not think I have any others that would be of any use to you.

Conveyance by road.

49,237. Now, in the case of hops from districts which are within 30 or 40 miles of London, can you compete by the road?—No.

49,238. What is the distance from London where you can compete by road?—Hops, within 15 miles of London, would go in by road.

49,239. Not farther off than that?—When you get 15 miles out of London there is not a very large acreage of hops to go.

49,240. I live in a hop district, about 25 miles from London, and I am under the impression that a good many of the hops go up by road?—I have no knowledge of that in my district, but I am 55 miles from London.

49,241. (*Mr. Little.*) They come by water from Maidstone, do they not?—Yes, and also from Sittingbourne and Faversham they come by water. In reference to your suggestion that a larger quantity might possibly come by road, those market gardeners who are growers of hops, and who know something about the road work, and are accustomed to take their produce to London by road, probably do take their hops by road, but the ordinary hop-grower is a little farther off, and has not that opportunity.

49,242. (*Chairman.*) Of course, where a farm is four or five miles from a railway station, to send hops to the railway station and there to handle them and put them on to the truck would add to the expense?—Quite so, and if it is within anything like a reasonable distance of London for a horse's journey in a day's work they would go to London by road.

Examples of preferential rates.

49,243. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I suppose there are innumerable other cases which you have not brought before us?—Quite so, instead of bringing a whole batch of cases, especially preference cases, I got an expert to go and verify those items I have given to the Commission. He has only had time to verify a few at this one port, but I thought it was better to give you those instances, and to say that there are hundreds, many hundreds I believe, of cases where these rates affect agriculturists of which these are fair samples.

49,244. (*Chairman.*) You simply mentioned those as illustrations?—Quite so, and I would be pleased to send you a further list in tabulated form if you wish to have them.

49,245. Then you can put them in later?—I will do so. (*See* Appendix A. V.)

Remedy for preferential rates.

49,246. What is your specific remedy, what do you think ought to be done?—On the question of railway rates?

49,247. I mean not as to railway rates altogether but on these questions of preference?—What I suggest is what is suggested by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, a report of which I will put in if you like.

49,248. (*Mr. Channing.*) I understand that you do not consider yourself sufficiently acquainted with the law on this matter, and the interpretation of the law to

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offer opinions on those points?—Do you refer to the decision in the Southampton case?

49,249. Yes?—Quite so.

49,250. And you yourself, having regard to the interest that you represent, would prefer to have those opinions stated to the Commission, if the Commission wish for an explanation on those points, by a legal expert?—Yes, I should be very glad of that.

49,251. The practical point on which you could give an opinion is, perhaps, as to the practical effect of that decision in regard to the question of the same or similar services; you are able to speak as to the result of that to agriculturists, are you not?—Yes.

Packing of English and foreign produce compared.

49,252. Is not the effect of the decision upon the questions of the packing and the amount that can be put into a truck, and the question of similarity and ease of handling and all the rest of it, being used in that decision to the very great prejudice of agriculturists in this country?—Yes, quite so, but on the other hand it is only fair to admit straightaway that the goods which are either manufactured or produced 100 or a 1,000, or possibly 1,500 miles from the seaboard in America must be so packed for handling and for export that when they arrived here, having come by ocean steamer, they would be in somewhat better condition for handling and unshipping, and there would be less risk than, as a rule, there would be with the English goods, and goods so packed would occupy less space than the English goods. But, I believe that is being made an unfair use of against us; I do not think there is anything like the difference which has been suggested.

49,253. It is quite inevitable that all agricultural products which come from abroad should be in such a shape that they give special facility for handling to the railway companies?—Quite so.

49,254. That must be so from the fact of their having to go across the sea?—Quite so.

49,255. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You consider that weight should be given to those considerations?—Yes, some weight certainly.

49,256. Only you differ on the point of degree?—Quite so; for instance, the ordinary railway waggon loaded with English hops would carry from 2 to 2½ tons; as the minimum rate is for 2 tons we always give a 2-ton load——

49,257. The traders succeeded in the matter of hops?—Yes, we did, but I was going on to say that the ordinary railway waggon loaded with foreign hops would be possibly three tons, because they are packed in square bales, whereas the English hops are packed in round bales.

49,258. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it your opinion that the English agriculturist who naturally and inevitably has to deal with a small quantity of product, and to send in moderate quantities is placed in an unfair and disadvantageous position owing to these rates?—Quite so. We claim that our one ton ought to be carried at the same rate that the railway company carries two or three tons of foreign goods, that is if we can give them a fair average load.

49,259. You think the rates are entirely excessive having regard to the fact that the railway companies are entitled to some allowance for the facility in handling the foreign goods?—Yes.

49,260. They are excessive?—Altogether excessive.

49,261. And the English products are really paying for the cheap transit of the foreign goods?—That is our view.

49,262. What solution would you advise of that difficulty, how would you remedy that?—As the law now stands it appears that the services not being altogether alike and similar the companies may charge these enormous differences between home and foreign goods. We claim that under no circumstances whatever should foreign produce be carried at a less rate per ton per mile than English produce.

49,263. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you ask for an equal mileage rate?—For English as against foreign produce, but not an equal mileage rate as against all distances.

49,264. (*Mr. Channing.*) What allowance would you make, then, for the difference of quantity which can be stowed in a truck?—I would give the same difference to the foreigner as you give to the English. The quantity put into a truck, did you say?

49,265. Yes?—If it could be shown that the foreign was so much better to handle than the other a fair allowance should be made, but not such an allowance as has been suggested.

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49,266. 200 or 300 per cent. is altogether out of proportion?—Five to 15 cent. would be, in my opinion, much more reasonable.

49,267. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Those are the rates given to the Irish traffic, are they not?—I have no knowledge of the Irish traffic.

49,268. That is so; as a matter of fact the Irish Southampton rate is the same as the foreign rate?—Indeed.

49,269. The Irish rates, of course, are home rates?—Quite so.

49,270. (*Mr. Channing.*) In most cases the English producer has no alternative whatever?—None whatever.

Conveyance by road.

49,271. The few cases of carriage by road are comparatively unimportant compared with the vast number of cases where farms are in a position which is beyond the point of cartage?—I should think outside the market garden produce not more than five per cent. of the produce which comes to London would come by road—possibly not nearly that.

Remedy for preferential rates.

49,272. And having regard to the results of the case against the South-Western Railway Company, you agree with the opinion of the Central Chamber of Agriculture that further legislation is urgently needed?—Quite so. We do not believe that it was the intention that all these differences should be allowed.

49,273. (*Mr. Lambert.*) There is a very widespread feeling of dissatisfaction, is there not, amongst agriculturists about these rates?—Yes, and has been from 1873 up to date.

Freight on hops.

49,274. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would you tell me what is the freight on hops from your part of the county to London?—The local rate, station to station (I can only give it from memory), is, I believe, 18*s.* 11*d.* per ton.

49,275. What is the value of the hops per ton?—The value of the hops would be 70*l.* per ton, sometimes very much more and sometimes less.

49,276. What would the freight be on the foreign hops?—I do not think there is any traffic in foreign hops *viâ* Dover. There is a small traffic in hops *viâ* Flushing and Queenborough at a through rate of 20*s.* a ton. I am also giving you that from memory, but I think it is 20*s.* a ton. We had a very large and substantial grievance in the hop rates 10 or 12 years ago, but through the action taken before the Railway Commission followed by the inquiry by the Board of Trade, and the re-arrangement of classification confirmed in the Provisional Order Bills, we have got such reductions as I think, generally speaking, the hop growers would be fairly well satisfied with.

49,277. So that there is no particular grievance as regards hops?—I have not come here to bring forward any grievance respecting hops, although I believe there are some instances where certain districts are favoured rather more than other districts; but I have no strong case to make out against the railway charges for hops at the present time. We have got a reduction of about 40 per cent. from the highest point.

Packing of English and foreign produce compared.

49,278. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You say too much weight has been given to these considerations of packing and bulk, and so forth; how would you correct that, by legislation?—I think the difference is so slight that it would be only fair to English agriculturists to make the rate the same whether the goods are foreign or English. If the companies find it somewhat better to load the foreign so much the better for them.

49,279. I understood you to say in a previous answer that you thought those questions of packing, and so forth, should be considered?—There is a difference, and the advantage is in favour of the railway companies, of course; but I claim that the same rate should be given for English cheese in one ton loads as for foreign cheese in one ton loads.

49,280. Are you sure that those terms are not offered?—I think they are not offered.

49,281. On your own particular line?—I have never known the same terms to be offered for English as for foreign, there is always something like a difference.

49,282. Have you any reason to believe they would be refused if they were asked for?—From past experience I should say they would be refused.

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49,283. Have you ever tried to get them?—I have often asked for reductions; for instance, in hops, I have sent consignments of hops, 40 or 50 tons at a time.

49,284. But you have never put the specific question to the railway company whether, if your consignments were assimilated to the foreign consignments, they would give you the same rates?—Personally, I have never had any business to compare with the foreign traffic that was going. I do not think hops go through my station in any quantity, and my particular business is chiefly with the north of England; therefore my business is carried on almost entirely on through rates. I do no business with London; I have, therefore, not been in a position to do exactly what you suggest.

49,285–6. Would you put on the same footing home butter or cheese carried in consignments of hundred weights at the most and foreign butter and cheese coming in full truck loads?—I do not suggest that it is carried in consignments of hundredweights at the most.

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Equal mileage rates on home produce.

49,287–8. And that equal mileage rates should be given as between home and foreign consignments generally?—If the foreign butter was at a certain price per ton I think the English butter should be at the same price per ton under the regulations laid down by the Provisional Order Bills, which is that the minimum should be three hundredweights. For small quantities under three hundredweights in a consignment something more should be charged to pay for the extra trouble of the small consignments.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. E. Samson.

Mr. Ernest Samson called and examined.

Mr. E. Samson.

49,289. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think you are the Secretary of the National Association of Cider Makers?—Yes.

Cider industry.

49,290. And you come here to-day to speak to the importance of the cider industry in ten counties?—Yes, and also to give an idea of cider making; how it is carried on at the present time, and what its requirements are.

49,291. Which are the counties that you more particularly wish to speak of?—The five principal ones are Devon, Somerset, Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester, and then there are the five neighbouring counties, Cornwall, Dorset, Wilts, Shropshire and Monmouthshire. As a matter of fact it is only in those counties that cider is made now to any extent; in Kent it is almost extinct, and in Norfolk there is very little made, although there is one maker of importance there.

Acreage of cider orchards.

49,292. What is the acreage under cider orchards in these ten counties?—It is a matter of calculation. The total under fruit trees is, I consider, about 140,000 acres. The latest returns are for 1893, and they give 135,000 acres, but as it is a growing industry by this time I think it can be taken that there are 140,000 acres under fruit trees.

49,293. Do you suppose that the return to which you refer is exhaustive? Does it include every worn out little orchard that may be attached to a farm?—Yes, I think so, except where they are merely allotments, and then it would only be a matter of a few trees and gardens. To obtain the acreage of the orchards under apples for cider I deduct one-fifth, that is, I imagine that one-fifth of the trees are either trees other than apple or pear trees, or that the fruit from them is used for other purposes than for cider making, that is, for the table, for making jam, and for other purposes. By deducting that one-fifth I make the nett acreage of cider orchards to be 112,000 acres in those ten counties.

49,294. Have you seen Mr. Radcliffe Cooke's evidence on this subject?—I was here at the time he gave it, so I heard it all. He spoke more particularly as to Hereford.

49,295. Are your figures pretty well in accordance with his?—Yes, they seem to agree. I fancy he deducted one-sixth, but then of course he spoke of Hereford only, and I speak of the ten counties. For the five counties I mentioned last it is necessary to deduct more than a sixth for certain.

Yield of cider per acre.

49,296. What would you give as the average yield per acre?—In Hereford the trees are planted rather sparsely, and run about 50 to the acre. There the yield would be from five to six hogsheads; my hogshead is 54 gallons. As I say, the yield in Herefordshire and those parts is about five to six hogsheads to the acre, but as you get farther down into Somersetshire and farther down again into Devonshire, the trees are planted much thicker and the average yield is about 15 hogsheads to the acre, a very large increase on the northern counties. I take the average for all the ten counties to be nine hogsheads per acre, the hogshead being, as I say, 54 gallons.

Value of cider produced.

49,297. Representing a value of how much?—That will make a total yield for the ten counties of a million hogsheads. Some of the cider sells at from 10*d.* to 1*s.* per gallon, and the poorer kinds from 3*d.* to 5*d.* a gallon; I have made an average of about 4½*d.*, or say 1*l.* per hogshead. One pound per hogshead for a million hogsheads is 1,000,000*l.* sterling; that is the value of the cider produced in those ten counties every year. The probable rental of the orchards I have not mentioned. Mr. Cooke put it at about 2*l.* 10*s.* to 3*l.*; I should raise that, because of Somersetshire and Devonshire, where the orchards are worth more than that. I consider that they are worth from 3*l.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* per acre, so they represent a rent roll of nearly 400,000*l.* a year.

49,298. Is the greater quantity of trees in the south of England due to the superiority of the soil?—And of the climate as well. In Somersetshire the trees yield more freely, certainly; and the same may be said in Devonshire. That is as to the importance of the cider industry. Now as to the value. The question then arises as to whether we can really make good cider here in England. First of all, as to the apples; there is no doubt about the flavour of them; they are excellent, and no one has ever suggested that better could be produced anywhere. In cider making we have to take into consideration not only the flavour of the apples, but the quantity of the juice yielded and its strength. In that respect we do not stand pre-eminent, but that I look upon as merely temporary. It is owing to the fact that a bad class of trees has been allowed to accumulate on the land. We have not propagated the best kinds; we have not raised the standard; whereas in foreign countries, France in particular, they have improved the trees very much, so that the yield of juice is greater and the strength is increased very considerably. The average strength in England, with the hydrometer, would be about 1,050, and in France they would consider that decidedly poor; theirs run from 1,060 to 1,070, and often up to 1,100. Of course you have only to calculate on the added 60 or 70, so that the proportion between 50 and 70 is a rise of 40 per cent.

Quality of cider.

49,299. Does the flavour depend upon the strength?—Not in the least.

49,300. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is there any great advantage in having a high alcoholic strength in cider?—You make the cider much more easily when it contains a large quantity of alcohol, and it keeps much better, just as a strong beer will keep much better than a light beer.

49,301. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Does the ordinary consumer prefer it strong?—That entirely depends upon the neighbourhood. In Somersetshire, in the neighbourhood of Martock, for instance, or the neighbourhood where Mr. Elton comes from, they drink strong cider; in Herefordshire it is a much weaker cider; and in Devonshire it is usually a sweet cider.

49,302. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Amongst the labourers?—Not amongst the labourers in particular. I am sorry to say all the sugar is fermented.

49,303. The cider is allowed to ferment, but there is nothing detrimental introduced into the cider?—No, nothing is introduced, but the whole of the sugar is fermented, and then it becomes hard.

49,304. Is it not the fact that Devonshire people prefer this, what you call hard cider, to the sweet?—Yes, they do, but still in Somersetshire they not only like it hard, but they like it strong at the same time.

49,305. (*Mr. Little.*) Do they drink as much?—They drink as much as they can get.

49,306. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is strong cider as strong in alcohol as strong beer?—A fair average strength is 5 per cent. of absolute alcohol, but some of the very

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strong ciders run to 8, 9, and 10 per cent. of absolute alcohol. That of course means double the quantity of proof spirit, namely, 10 per cent. up to 16, 18, and 20 per cent. of proof spirit.

49,307. So that it can easily be made as strong as beer or stronger?—Yes, it can easily be made as strong. At certain times it may be considered a teetotal drink, it can be made containing 3 per cent. of absolute alcohol, which is just about the limit, I believe, of a temperance drink.

Small holders and cider making.

49,308. Then is it your opinion that with good management this country ought at least to hold its own against any foreign competitors?—No doubt it can, because good cider can be made, and it is made at the present time, by small landowners and tenants to whom the cider industry is relatively of great importance. They very likely look to pay their rent out of the sale of the cider or at any rate to receive an important sum—in all probability it is the largest sum that they do receive for the sale of any one product. One important item in connexion with it is that these as a rule are not men who depute the work to other people to do; they attend to it personally, and that enables them with a long experience and the interest they have in it to produce a very good cider. The small landowners and tenants who attend to it personally are the people who make the best cider in the country.

49,309. Are they any considerable proportion of the whole?—It is a decreasing proportion. I have put the word "yeoman" in my brief. It seems to me that that word somewhat represents the class of people I speak of, and they I should certainly say have been on the decline; I do not know whether they are actually now on the decline, but at any rate they have been for the last 20 years.

49,310. Owing to economic causes?—Yes, owing to the change in the conditions of the land.

Cider manufactories.

49,311. Not owing to the falling off in their special business of selling cider?—No, they have no reason to complain of the falling off of their sales because good cider sells readily. Then good cider is also made at the present time by large manufacturers who invest capital in the business, and bring to bear on it skill and a good deal of science—as much science as they can command at any rate. Some of them have spent very considerable sums in obtaining the best methods of manufacture.

49,312-13. How do they obtain their apples?—Some of them have orchards of their own—most of them have to some extent orchards of their own and the rest they buy; they buy either apples or the juice as it runs from the press; the principal manufacturers and the best manufacturers do that.

49,314. Do they import as well?—They import apples sometimes. If there is a bad year certainly they import apples from Normandy and Brittany, and sometimes from Holland I think, but still the importation of apples is rather the exception.

Quality of cider.

49,315. A large amount of inferior cider is now produced I understand?—Yes, unfortunately the bulk of the cider now made is inferior, and it is of those people who produce that cider that I want more particularly to speak. In the 10 counties I have mentioned nearly all the farms have an orchard, and there the apples are made into cider, in the first place, to give to the labourers, as in those parts it is usual to supply the men with cider as well as wages; and then, of course, the farmer drinks some himself, the rest, if it is of anything like good quality, being sold. Speaking of the good cider, it sells readily at remunerative prices—there is never any difficulty in selling good cider. Wherever it is made it will sell from 10*d.* to 1*s.* a gallon, which leaves the maker a very good profit. But the poor cider does not sell, or, if it does sell, at a very low price, which does not repay the man for his labour and rent and so on. It is only natural to ask why they do not make good cider all round, seeing that, as I said at starting, it is possible to make good cider. The trouble is that the farmers and those who have apples to make into cider do not know how to make the cider and they have no means of learning. Therein arises the difficulty. Those farmers who do know how to make good cider have been connected with the district all their lives and have learned by tradition and experience the proper blending and treatment of the apples and the juice and how to produce a sound cider. Those are the small men I termed yeomen.

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49,316. They do not impart their knowledge?—Their knowledge is empirical; they have no rules to go by; they tell by the taste or by the feel, or they know from habit. Then that knowledge is only applicable to their particular district and probably to their particular farm. Therefore, if these people could impart the knowledge it would be of very little service to people 20 miles off and differently situated. But empirical knowledge is very often difficult to impart; it, in fact, only can be imparted by the long training and experience which these men have.

Instruction in cider making.

49,317. How would you give the training which is required?—If a man wishes to learn, or wishes to get his sons instructed, he has a good many difficulties to encounter. He might learn, it would be imagined, from books or from some other person. The cider industry in this country has been so neglected that there is not a book published showing how to make cider, so that any person versed in that kind of industry can by following the instructions make a good cider. There are some antiquated books where men relate their experience, and there are others which devote some pages to cider making, but where the science is treated, it is merely a transcript of an imperfectly understood foreign book, with many blunders and important omissions. When I want to know anything about cider I am obliged to refer to some French or German book. There is no book published in England or in English that I am aware of—not even in America—that will really help a man over all his difficulties or teach him how to make cider.

49,318. Are there competent teachers to be had?—There are no competent teachers at the present time. He cannot go to his neighbours very well to learn, because, as I said before, theirs is an empirical knowledge and only applies to their immediate neighbourhood, and they are men as a rule who are competent of making cider, but not very competent of communicating it to other people. Then he might apply to the manufacturers, but, as I have said before, they have obtained their experience and knowledge at great cost and outlay to themselves, and they regard it as a trade secret,—in fact, as a part of their stock-in-trade; and they will not communicate it to others who are likely to be competitors. The instructors that he would naturally apply to would be professional instructors, people who make it their business to teach a science or an industry: but there are none in this case. A man in order to be of service in teaching how to make cider must have a theoretical and scientific knowledge joined to practice. He must have a knowledge of the soils and situations, the sorts of apples and their suitability, and he must also have a knowledge of chemistry and of fermentation. He should also have visited or seen something of the wine trade, because it is an analogous trade. At the same time in order to be of great assistance he must be in constant touch with the orchards and with the makers of cider, so as to know the peculiarities of the different districts. There are no such instructors and there are no opportunities for training them. That is where the difficulty comes in at present, there being no instructors and no opportunities to train them.

County councils and cider making.

49,319. How would you meet that difficulty?—The county councils in some of the districts interested have done, I think I may say, all they could towards meeting the difficulty; they have endeavoured to instruct the farmers and those interested in cider in cider making, but the men that they have chosen, although the best obtainable, have not been suitable men, because these would-be instructors have not the knowledge which I have said is requisite; they are not theoretical and scientific men with a practical knowledge; they are either purely theoretical men or simply practical men who have had no wide experience.

49,320. Do you think that very little success has been attained by these teachers so far?—I am afraid that it has not met with the success which it deserves. The good will was there; the intention was quite good on the part of the county councils, but they cannot find the men to instruct, that is where the difficulty is.

Cider experimental station.

49,321. Do you think that teachers could be trained; if not, apparently we shall never get the necessary staff?—The teachers can be trained in this way; by taking the general knowledge which has been obtained by research and experiment in other countries, and then applying it to the particular needs of our various districts. The way I should suggest would be that some central station should be established or added on

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to some agricultural experimental farm already in existence, and there attention should especially be given to everything that is necessary to cider making, that is, attention to the trees—that is, to the thinning, the pruning, the grafting, and then the manuring of the ground and the fertilising of the ground by digging it up, and so on. That, of course, in market gardens is already done, but in orchards they seem never to dig up round the trees, or at any rate, very seldom in the majority of them. But the ground should be dug up so that the earth may oxydise a little, and so that the insects and grubs, and one thing and the other may be disturbed and be killed either by the frost or by being eaten up by the birds. All that requires to be impressed upon the orchardists.

49,322. As to the management of the orchards, you could get practical persons, I suppose?—Yes, to some extent, as far as I have mentioned you can; but then, in this country we have never studied the particular trees that should be planted for cider. A good apple for cider must not only have a perfume, but it must give a free yield of juice, and that juice must be of great density; it should be certainly up to 1,075; that is, where a thousand parts of water weigh a thousand, a thousand parts of juice should weigh 1,075; that part of it has never been studied to any extent in England, and where you see any analyses of apple juice you will find that they are principally taken from the French. It was done to some extent through the society that issued the book called "Pomona," of which Mr. Cooke spoke. Then, attention has never been given to the sorts of apples to plant to meet deficiences. Many of our orchards contain very good apples, but when taken together they do not form a happy blend for making cider, whereas a man of experience would very soon recognise what kind of apples were required to be planted in order to complete the blend to make a perfect cider. That is a thing that can only be done by experiments. The experiments need not be conducted on the experimental farm. When different people are planting, if it was watched a little what they were doing, so that it was seen what kind of soils the trees are planted in, and what kind of trees are planted, the results could soon be judged and tabulated, and the results given to others for their benefit and their guidance in planting elsewhere.

49,323. But you must get a man of experience to conduct these experiments; how would you get him?—Take the best that is to be found. Of course, there are some men who have given some attention to these matters.

State aid for cider making.

49,324. Do you think that the State or the cider counties might perhaps interest themselves in this matter?—You can see what has been done in foreign countries in this matter. In the colonies all this is done direct by the Board of Agriculture; they arrange these stations and appoint inspectors or teachers themselves. In France and Germany, on the other hand, although the aid comes from the State, it is done through some society or other, which devotes itself to this particular culture. In that way it seems, as far as we can judge, that greater results have been attained at a smaller price, because the people who have been connected with these pomological societies, and cider societies, understand the business, and have their heart in it, and certainly, judging by the results, it has been a great economical success, both in France and in Germany.

Cider making in France.

49,325. Is it a much more important industry in France and Germany than it is in England?—Yes, much so. The average yield of cider in France is 6,500,000 hogsheads, so that that would be six or seven times as much as it is in England, and in the year 1893, the year before last, the yield was no less than 13,000,000 hogsheads. That is a correct figure; that is not an estimate the same as mine is of England; that is taken from actual returns, similar to the returns of the Board of Agriculture here as to acres, and fruit trees in orchards.

Imports of cider.

49,326. Does a large quantity of cider come over here?—The principal import of cider is from America, from the neighbourhood of Boston, Massachusetts. I should think that probably this year it will be from 800,000 to 1,000,000 gallons.

49,327. Is that of good quality?—No, it is not of first rate quality, but still it sells pretty readily here. It is made sweet; it contains about 5 per cent. of absolute alcohol, and is not unpleasant; but to say that it is a first rate cider would be giving it praise which it does not merit. There is some imported from France, and some from Germany, but the quantities from there so far have not been very great. However, as far as I can make out, from the French papers, they are rather thinking of trying to create a market for more French cider over here.

Consumption of cider in France.

49,328. There is a much larger consumption of cider in those countries than in England then?—Yes, the consumption is very great, because, of course, in France they consume all they make. It is consumed in France in rather a different way to what it is here. They send it on board their ships there for the use of the crews, and that is a considerable item in the course of 12 months. It is sent on board their men of war, and their trading ships as well, as an anti-scorbutic, instead of lime juice. Then there is also a considerable consumption in France for making eau de vie de cidre—cider brandy—of which some is sent over here; I do not know where it gets to, or under what name it is sold when it gets here; that I have not been able to trace, but some cider brandy is sent to this country, and sold under some name or other.

49,329. Does it come under the name of champagne?—I do not think so. We can detect malic acid in champagne very readily. I have seen lots of letters in the "Times" about it, but I do not attach much importance to that myself. To go to the general subject, assistance must come from some part or the other, whether it is better it should come from individuals, the same as some of our experimental farms have been made here, or whether it should come from the Government or how, I am not prepared exactly to say; but assistance must come from somewhere, because the cider maker at the present time is helpless; he cannot obtain instruction or information.

Position of English cider industry.

49,330. Is the result of that, that the manufacture is declining?—At the present time I do not consider it is declining, because the National Association of Cider Makers have certainly done some good, and I hope it is only the beginning of the good they will do. A few years ago the cider industry was in a lower state than it is now. There is a great demand for a light non-alcoholic drink in this country; when I say non-alcoholic, I mean of slight alcoholic strength. That has stimulated the cider industry beyond a doubt, and there are men who are looking round to see how they can utilise their farms to good account, who have turned their attention to cider making. The cider industry has improved slightly of late, but only very slightly: as I say, the people are helpless, and they do not know where to go for instruction or information.

Demand for good cider.

49,331. Do you think that if there was an increased supply of good cider there would be an increased demand?—No doubt about that whatever. As I said at the very beginning, the good cider sells very readily at a remunerative price, and the fact that we import a considerable quantity of only fairish cider, which finds a ready sale, is proof that the demand is greater than the supply. Then more than that, in many districts people will not trouble to sell cider, because they say that when they have worked up a sale for it, they find the supply gives out, and then their labour is practically useless. If we have a spell of hot weather in August, or something of that sort, when it has become well known in the district that they sell good cider they find that they can no longer get a good supply, and so the labour is lost. I am satisfied that if there was a constant supply of good cider, many people would take up the selling of it, more particularly in the manufacturing towns in the north, and that the sale might be doubled or quadrupled in a very few years—always supposing that you could supply and sell good cider—therein is the difficulty, to supply good cider.

County councils and cider making.

49,332. Do you consider that the county councils, by a possible combination among themselves, could affect all that is required in the supply of trained teachers?—If those 10 counties that I have mentioned were to join together, it would be a very slight tax on each one, but still if cider is once made good the industry would soon extend, and then, I suppose, they would think it a hardship that they should be at the expense for other counties. It seems to me to be a matter worthy of more general assistance.

Cider experimental station.

49,333. A small experimental farm would not be very costly, would it?—I should think that a matter of a couple of thousand a year for five years would give opportunity for proving whether anything can be done in the industry. There is no outlay of capital required; it is only a matter of a couple of hundred pounds.

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49,334. Competent persons might be assisted to be trained in France or Germany?—Yes; that could be done. I daresay that through our Government we might obtain the assistance of foreign teachers. We might have access to their laboratories and see what they have done on general principles, and apply those to the special circumstances in England. That is what is wanted.

Management of orchards.

49,335. Do you consider that the management of orchards is better understood, or the contrary, at the present day?—The fruit orchards are certainly better managed now in England than ever they were; but that does not apply to apple orchards.

49,336. Do you mean fruit for the table?—Fruit for the table, for jam making, and so on, but it does not apply to apple orchards. The farmers not knowing how to make good cider have made bad cider, and they have found it does not pay, so the orchards have been neglected, and the men have not troubled about anything in connexion with them. If you travel in the West of England and look at the orchards, even from the railway, you will see that the trees are ragged and covered with moss; all a sign of weakness, all a sign of neglect.

Cider factories.

49,337. Could the factory system be much extended, do you think, for the benefit of these farmers?—That would be somewhat of the same thing as the wholesale men buying the juice direct from the mill.

49,338. Something in the nature of creameries, so that the farmers should send in their raw produce to be made up at local factories?—That might be done in certain districts, certainly; the same as the wholesale men buy the juice now, or the apples.

49,339. Would it not pay farmers who do not understand the art of making cider better than making bad cider?—Yes, certainly. That is so at the present time; in certain districts the farmers prefer to sell the apples, because the man who buys the apples knows how to make good cider, and he gets good prices for it, whereas the farmer can only make poor stuff, which sells at a bad price. I have an example of that which occurred last year at Mr. Neville Grenville's, near Glastonbury. He made experiments in the year before (1893) and wished to continue them in 1894, but he had very few apples, so he bought the apples in the neighbourhood from anyone who offered them, and under the guidance of a scientific man, these apples were made into cider, and the whole of the produce was sold at 10*d.* per gallon right away, without any bickering, which was a very good price, and no doubt a remunerative one, although Mr. Neville Grenville did not undertake it for the sake of the gain. A neighbour of Mr. Grenville, who had the command of the same kind of apples at his own place, and bought some in the neighbourhood too, made cider, but he could not succeed, and did not succeed in selling that cider at more than 4*d.* a gallon. The two lots of cider were made from the same apples, but the second one was made badly. I think that is proof positive that it is the skill in making the cider which gives the good cider or the bad.

49,340. That, no doubt, was a great benefit to the neighbouring farmers?—They are opening their eyes to the fact that good cider can be made from apples which they considered only poor cider could be made from; and now they are anxious to learn, but there is nobody to teach them and nobody to help them.

Demand for good cider.

49,341. If the farmers knew how to make cider do you think they would make a greater profit by making it themselves, even on a small scale, than by selling their apples?—If they could make it good. Besides, they want it for their own consumption, and they want it for the consumption of their men. A good deal of it could be sold locally at no very great distance. Sell the apples if you can only make bad cider, but make cider if you can make it good. Then they have the mills, they have the presses, and they have the cider cellars, so that they would like to utilise those, and I think they would to advantage.

Consumption of cider by labourers.

49,342. The labourers drink less cider than they did, do they not?—Yes, I should think they do, because formerly employers used to buy cider to give to the men very often; now instead of buying poor cider they buy light beer. In that way there is less cider consumed. But I do not know but what the labourer is just as fond of cider as ever he was.

Compulsory destruction of insect and fungoid pests.

49,343. How would you protect farmers against insect and fungoid pests?—That refers more particularly to the orchards. I should certainly suggest that the Government should compel the tenant to maintain the trees in a clean and vigorous state, and that the owner of the orchard should, in the first place, put the orchard in a clean and vigorous state. In this country, of course, we do not care about legislative interference; but, still there are instances when it is not only desirable, but when it is the duty of the Government to interfere. In this case what we ask is, that the careful man may be protected against the negligent, which seems to me to be one of the duties of the Government.

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49,344. That principle would carry us rather far, would it not? Why should this interference be extended to the orchard industry solely?—It would not be only to the cider industry, it would include orchards of all kinds of fruit. You will find it is only one little step further than the law goes already. For instance, we have vaccination, which is quite personal; the muzzling of dogs to protect persons and animals; and owners are compelled to keep their property in a sanitary repair to prevent nuisances and infection. Then we have legislation with regard to foot-and-mouth disease, glanders, scab, and so on. Then, again, a man is compelled to keep his chimney clean in order that he may not be a nuisance or a source of danger to his neighbours. Factories are not allowed to pollute streams, and a factory is not allowed to belch forth smoke or noxious vapours which destroy vegetation. So that as things are now the owner of an orchard suffering damage to his orchard from the fumes of a factory has a remedy against the manufacturer.

49,345. I think all those cases you have quoted affect the health of the community?—Here I am speaking of the noxious fumes from a factory which caused damage to vegetation.

49,346. Yes, and also to health?—But, still, the fact that it is causing damage to vegetation would allow the man who receives the damage to obtain compensation, and, at least, to cause the nuisance to be abated. I think the Rio Tinto Company had a case of the kind at Port Talbot on a large scale.

49,347. I suppose you would not confine these protective measures to orchards alone; you would have no objection to seeing it extended to the other departments of agricultural industry?—I do not know.

49,348. Why should you not compel a man to keep his thistles down, for instance?—The thistles are apt to extend to other farms I must admit, but not to anything like the same extent that these orchard pests do. We ask that the owner of an orchard suffering damage from the infliction of insect pests from neighbouring orchards may be protected. He can protect his orchard against his neighbour's cattle but he can do nothing to protect himself against the insect pests; he is absolutely helpless there. Besides, you really are not allowing a man who keeps his orchard in a healthy and vigorous state to reap the full benefit of his outlay at present. Whatever he may do he is at the mercy of any negligent neighbour from whose orchard infection comes in a variety of ways, from these moths, or the wind may carry the eggs and a variety of other things.

49,349. Do you think that the landowner should do more to maintain orchards in a clean and healthy condition?—No, I do not ask that the landlord should maintain it at all—I ask that the tenant should.

49,350. Encouraged by a liberal system of compensation?—No, none whatever; the tenant should simply be compelled to keep the orchards in good order; let the tenants be compelled to keep them in good order; the maintaining of the orchard should be solely at his expense. The reason is this: the outlay for maintaining the orchard in good condition takes place in the winter and in the spring principally—almost exclusively—and the benefit from that is reaped immediately afterwards, namely, in the autumn in the same year. Therefore the man who obtains the benefit—namely, the tenant should pay for it. What we ask is that the Government should compel the tenant to maintain the orchard in good condition. When a tenant takes a farm, supposing it is in good condition, on leaving it he must leave it in the same condition or pay for dilapidations under certain little conditions which I do not know affect the issue in this case. If he neglects a field the field is damaged and nothing more, but if he neglects an orchard not only does the orchard suffer but the neighbour's orchard suffers. Therefore, for that reason we ask that the tenant should not only be obliged to deliver up the orchard in a good condition, but that he

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should be bound from year to year to keep it in good condition so as not to become a source of infection and of damage to his neighbours. There is only one step to be taken; the thing is that it has to be done annually instead of at the end of the time.

Compensation for planting.

49,351. Are you satisfied with the existing law as regards the planting of trees by tenants and the compensation therefor?—I do not think that we need trouble very much about that at the present time, because the Agricultural Holdings Act is perhaps not quite perfect, but very little amendment there would do. I consider that if the landlords find that their tenants are making good cider and selling it at a profitable price, that part will soon arrange itself. I do not think that there will be any difficulty about that. When cider making is found to be a profitable industry landlords and tenants will soon agree who shall make the outlay and so on. Capital will be found for that by arrangement between landlord and tenant. The main thing is to make the cider industry a paying industry by teaching the farmers how to make good cider.

Deleterious preservatives in imported cider.

49,352. Are deleterious preservatives in cider much used?—This American cider which is brought over is generally considered as being preserved by a chemical which is deleterious—certainly injurious.

49,353. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the chemical?—Salicylic acid. That is certainly used to preserve a good many food products, but I am told that in other businesses, the best houses, the best distributors insist that the products which are supplied to them for distribution shall not be preserved by salicylic acid, showing that the best people consider that salicylic acid is detrimental. More than that, in France the use of salicylic acid as a preservative in any food products whatever—food products, of course, include drinks—is forbidden by law, and certainly I consider that it should not be used in this country for preserving cider.

49,354. Is that acid not used in beer to some extent in this country?—I think not; I fancy they put a stop to it.

49,355. I have heard of it in lager beer at least?—That would be foreign beer. There it may be used.

Adulteration of cider.

49,356. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Would you make all cider, home and foreign, liable to inspection and analysis by proper officers?—Certainly; it must be the same as with other foods; coffee, for instance, must be sold pure if you ask for pure coffee: so if you ask for pure cider there should be pure cider sold without the preservatives.

49,357–8. Is not the adulteration of cider forbidden at present?—No, there is no definition of cider; the Government does not interfere in any way whatever.

Cider not dutiable.

49,359. (*Mr. Little.*) And there is no excise duty?—No excise duty and no import duty.

49,360. (*Viscount Cobham.*) If you have one you will have the other probably?—In every country the natural wine of the country is allowed to be made and sold free of duty.

49,361. (*Mr. Little.*) Except beer?—I said wine.

49,362. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Is there any duty upon cider in France?—No, anybody can make it, anybody can sell it.

Licenses for sale of cider.

49,363. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I see you are in favour of the freer issue of licenses for the sale of cider?—The trouble is that the licenses are not very freely granted at the present time. The off-licenses cost 25*s.*, and they are not very readily granted. I do not know that we should complain about that, but we do complain that there is considerable difficulty in obtaining freely on-licenses (which cost five guineas) for a kind of cider cellars, of which there are only six in London, strange to say. I do not know that there are more than five actually open, but then there is one that will be opened soon. What we want is that those licenses shall be granted freely. More than that, we complain that in the tied houses—tied houses being public-houses owned generally by breweries—brewers object to the sale of cider under any circumstances. That we consider a hardship. The law ought not to allow the owners of tied houses to insist on that under any circumstances, which they now do. Of course the brewer says it interferes with the sale of beer, and "I do not get any profit on the cider whereas I should get a profit on the beer," and therefore he will not allow the sale of cider in his tied houses. That does not apply everywhere, but it does in a number of instances. That we consider is a decided hardship.

49,364. Do you think that cider should be defined by law?—A Commission sat on whisky some years ago and tried to define whisky, and they did not succeed I believe. So I do not see how they are going to define cider. Still certain things could be objected to.

Definition of pure cider.

49,365. (*Mr. Little.*) How would you insist upon pure cider unless you define it?—I would not define it, but still I would forbid certain things being used in it. For instance, a definition of cider is this—it is the expressed juice of apples, or the expressed juice of mellow apples, fermented and matured from which nothing has been abstracted but that thrown out by its own action. That would be a kind of definition of cider, but it would be very difficult to have nothing sold under the name of cider but that. At the same time it might be possible to prevent things being added to fermented apple juice. I think a happy mean might be found between the two. Salicylic acid is a foreign matter added, and that I certainly would object to. You cannot object to some things being added to cider. For instance, some of the natural constituents are occasionally in small proportion or not in sufficient proportion for the cider to mature or to keep; the astringent matter, for instance, may be a little short.

49,366. You mean the tannin?—The tannin would be the astringent matter; I think then it would only be fair to allow the maker to use a little of that because it is a natural constituent of pure cider.

49,367. Then you see the difficulty of legislating is that you have to lay down a definition?—I do not ask for any legislation in reference to that; I do not think it is desirable, and I do not think it is necessary.

Adulteration of cider.

49,368. I thought you want legislation to prevent adulteration?—No, I want to say that certain things are not to be used in cider.

49,369. Prohibited by law?—Yes. I want the use of salicylic acid in cider to be prohibited by law. All the same, I should think it is not at all improbable that salicylic acid will be prohibited as a preservative in all food products in England. But it will not be necessary, for instance, to define strawberry jam if you prohibit the use of salicylic acid in making strawberry jam.

49,370. (*Lord Rendel.*) Your object in coming here is to point to the improvements of the cider industry generally, is it not?—To give an idea of it. Nobody has ever ventured before to give an idea of the improvements of the cider industry, or to draw attention to the fact that the output is valued at a million a year.

State aid for cider making and protection of orchards.

49,371. You have shown us it is very important to suggest that it might be considerably assisted by some intervention on the part of the State?—Yes, on the part of the State, as far as the orchards are concerned, in protecting the orchards against insect pests; there I consider that the intervention of the State is absolutely necessary.

49,372. Then do you limit your suggestions of State intervention to the protection of orchards?—And the small matter of preservatives. The principal thing that I would insist upon is the need of instruction in making cider. The State of course could easily supply a small sum of a couple of thousand a year out of some of its grants, or that money might come from other sources, not necessarily from the Government.

49,373. Then you suggest two forms of State intervention—one, the protection of the orchards, and two, a system of scientific education in cider making?—Yes, you want the assistance of someone for the second thing.

49,374. Dealing with the first, are you aware of the practice in those portions of France in which the olive is grown with reference to the protection of olive yards?—I do not know the olive yards of France; I know the olive yards of Spain. I lived in Spain. I do not know the regulations in France.

49,375. Is there any system there of giving protection to the olive yards of the kind you suggest?—I do not know that there is. If there is any law in Spain to that effect it is very indifferently administered.

49,376. Assuming Spain to be in a somewhat backward condition generally, would you expect that there would be a better state of things in France?—Certainly, or in the olive industry, more particularly in Italy, because there it is of such vast importance; the olive industry in France is not of such vast importance as it is in Italy and Spain.

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49,377. You would not be surprised to find that in the olive-growing country of France there are administrative regulations for the protection of olives?—I should expect it is so; the same as there is with the orchards in France.

49,378. Then with reference to the intervention of the State with regard to education, you consider that the making of good cider is at present an empirical art generally?—Yes, certainly it is an empirical art, with the exception of a few manufacturers.

49,379. Take the case of beer: would you say that the home-brewed beers of old times were also, generally, made in an empirical fashion?—Yes, I think they must have been. I do not think that they even used the thermometer or hydrometer in the olden times; they simply brewed in October, and they judged of the weather by their own feelings. I should think it must have been empirical. I have no doubt they weighed the malt, and measured the water, and they told when it boiled, but it would have been certainly empirical.

49,380. Do you consider the beer supplied by the best brewers of this country to be of a very admirable character?—I know nothing better than Bass, I think, the world over, and nothing better than Guinness.

49,381. Then in that case, without the aid of the State, beer has arrived at very great perfection in the hands of skilled makers?—Undoubtedly, but that is a very large industry, and large brewers are able to obtain trained men to put in as brewers' chemists, and so on, which the unfortunate farmer cannot do.

49,382. And at high salaries, too?—At very high salaries.

49,383. Men who have studied with very great care abroad and at home?—Yes.

49,384. Then take the case of wine—the most successful wine districts, for example; would you consider that wine was there made rather by empirical or by scientific processes?—Scientific, certainly, now. Take the highest; take champagne, for instance; that certainly is no longer made empirically; that is made by a scientific process, everything is watched most carefully, and science brought to bear upon it.

49,385. Are you aware whether the State has interfered, or assisted in any measure?—The State in France has interfered in various ways—with the phylloxera, for instance—in stamping out the disease at the very beginning in the vineyards. All through the Continent you will find experimental vineyards. I have been over some of them.

49,386. Assisted by the State?—Certainly, and some of them administered by the State—administered under the State at any rate.

49,387. Then you would take that as an analogy in favour of your proposal?—Certainly.

Effect of soil and situation on quality of cider.

49,388. Are you aware whether there is any strict relation between the districts growing the best wine grape and the districts producing the best wine?—Take on the Rhine; for instance, Johannisberg, the finest wine they make there is made from grapes grown on a particular hill. The wine depends upon the particular kind of grape grown upon a particular soil in a particular situation. Then with Hungary it is the same; the most celebrated Tokay wine is made from grapes grown in a particular vineyard on a particular hillside. The wine depends upon a particular kind of grape grown upon a particular soil and in a particular situation.

49,389. As regards those vintages to which you have referred?—Yes, as regards the Johannisberg and Tokay which I have mentioned.

49,390. As regards the great bulk of wine that is grown, do you think that there is any very definite relation between the districts producing the best wine and the districts producing the best grapes?—The vintage grapes? Certainly the soil and the situation are the principal things in making wine, because you can easily alter the sort of grape if it is not found to be suitable, but you cannot alter the soil or the situation to any material extent.

49,391. You have never heard, for instance, of French wine growers envying the grapes of Italy or the grapes of Spain?—No, they do not; they know that their country is not warm enough to grow that particular kind of grape, which gives a very heavy juice, and so they import the juice or they import the wine. For instance, at Alicante, Valencia and Barcelona I have seen tens of thousands of barrels of heavy Spanish clarets shipped to France. The French know, that in order to make their cheap clarets suitable for export it is necessary to add some heavy full-bodied wine, full in colour and full-bodied in spirit, and they import it, they do not try to grow it to any extent in their own country. The only place they can grow them is round the Burgundy district.

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49,392. You would not be wholly surprised then to hear that many French growers would be very glad if they could have the skill that they possess and the grapes that other people possess?—Yes, they would be glad of that, I daresay; if they could get all the good things to themselves, no doubt they would be glad of that, but I never heard of it exactly; they give it up as a hopeless case, I think.

Skill in cider making.

49,393. If that were so, your point that skill in manufacture is of very high importance would be strengthened, because superior skill, as I gather in the making of cider, would be of more importance even than superior quality in the apple?—Yes, certainly; because with superior skill you can make a very good cider from an indifferent apple, but if you have not the skill with good apples you will not make a good cider. The skill certainly is of more importance than the material you work upon.

49,394. As you mentioned your experience I was only desirous of bringing out whether you could strengthen your case by the example of wine making in France and beer making in England?—Certainly the skill is all-important; for instance, the French with their skill and their thin clarets of the Bordeaux district make the best wine; the Spaniards have a heavier wine, but they make poor stuff.

Consumption of cider by labourers.

49,395. Going back to the 10 counties which you spoke of as producing a million hogsheads, what proportion would you judge, roughly speaking, of those million hogsheads takes shape in wages?—I am afraid I have not thought that out, but I should certainly say one-half.

49,396. Therefore you would say that as regards one-half of the whole produce of this important industry the growers have a certain sale and a limited interest in the quality?—Yes, that is so, and I put that on the original sheets on which I made notes. But there is this to be said, that the poorer the cider the more the master gives to the labourer. If a man is to have three pints a day and the cider is particularly bad the labourer says, "Master, give us a drop more."

49,397. If a particular proportion of wages takes the shape of cider I presume the wage payer will require a minimum quantity every year?—He will require a minimum quantity for giving to his labourers?

49,398. Yes?—But he would require certainly a less quantity if it was good cider, and then he would economise it because he would be able to sell it.

49,399. Therefore the quality of the cider is to that extent of some importance?—Certainly.

49,400. The same in regard to strengthening its saleable character generally?—I am afraid I do not quite understand.

49,401. The quality would be important to him because the better cider would go farther?—Certainly, in that way it would be an advantage.

49,402. And it is not of importance to him as regards its being of a more saleable and of a higher quality?—And the particular quantity which he gives to the men would not make so very much difference to the man, only he would make a smaller quantity go very much farther because when the cider is very bad, and the farmer cannot dispose of it at all, he is not very particular whether he gives three pints or four pints, but when he gets a good cider which he can easily dispose of, the labourers get rather less than three pints instead of four.

Production of cider and table apples compared.

49,403. Are there any orchards in which both fruit apples and cider apples are grown?—Yes, in certain districts in Herefordshire and Gloucestershire, and around there. In some places the apples are plucked and sent to market, and sold for the table or sold for cooking.

49,404. From year to year, is there any disposition to be shifting from one class of apple to another?—I think that the cider apples have rather decreased, if anything, and the table apples rather increased.

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County councils and cider making.

49,405. Do you think that whether in reference to superior teaching or to the superior protection of the orchard it is requisite to go beyond the administrative facilities the county councils have given?—The county councils have done their best, and they have done no good; therefore, I think it is necessary.

49,406. But that is the only reason why you suggest that legislation should be carried out?—In connexion with the insect pests, of course, the county councils have nothing whatever to do, but the other (education) is not to be obtained at the present time, and I ask that some means may be found of supplying a want which is not found to be supplied anywhere at the present time.

Association of Cider Makers.

49,407. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Would you tell me the composition of your Association of Cider Makers; what are your members chiefly; are they tenant farmers?—No, certainly not; I have here a proof of the list of vice-presidents and members of the council.

49,408. Are there so many from each of these ten counties that you have mentioned?—Yes, we have a vice-president for each of 15 counties, and then for the five important counties we also have a council as well, of which the vice-president is the chairman, and then there are three other members——

49,409. In what line of life are these councillors; are they tenant farmers or landlords?—They are landlords in each county, and there is a cider maker as well. Take Gloucestershire, for instance, G. E. Lloyd-Baker, Esq., is vice-president, and the other members of the council are—Sir John F. Dorington, Lieut.-Colonel Curtis Hayward, and Jas. Harper, Esq., who is the manufacturer. Then take Hereford. C. W. Radcliffe-Cooke, Esq., M.P., is the vice-president, and the other members are—James Rankin, Esq., John H. Arkwright, Esq., E. F. Bulmer, Esq.

49,410. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Will you give the names for Worcestershire?—I have not got that council complete yet, but Alfred Baldwin, Esq., M.P., of Stourport, is the vice-president, and A. F. Godson, Esq., M.P., of Droitwich, is one of the members of the council; I have not got any farther than that.

Objects of Association of Cider Makers.

49,411. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In each of these counties do they meet and talk the matter over; and what is the object of your association?—Answering the first part about the meeting, the association has only been formed about six or seven months, and so far we have only had meetings in Herefordshire, where Mr. Cooke has been very active indeed. But we are now beginning in Somersetshire, and in about 10 days' time I shall be at Taunton, and I hope that will be the beginning of having meetings in Somersetshire. The objects of the association are to assist the cider makers in every possible way. I have a small handbill here which says that an account will be given of the efforts made by the National Association of Cider Makers towards improving the process and the methods of the production of sound cider, and the legislation proposed for the suppression of insect pests, compensation to tenants for planting and renovating orchards, reduction of transport rates, and the suppression of adulteration of cider. Then we assist anybody connected with the cider industry in any way. For instance, a man quite recently sent to me a bottle of perry, and said: "It is "not clear; what am I to do to it?" With the best means at my disposal I discovered it was wanting in tannin, so I sent him a small bottle of tannin solution, and told him to put that to a champagne bottle of perry, and see if it had the desired effect. He wrote back in the course of time: "Yes, the perry has deposited, and "is beautifully clear." Then I sent him sufficient for over 300 gallons, I forget the exact figure, and told him to put the whole of this into the three casks.

49,412. Was this given to him gratis?—Yes; that I gave to him gratis to encourage him.

49,413. I want to get at the object of your Association; are you going to get up a large fund to help these people?—I do not consider that it is necessary to give him anything because if this man derives the benefit which he has derived from the improvement of his cider he can well afford to pay. There can be no harm in it. This man is not a member of the Association I should tell you; I do not even draw the line as to whether a man is a member of the Association or not because I want to help everybody.

49,414. Is your object to get as many members as you can from the tenant farmers and those who possess orchards?—Yes, but still we do not make it a point that a man shall become a member and subscribe whenever he seeks assistance because we know how poor farmers are and how very loath they are to part with their money if they can have it without. We want to help them all we can, and then if we have done them any good we can with a good grace ask them to subscribe and become members at a guinea a year.

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Co-operation in cider making.

49,415. Have you any idea of co-operation in the matter in order to establish the manufacture of cider in the district?—No, we do not trade at all, and we have no intention of trading.

49,416. You do not wish to?—No, there is no intention of buying or selling or acting as agents; there is nothing of that. If it would be an advantage to help such an association when it did not enter into competition with others we would very willingly give it our assistance.

49,417. But there is no such thing at the present moment you say?—There are one or two things in embryo, but I cannot say there is one in working order. I have heard of one or two somewhere in Herefordshire, but I do no not know whether they are in working order.

Demand for good cider.

49,418. I think you have expressed a very strong opinion that the consumption of cider would increase?—Yes, undoubtedly.

49,419. Upon what do you base that generally?—At the present time all good cider sells readily at from 10*d.* to 1*s.* a gallon. Cider dealers often have to go round the country and hunt up the actual makers of cider, the farmers, to look for this kind of cider and they do not get sufficient to supply the demand.

49,420. What kind of cider are you particularly alluding to—the best, the sweet?—To some extent the sweet of a gravity of about 1020.

49,421. In bottles or in casks?—In casks; because it is not usually bottled until it passes into the hands of the dealers.

49,422. Perhaps you are aware that especially in the vale of Berkeley, between Gloucester and Bristol, a great deal of what is called rough cider is made?—Yes; hard cider.

49,423. As far as my information goes, I am told that the sale of that has very much fallen off, although I do not think the material has fallen off?—The people do not know how to make it.

49,424. I say I do not think the goodness of the cider has fallen off at all?—No; I do not know that it has.

49,425. But I am told that the consumption has very much?—Yes; I quite agree. I do not imagine that the quality is any worse now than it was formerly, but still it is a hard cider.

49,426. That I admit?—The people who formerly bought that kind of cider now prefer to buy light beer. It was probably always bought by people who gave it to their labourers as part wages, and now they find it preferable to buy light beer. Instead of making that hard cider, if the people had skill, they would make a light sweet cider which would sell readily.

49,427. You think it would?—I feel certain of it; there is demand for it which we cannot meet.

49,428. In the big towns or where?—In the big towns, more especially in the summer time.

Consumption of cider by labourers.

49,429. I think you have already said so, but my experience is that the labourer does not consume anything like the quantity of cider that he did; he will not now take cider in many cases as part of his wages which he used to do at harvest time. I am only wanting to get at where you consider the consumption of cider will be found?—The consumption of cider will be found where the American cider sells now so readily and where the better kinds of cider sell.

English and American cider compared.

49,430. Do you think that the English made cider, if it was better attended to and better made, would cut out the American cider; is that the idea of your association?—That is my idea, and I can quote as proof that one of the largest cider merchants who formerly sold American cider and who said, "I have a demand "for cider, and I will meet it; if I cannot get good "cider in England I will get it from abroad," and he did get it from abroad—now that there is some slight improvement in the manufacture of home cider has been able to dispense with American cider. So it

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would be with all. If we could only make sufficient in this country, people would rather have English cider, for it is better in many respects than the American.

49,431. You think it is more a question of quality than of value—that we can produce cider here at such a price that if it was properly made, it would fairly compete with, if not extinguish the American cider?—Yes.

49,432. That is your opinion—I only want to get your opinion?—Yes. We have many advantages. It is very difficult to send a light alcoholic drink all the way from America here; it is very apt to deteriorate in many ways. The people should not make these poor ciders; but they do not know how to make better, they do not know how to make other ciders, at the present time. What we want is to teach them how to do it, but we have not the means, and there are not the means available.

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Compulsory destruction of insects and fungoid pests.

49,433. Do you not think that you are rather entrenching upon the State in asking them to come and get the insects off the trees in the orchards? Why should not the hopgrower do the same; why should not the turnip-grower when he is troubled with the fly do the same?—I only ask the State to compel the tenant to get the insects off the trees at his expense. I do not know that the fly goes from one turnip field to another to the same extent that insects do in orchards. Then again, they can help themselves to some extent in the turnips and in the hops. I have shown that it is only one little step from the noxious fumes against which a man can protect himself, to protecting himself against his neighbour's dirty orchard.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

Ninety-fifth Day.

Thursday, 23rd May 1895.

PRESENT :

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. } *Secretaries.*

Mr. A. W. Fox. 23 May 1895.

Mr. ARTHUR WILSON FOX re-called and further examined. (*For previous evidence, see Vol. I., page* 262.)

Mr. A. W. Fox. 23 May 1895.

Report on Lincolnshire. Condition of agriculture.

49,434. (*Viscount Cobham.*) As an Assistant Commissioner, I believe you have examined into the condition of agriculture in the county of Lincolnshire, excepting the Isle of Axholme?—Yes.

49,435. I think the general result of the report you have presented on that county is, that Lincolnshire has suffered very heavily from the recent prevailing depression of agriculture?—Yes; in the north more than in the south.

49,436. What is that owing to?—The soil is better in the south. There they can change their system more; they grow potatoes, and roots, and seeds in large quantities, and go in for market gardening; whereas in the north they have been severely hit by the recent fall in barley. Of course, they have been hit there for a long time; but the recent fall in the price of barley has pressed them very much.

Size of farms.

49,437. Does the size of the farms differ, as between the north and the south?—Yes. The farms in the north are very large ones in many districts on the Wolds and the heath and the cliff. On the east side, in the marsh land, there are a great many small farms in the north. But certainly, in the south, taking in the whole, there are many more small farms than there are in the north.

Small and large farms compared.

49,438. Would you say the small farms have done better because they are small?—I do not think so on the whole—certainly not. The small farms near towns which can grow market-garden produce and have not got to send the market-garden produce any great distance have done fairly well in some cases.

Reduction of rents.

49,439. The landowners have suffered very severely in common with the tenants, I presume. What do you state is the general fall of rent in Lincolnshire?—It was generally agreed that on the best land, putting aside accommodation land close to a town, the fall in rents was 33 per cent. when I visited the district; but they have fallen since.

49,440. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) On the best land, near to a town, did you say?—No; taking the best land, but excluding purely accommodation land. There are cases where clay land has been reduced enormously; I mean down to a rent of 5*s.* an acre; but that is exceptional, because there is not a great deal of clay in the county.

49,441. (*Viscount Cobham.*) But the farms have still been retained in cultivation even on the worst land?—Yes, there is no abandoned farm in Lincolnshire.

49,442. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You spoke, I think, of the best land?—Yes.

49,443. What is the average land reduced to?—I should say that on an average rents have gone down between 45 and 50 per cent. I have, in the report given, a list of reductions in rent.

Tithes.

49,444. (*Viscount Cobham.*) With regard to the tithes, are they paid by the tenant or by the landowner?—The landowners have paid the tithe in a great many cases in Lincolnshire for a number of years.

49,445. On the large estates?—Yes, on the large estates.

Landlords' outlay.

49,446. I think you say that since the last 15 years there has been a large increase in the amount of outlay upon the land?—Yes, there has in Lincolnshire.

49,447. Is that still being maintained?—It was up to the time of my visit a year ago; I have no reason to doubt it has not since.

49,448. With the result, should you say, that Lincolnshire compares well with any county that you know in regard to the provision of buildings and farming accommodation?—With any county I have ever been in.

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49,449. Do you say the same with regard to the cottages?—Taking the county as a whole, certainly yes.

Effect of depression on landlords and tenants.

49,450. Have the tenant farmers suffered at least as much as the landlords?—That would be a difficult thing to say. I asked that question at several meetings when both were present, and they seemed generally to say that they had suffered about equally; but I should not like to say one way or the other.

49,451. Could you form any conclusion as to the relative amount of capital lost by the two classes?—I think, that looking at the fact at all the public meetings I held, which were numerous, the farmers said they thought that rent had been reduced fairly to meet the fall in prices at the time I visited the county; judging from that, I think the farmers thought the landlords had made as many sacrifices as the situation then demanded.

Wages.

49,452. With regard to the labourers, their wages have kept up till quite recently, have they not?—Yes. They went down last autumn lower than they had been for a great many years, but they have risen again this March, but not to the same level that they were this time last year, for they are about a shilling a week lower than they were at this time last year.

Reduction of labour.

49,453. Has there been a considerable reduction in the amount of labour employed in the county?—I should not say so on the best land.

49,454. Is much land going into grass?—A good deal has been turned to grass.

49,455. Wherever that is the case, of course, there is a reduction in the labour bill?—Yes, but with these big arable farms where they grow a large acreage of barley and wheat, there is a great deal of the country splendidly farmed: still, as you will see from accounts which I have shown in my report, there have been farms that have lost.

49,456. Do you give us, in your report, the agricultural population of Lincolnshire?—Yes, the figures appear on Table A. 6-C., at page 139. You will see from that table that the agricultural population has not decreased much in Lincolnshire.

49,457. Do you think the tendency will be towards a further diminution in the labour employed unless prices recover to some extent?—It was unanimously said that all the poor land would go out of cultivation at present prices.

Barley growing.

49,458. Is the arable land in Lincolnshire still mainly devoted to the cultivation of wheat?—In the last few years they have turned their attention more to barley, because wheat has not been paying and barley was paying before, but now that the price of barley has gone down so low they look at the future with much apprehension.

Low prices.

49,459. I think you have found it to be unanimously the opinion of the farmers in Lincolnshire that the depression is mainly due to the fall in prices, but partly also due to the heavy taxation that they labour under?—Yes. The fall in prices is their chief complaint—their one complaint I may say, generally speaking.

Burdens on land.

49,460. But they also complained a good deal as to the burden of rates and taxes, did they not?—They put that second.

49,461. You state that they maintain that grain at present prices is grown at a loss; does that mean all classes of grain?—No, that refers to wheat and barley. In the report I have shown the cost of producing an acre of wheat and barley as far as it is possible to do so, and the price obtained for it.

49,462. Can you then state that under these two heads are comprised, according to the opinion in Lincolnshire, the causes of the depression in agriculture?—Yes, I feel sure of it, and I held a great many meetings throughout the county.

Tenure.

49,463. There appears to be no feeling as to the existing system of tenure having anything to do with farming depression?—No, there was none, I think.

49,464. There was a strong feeling, a universal feeling, in fact, against land courts?—Yes.

49,465. Should you say that the tenant-farmers of Lincolnshire are, relatively speaking, a very powerful and intelligent body of men?—Yes, as powerful and intelligent as I have met in any county—perhaps more so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act and Lincolnshire custom.

49,466. Very little advantage has been taken of the Agricultural Holdings Act, I gather from your report?—Practically none.

49,467. Because the Lincolnshire custom is held in much more esteem?—Yes, they prefer their custom.

49,468. Could you point out the main differences between the Lincolnshire custom and the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Under the Lincolnshire custom a claim is not prepared, nor is a counter-claim prepared in the way in which it is under the Agricultural Holdings Act which savours very much like an action at law, in which both sides frequently make the largest claim they can and solicitors are often introduced into the case, or a large number of witnesses, or valuers, or representatives who are practically partisans in many counties. There is a Valuers' Association in Lincolnshire which is held in great esteem by the tenant-farmers. The valuers spring from the agricultural classes themselves; their fathers frequently are farmers, and they are looked upon as an entirely impartial body. One of those gentlemen is selected by the outgoing tenant, and one by the incoming tenant or by the landlord, and those two settle all questions of compensation between themselves in a few hours or in a day, and the parties always seem perfectly satisfied with their decision; in fact, I hardly heard one farmer say that he did not think that they got full compensation.

49,469. Is it certain that the procedure is far cheaper under the Lincolnshire custom?—All the valuers say so, and I suppose if it is that it is rather to their interest to have the Agricultural Holdings Act.

49,470. Would you say that a matter very rarely goes to the referee?—Very seldom.

49,471. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did you ever hear of any case that had been taken to a court of law?—No, I did not.

49,472. There is no instance on record as far as you know?—No. I asked that question, and I never heard of a single case where there was litigation.

49,473. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Would you say that the preference given to the local custom was mainly owing to the cheapness and expedition of the procedure rather than to the scale of compensation allowed?—I think the procedure is the chief point. It is no trouble to either party; they put the matter into the hands of a valuer, and it is settled in a day. The farmers consider that they take all out of the soil that they put in.

49,474. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Does the preference for the Lincolnshire custom rather rise from this, that in the case of the Agricultural Holdings Act the compensation is given for the value to the incoming tenant, whereas in the case of the Lincolnshire custom the compensation is given upon a definite part of the outlay?—Yes, there is certainly that difference.

49,475. So that the parties know practically exactly what they are going to get?—Under the scale?

49,476. Yes?—There is a scale, certainly.

49,477. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are they satisfied with the scale, and do they believe it is as liberal as under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes; perhaps if you take the Agricultural Holdings Act you will find that in some cases higher compensation has been given under it; but taking the Lincolnshire custom as a whole I should say that higher compensation must be given under it, because there would not be this universal feeling in favour of it otherwise. In paragraph 42 I quote statements made at some of my largest meetings. At Grimsby the farmers said, "We feel perfectly "secure under our custom. We take out what we put "into the land." The farmers at Horncastle said, "Men farm high up to the end of their tenancies, "as they are properly compensated under the custom." At Brigg they said, "We farm high right up to the "end of our tenancy." There can be no stronger proof than that of the success of the custom.

49,478. I suppose the custom sprang up under the special conditions of the county, and is therefore more acceptable than a cut-and-dried system which would apply to the whole country alike?—They have had it for years. Sir James Caird commented on the custom in 1850 when he wrote to the *Times*. They were given compensation in Lincolnshire, I believe, before it was given to any one else in the country.

49,479. Do you consider that compensation for dilapidations is a less burdensome matter for the tenants under this custom than it might be under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—The landowners say that they

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get less under the custom for dilapidations than they would if they fought a case under the Act.

49,480. Claims under the custom go back a much shorter time, do they not?—I think the tendency is to help the outgoing tenant as much as possible in a good many cases. That was rather the feeling. But there was no grumbling about it; the landlords said they would much prefer the custom to the Act, because there was no friction. But then I think it should be remembered that the landlords in Lincolnshire have equipped the farms in such an excellent manner right throughout, and are now keeping the buildings themselves in repair; that practically there is very little dilapidation against the tenants with reference to buildings.

Restrictions as to cultivation.

49,481. I think you sum up the whole matter by quoting a farmer who said that agreements are really now put on one side and that so long as a farmer farms fairly he has nothing to fear?—Yes. In South Lincolnshire you may say there is practically freedom of cultivation and they grow roots and seeds or anything they like. No doubt in North Lincolnshire, where they have to farm more on the four or five course system there are more restrictions in the agreements especially in the old agreements, but the evidence was, that they were practically put on one side and, in the new agreements, in many cases, they are left out.

49,482. On large estates?—On large estates. I do not mean to say that all restrictions are left out, such as those relating to the ploughing up of grass land and so on.

Compensation for deterioration.

49,483. Do you think the feeling in favour of the principle of compensating for good farming preponderated?—No, I do not think it did. There were a good many points raised about that. In the first place it was said by farmers at one meeting that they would not care to be open to be dilapidated for deterioration of land at such a time as this, when the land might be deteriorating, because it really did not pay them to cultivate their bad land, and so, at the end of their tenancy, they might be dilapidated by the landlord for the deterioration.

49,484. They thought they would probably lose more than they would gain?—Yes; and a man who has got a bad soil in one half of his farm and chooses to let it go and to cultivate the other half well, thinks that he might suffer if he was dilapidated for deterioration.

49,485. Was there a strong feeling the other way?—No. The question was hardly raised; I may say that whenever it was raised I raised it myself in order to get their opinion about it.

Scheduling the condition of farms.

49,486. You are aware of the scheme proposed by the Central Chamber of Agriculture, that there should be a system of scheduling land on entry and on quitting?—Yes, I understand that.

49,487. Did it carry much weight with the Lincolnshire farmers?—No; not in Lincolnshire. I asked the Valuers' Association that question; their view was that if a man takes a farm in bad condition he should see that he got it cheaper and that he must not be compensated twice.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

49,488. With regard to compensation for corn consumed on the farm was there a difference of opinion as to that?—There was a difference of opinion about that. I think the majority decidedly were against it, not because they disagreed with the principle but because they did not think the incoming tenant could be protected.

49,489. There was really no check upon the outgoing tenant's account?—No; that was the objection that was always raised. The landowners said that if there was any method of protecting the incoming tenant they would be perfectly satisfied with the proposal.

49,490. Do large landowners have mills on their properties?—No.

49,491. One way of checking these claims might be for the landowner to maintain a mill, and to grind the corn there, and keep accounts against the farmers?—Yes. I may say that the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, which is a very powerful body, decided against it. There was a large number of farmers at that meeting. I have heard since that there was a growing feeling in favour of compensating for corn, because, of course, the prices have fallen considerably since I was in the county. But the Lincolnshire Agricultural Society, I understand, still take the same view that they did when I was there.

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49,492-3. The Lincolnshire Agricultural Society consists mainly, I presume, of sitting tenants?—Yes.

49,494. But they clearly saw the disadvantage to agriculture which would result from putting too heavy a burden upon the incoming tenant?—Yes, that was their point.

Market gardening.

49,495. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is market gardening increasing in the district suitable to it?—Yes, it has increased of late years.

49,496. At the present time is there a tendency to increase?—At the time when I was there 12 months ago they were complaining very much of foreign competition in fruit and in vegetables from Spain and France and Brittany.

49,497. That would be especially with regard to the earlier sorts of vegetables, would it not?—Yes. With regard to fruit there is a good deal of competition now in currants and gooseberries, and also in apples and pears, which they complained of.

49,498. Do the market gardeners have fruit as well as vegetables?—Yes, in a good many instances.

49,499. So they have two strings to their bow?—The men who have fruit are generally close to towns, such as Spalding and Boston.

49,500. In regard to the potatoes, would those be early potatoes for early use?—There is some early potato land on the south and on the north-east side. That is very valuable land still, of course.

49,501. Is the cultivation of early potatoes remunerative?—In a good year no doubt it is, but then the land which would grow them is very limited.

49,502. Is that not interfered with very much by early potatoes from Cornwall and France?—I cannot say that directly; the only complaint I heard from them was of the foreign competition.

Flax growing.

49,503. With regard to flax; it used to be cultivated, you say, in certain districts in Lincolnshire?—Yes.

49,504. Can you say why it has been discontinued, and the buildings pulled down or allowed to go to ruin as you describe?—No, I do not know why.

49,505. You are aware that it has been considered lately that it is desirable to cultivate flax in this country?—Yes, I saw the same thing on the west coast of Ireland when I was there. I forget why it was given up.

49,506. You could not give us any information on that?—No.

49,507. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Where does the foreign importation of potatoes mainly come from?—From France.

Rates.

49,508. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think in reference to the rating you report that the tenants wish the rating should be divided between the landlord and the tenant?—I do not think that is generally so in Lincolnshire, but some witnesses said so.

49,509. Is it not the general idea that the rating as in Scotland should be divided between landlord and tenant?—I should not say that was the general desire, but certainly there was evidence of that, and there were a certain proportion of witnesses who advocated that.

49,510. I suppose the tenants in England pay all the rates?—Yes.

49,511. Do you not think it is not generally desired that the rates should be divided equally?—I should not like to say that as regards Lincolnshire. Certain tenants advocated that, but I could not say the whole county advocated it.

49,512. If the rating was divided it might help the tenantry, but it could not help the landlord?—I suppose where the rates were increasing it would certainly help the tenant, because the landlord would bear part of the new burden.

The Lincolnshire custom.

49,513. Regarding the Lincolnshire custom for compensation, it has always been easily wrought and cheaply wrought, has it not?—Yes.

49,514. And it is more liberal towards the tenant than even the Agricultural Holdings Act has been?—Taking the compensation given on a farm as a whole, yes, certainly. One ought, I think, to add that there is less given for dilapidations, at least, that was the evidence in Lincolnshire.

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Compensation for deterioration.

49,515. But then the dilapidations in Lincolnshire have never come into play against the compensation to any great extent, have they?—Yes, the valuers take that into account, but as I understand from the valuers and from the landowners, it is taken less into account than it would be in a fight under the Agricultural Holdings Act. Although the Valuers' Association did not admit it, some valuers told me that it was the practice and the feeling among some of them that they ought not to go back more than one year for dilapidations on the ground that yearly tenancies meant a fresh contract every year, and that when the rent was paid the past was wiped out.

49,516. As a matter of fact, regarding the landlords' dilapidations, they have never made a charge against the tenant for leaving in a bad state?—They do not actually make a claim, because it is not the procedure. The valuer on behalf of the outgoing tenant or the landlord settles the whole matter, but without a formal claim being drawn up.

Valuers.

49,517. You seem to say that the appointment of these valuers has been very beneficial?—Very.

49,518. Would the same not apply to all counties, both in England and in Scotland if we had what has been advocated by many witnesses—that we should have in each county, namely, a few special referees or valuers?—It has worked very well in Lincolnshire, and in Suffolk, where it exists to an extent, it has worked very fairly too.

49,519. If we had a body of such practical men in other counties both in England and in Scotland, would it not work equally as well?—There is no reason why it should not, and I think a body of men to choose from would be more satisfactory than the appointment of a single arbitrator.

49,520. Have these valuators not sometimes acted a very good part in bringing the landlord and the tenant together?—Yes.

Arbitration for rent.

49,521. Are you able to say not only in the matter of compensation but in the matter of rent also—has that ever been left to them?—I do not think they have ever touched the question of rent in Lincolnshire.

49,522. Not for the sitting tenant?—I do not think they have ever touched the question of rent at all.

49,523. Is it the opinion of the people you met that a body of these men might be valuable to refer to where the landlord and the tenant were differing in regard to the rise or fall of rent, so that they might decide which was right and which was wrong?—The farmers of Lincolnshire were very emphatic as to their desire to fix their own rents with their landlords.

49,524. I am saying if there happened to be a difference of opinion of 100*l.* or 50*l.* a year would they not be a reasonable body to bring the landlord and tenant together?—I should not like to answer that question. All I can say is that in Lincolnshire they settle questions about rent satisfactorily themselves.

Changes in tenancy.

49,525. And there are very few changes in tenancy there, I understand?—There have been a good many since 1879, but on many of the large estates the same families have been there for several hundreds of years.

49,526. The old Lincolnshire principle, which has been carried out by our worthy Commissioner's uncle and himself, is that the landlords generally paid attention to and kept the sitting tenants?—Yes. I hardly heard any suggestion made in Lincolnshire that the sitting tenants did not get the same consideration as new tenants.

49,527. You know from going over these counties that it is much cheaper for a landlord generally, and perhaps for the tenant, that the tenant should be engaged for a long time in developing the agriculture of the country without being changed?—Yes, it is cheaper to keep a good tenant than to have a new one.

Unexhausted improvements.

49,528. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Paragraph 42 which you have quoted sounds a little contradictory in a way. You state that at the meeting in Grimsby they said, "We "take out what we put into the land," and at Brigg, "we farm high right up to the end of our tenancy"?—Yes, they said so.

49,529. What do they mean by taking out what they put in?—What they meant was that any capital which they had put in and which they had not exhausted they took out under the custom.

49,530. That they were allowed for it at the end of the lease in the shape of compensation?—Yes.

49,531. It reads rather queerly?—I put down their own words.

49,532. However, that is the explanation. In regard to these valuers, what is the system whereby men become members of the association, are they selected or chosen in any way?—No. I think if a man wished to be a valuer he would naturally be a member of the Valuers' Association unless there was anything really against him. They meet together for the purpose of having a uniform system throughout the county, and when any matter crops up, like this question of compensation for corn, for instance, they discuss it as they have done lately. One object of the association is to secure uniformity.

49,533. Have the present members of the association the selecting of new members of the association?—They are elected by a majority of the committee.

49,534. Unless a man belongs to this Valuers' Association is he considered to be a proper arbiter on agricultural questions?—I did not hear that. All the valuers, whether in a large way of business or a small way of business, seemed to belong to the society.*

49,535. I put these questions in face of the fact which Mr. Clay has referred to; namely, that it is supposed that it might be a good thing to carry this scheme out in other places: it is therefore very important to know how these men are chosen who do give satisfaction?—I do not know that, I am afraid.

49,536. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think these men are drawn mostly from the practical agricultural element?—Yes, nearly all of them are. A great many of them, I think, have their fathers engaged in agriculture, some of them are farming themselves and there are one or two agents.

49,537. Has the landlord and agent confidence in these men for dispensing fair justice between all parties?—Yes, quite.

49,538. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) About how many of these men are supposed to be required to carry out this custom?—For what area?

49,539. I mean all over the county, how many does the association consist of?—66 members.*

Reduced rents and value of land.

49,540. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What should you say has been the extreme fall of rents?—I think I have quoted about 80 per cent.

49,541. The capital value of land has fallen as much or even more than the rents in Lincolnshire, has it not?—It has fallen more because nobody will buy, though there are still people willing to become tenants in some parts.

49,542. A great deal of land, I think I heard you say, in your opinion, was still splendidly farmed?—Yes, some.

49,543. Is it being farmed at a profit under those circumstances?—No; I give the accounts of some of the best farms which show a loss.

49,544. Where it is being so highly farmed, still it is being farmed at an actual loss?—Yes.

High farming on the Wolds.

49,545. I suppose they only keep it in this high condition in the hope that times possibly may change, and the prices rise?—Yes, that is the case. They say: "It "is no use farming the Wolds badly; you must farm "high up to the end, or throw over the whole thing."

49,546. That is to say, that unless land is highly farmed in that part of Lincolnshire, and a great deal of capital spent upon it, it does not pay to farm it at all?—That is what is stated about the Wolds, the cliff, and the heath.

Prospects in North Lincolnshire.

49,547. What do you gather from that—that if the present prices continue, they will continue to farm at a loss?—They will continue to farm at a loss, and the end must come; in fact they have let the inferior land at the base of the Wolds and the cliff go.

49,548. I suppose it really has come to this: that the outgoings of this class of land are so large where it is farmed very highly, and the rent forms such a very insignificant item in the outgoings, that there is practically little to be gained further by any reductions of rent?—The reductions of rent cannot possibly save

* The Association consists of persons "whose chief occupation is that "of land agents or tenant right valuers, or both, who have been in "practice for 3 years at the least, or who have been pupils of members "3 years, or who have been taken into partnership by a member. "There are only a very few tenant right valuers in the county who do "not belong to the Association, and most of the valuing is undertaken "by members of the Association."

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them. I have shown that in several of these accounts their losses are much greater than their rent.

49,549. Do you look forward to the day when, unless there is a change in prices, a great number of these magnificent farms will cease to be cultivated?—I should think there is little doubt about that in North Lincolnshire, where they cannot turn their attention to growing something else like they can in the south.

49,550. You think that that magnificently-farmed district, which extends over an enormous area, is, unless we have a change in prices, practically doomed in the near future?—That is what was said all throughout the county. But I do not mean to say that the whole of North Lincolnshire is magnificently farmed; there is every apparent evidence of depression in driving through a great many parts of North Lincolnshire.

Small freeholders.

49,551. Did you see anything of the small freeholders on the east coast?—Yes; I did. I spent many days among them.

49,552. There have been a vast number of freeholders there for many years, I believe?—Yes.

49,553. They differ, I understand, rather from the freeholders in the Isle of Axholme in this respect, that in the east of Lincolnshire they each have their little holdings with their homes upon them all together?—I never visited the Isle of Axholme.

49,554. In the Isle of Axholme—perhaps you may have seen the report?—Yes; I read the report.

49,555. The holding is very often held there in strips of land; but in the east of Lincolnshire you very often find the small holdings separate—each little farm by itself?—Yes; quite distinct.

49,556. What was the general condition of these small freeholders?—I should say the majority of them are working like slaves to earn interest for money-lenders.

49,557. Is that their general condition?—I should say so.

49,558. Did you come across any of these men who have obtained their small holdings since the depression began and who got their farms or their land at comparatively cheaper prices?—I found some men who have bought their land since 1879, but not in very recent years.

49,559 Did you come across any instances in that part of Lincolnshire among the freeholders where you could say they were doing well and satisfactorily?—Where I found them doing best was at a place called Friskney and Wainfleet. There, no doubt, they were holding their own with enormous hard work and by living very hard.

49,560. In both of those two parishes it is exceptionally good land, I believe?—Yes; early potato land in certain quantities and wonderfully good land—beautiful land.

49,561. Some of the best land in the whole county?—Yes; splendid land; in fact the only really successful small holder I found told me that if he sold his land there he would want 120*l.* an acre for it.

49,562. That he could get it now?—He said he would not sell it unless he got that.

49,563. That kind of land is devoted practically to market gardening, I think?—Yes; practically, not entirely. But they all grow some market-garden produce or flowers or bulbs.

Character of Lincolnshire farmers.

49,564. I think you spoke very highly of your opinion of the intelligence and the ability of the tenant farmers, as a rule?—Yes; they are a very fine lot in Lincolnshire.

49,565. Men who understand their business and are intelligent?—Very; the large farmers are highly educated men in many cases.

49,566. It is not from any backwardness or want of knowledge or intelligence or desire to go with the times, then, that makes them in this unfortunate condition?—No, I asked that question, and the evidence was rather that the farmers had put forth fresh energies to meet the times.

49,567. They are ready to try anything or to do anything, or to adopt any system of cultivation if there is a reasonable prospect of its paying?—Yes, and they have tried new systems in South Lincolnshire.

Insecurity of tenure.

49,568. You tell us they say "there is no such thing as insecurity of tenure"?—There was no evidence of it brought before me except one case, and that was an exceptional one.

49,569. I think you make that statement on page 17 of your report, do you not?—Yes. Generally speaking they are a class of men that a landlord would never dream of getting rid of in his own interest.

49,570. All the grievances are summed up in low prices and high taxation?—Yes; those were the two points that were brought forward everywhere.

Claims and counter-claims under the custom.

49,571. You told us with regard to the custom that when valuations take place under the custom at the close of the tenancy the counter-claim as a rule is less than the counter-claim, under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, that is the opinion of the valuers of the landowners, and I may say of the farmers too.

49,572. What is the reason of that?—Is it because the landlords do not make the counter-claim, or is it that there is no counter-claim that can fairly be made, or is it from the absence of dilapidations as a rule, or is it because the landlords do not claim for dilapidations?—It is because they do not claim formally for dilapidations, to a considerable extent; then, as I have already said, the landowners have put up splendid buildings, which are very substantial; and having also done the repairs there are no dilapidations of buildings to claim for. But with reference to the dilapidations to the land, the deterioration of the land and the fences and the ditches, there is no doubt that in many parts it has been seriously deteriorated.

49,573. That is within comparatively recent years, is it not?—Yes.

49,574. In those cases have claims for dilapidations been made or are they smaller than in other counties?—They are smaller than in other counties because the landlords do not press for them, and because, as I say, there is a certain feeling among valuers that they should not go back very far for dilapidations.

49,575. As a matter of fact until these terribly bad times begun there was every inducement, I understand you to say, under the custom to the tenants to farm as high as possible up to the last moment?—Yes, and those who can afford it are doing it still.

49,576. Those who have got any money left?—Yes.

49,577. Where that was the case of course there was no claim for dilapidations?—No, of course not.

49,578. Then one great effect of the custom has been to induce people to farm high up to the last moment?—Yes.

49,579. And to leave their farms in excellent condition?—Yes.

49,580. Will you turn to paragraph 49; you deal there with some conversations you had, I think, with regard to the position of the sitting tenant?—Yes.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

49,581. The general view was that it is quite impossible to compensate a sitting tenant, is that not so?—You mean when he quits?

49,582. No; to compensate him when he remains?—Yes, that was regarded as an impossibility, because it was said how can you compensate him for something which he was going to sit down and obtain the full benefit of at once?

49,583. I think I have here the words of a farmer to you: "How can I get compensation for unexhausted "improvements which I myself am going to ex- "haust"?—Yes; that was the phrase; I remember that was used.

49,584. What they meant, I suppose, was this, that if the plan was adopted of giving compensation to a sitting tenant, which is now sometimes proposed, it seems to me, by people who do not very well understand the subject, the landlord in self-defence will have to farm the land himself?—Yes; the landlord would practically be financing his tenant.

49,585. Exactly; he would be finding all the money for the conduct of the farm?—Yes, without having the control or management.

Arbitration as to rent.

49,586. You were asked a question just now as to whether, supposing in the taking of a farm there came to be a difference of 50*l.* in the rent between the landlord and tenant, the tenant would not think it desirable to have someone to step in and to say how the difference should be composed; is it not the case generally in Lincolnshire at the present time that the tenants practically make the bargain for the rent themselves

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and that they give their own rent?—No doubt that is the evidence in the majority of cases, and I have quoted that. Of course on some of the small farms capable of growing market produce there is some competition, and in some cases considerable competition; but then in cases of that sort that class of man is almost a tradesman, and sometimes is actually a tradesman.

49,587. You found, I think, a very decided and distinct opinion on the part of the farmers almost unanimously against any interference whatever of that kind?—Yes, and I think, on the whole, that the small farmers were, I should say, stronger almost, if they could be, than the large farmers on that point. It must not be forgotten, I think, that the land in South Lincolnshire is owned by small people in very many districts, and that they are on a social equality with the tenants; the tenants have sprung from them or are their relations.

Notice to quit.

49,588. With regard to the term of the notice to quit, which did you find, as a rule, that they preferred, the longer or the shorter term?—In many cases they preferred the shorter one.

49,589. Their preference for the shorter term was the most general, was it?—I think it was. I think that now the majority of men in the north certainly prefer six months' notice, but then you must take into consideration their excellent custom.

49,590. At all events it is the fact that under that custom, and with a six months' notice to quit, you have adduced numerous instances where the same farms have been held by the same families for generations?—Yes, for generations, and without anything in writing.

49,591. And all the whole time under a six months' notice to quit?—Yes.

49,592. You found that the county possessed great advantages from an agricultural point of view?—Yes, very great advantages.

The position of Agriculture in Lincolnshire.

49,593. I am now rather trying to sum up what you have told us; the land is fair, I think?—Yes, and very good in many parts.

49,594. The farming you have described as admirable, and the farmers as most intelligent?—Yes.

49,595. I do not think you have given us your opinion as to the quality of the labour?—The quality of the labour is as good as you can find anywhere in England I should think, except, perhaps, in Northumberland.

49,596. Is there a fairly good feeling between the labourers and the farmers?—Yes, I think there is; much better than in other eastern counties.

49,597. You spoke of the landlords, I think, as being, generally speaking, liberal?—Yes.

49,598. And the farmers themselves say that they have nothing whatever to complain of as regards security of tenure?—That is so. The landlords in Lincolnshire take an immense interest in their estates. They are nearly all resident landowners, and they take a very prominent part in all agricultural matters.

49,599. You formed, I think, the highest opinion generally of the way in which agriculture was conducted in that county?—Yes; it could not be conducted better I should think.

49,600. Yet with all this, I understand you to tell the Commission that in your opinion, as the result of your very careful inquiries, matters are getting into a very deplorable condition?—Yes, very; there is no doubt about that. A very large number of notices were given this Michaelmas after I left. As I point out in the report the landowners have tried farming their own land; they tried that five or six years ago, but they have given that up as a bad business, and they let their land at any price that they can get tenants at; and now the landlords say they are not going to make the experiment again.

Wages.

49,601. The wages of labour have also, I think, latterly begun to fall?—Yes; they fell lower this winter than they had been for a great many years, but they have risen again, although they are not quite so high as they were this time last year.

49,602. Since the busy time began they have risen?—Yes.

Low prices.

49,603. All these misfortunes and troubles from an agricultural point of view I understand you to attribute mainly, if not entirely, to the fall in the prices of agricultural produce?—Yes; if they had good prices they have got everything to make agriculture successful.

49,604. Is there anything in your opinion which can save this great agricultural county from the future which you appear to foresee for it except some change in the question of prices?—No, nothing, certainly in the north; some of them may hang on in the south. On the small farms which are so frequently tenanted by men who have been foremen, and who are renting them at times rents, the tenants can hardly exist at all, and they have to get their wives and their daughters to work like slaves on land which is very good and capable of growing market garden produce. I think that speaks for itself.

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Rates.

49,605. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I see from the recent return as to the rateable value of the properties in the different unions, there is one union in Lincolnshire—that is Holbeach—in which the rateable value of the lands does not seem to have fallen materially; have you got any information as to the reason of that?—The rateable value has increased by 641*l.*, has it not?

49,606. The rateable value of lands has only fallen from 124,889*l.* to 124,518*l.*, so it has practically remained stationary; whereas there has been a great fall in the rateable value of the lands in every other union in Lincolnshire. Is there anything exceptional in that union which has kept the land up in value?—No, not that I know of—I should not think there was; I do not think there is any large town there.

49,607. The lands in the union still have a rateable value of about 30*s.* an acre?—Up to what year are you alluding?

49,608. I am alluding to the year 1894?—I am afraid I have not got the figures for that year.

49,609. It seems to be a total exception from all the other unions in the county?—Yes; but I do not think there are any large towns in the Holbeach Union.

49,610. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is that a potato district?—It is not the best potato district, but they do grow a great deal of market garden produce there.

49,611. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The fall in the rateable value in the Stamford Union is smaller than in most of the others; is there anything that keeps it up there?—Stamford is an increasing town.

49,612. The land is accommodation land, then, I suppose?—Yes.

49,613. Did you have any complaint of the land tax in Lincolnshire?—Not much.

49,614. Nor of the tithe?—No; that was not mentioned; the landowners have paid it generally long before the Tithe Act was passed.

The Lincolnshire custom.

49,615. (*Lord Rendel.*) Do I understand you to say that the Lincolnshire custom is thoroughly successful in its working?—Yes, I heard no criticism of it really at all, except the few suggestions about consuming corn.

49,616. Would you go so far as to say that the custom was so satisfactory as to prevent anything like a general desire to obtain legislative assistance in establishing the relations of landlord and tenant on a new basis?—I think that there would be a very serious objection raised in the county to such legislation.

49,617. In fact it is the other way, and the custom is so good that the tenants as well as the landlords, look to it as having a very important bearing on their mutual prosperity?—Yes, many of the large farmers attribute much of the success of agriculture in Lincolnshire to the custom.

49,618. Then that being the case, and all the other conditions being rather more favourable in Lincolnshire than the average of this great agricultural country, the custom has not saved the county at all from the prevalent depression?—No, but Lincolnshire is in this position that if prices went up now they have got their land in a much better state than they have in Norfolk or Suffolk—at least I ought not to speak of Norfolk for I do not know it officially; but certainly it is better than in Suffolk and in Cambridgeshire, and so they would have that start; they would not take perhaps five or six years to get their land into condition because they have got it into fair condition.

49,619. Is that state of things due to the working of the custom?—Many of the farmers say that the custom has had a great influence upon producing that state of things.

49,620. You would regard, I gather, a good local custom, where it gives satisfaction and stands the test of

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time, as better than any legislative intervention?—That is the opinion of all the Lincolnshire people. They say they could not better their custom except perhaps in a few details which they are quite capable of working out for themselves.

49,621. Nevertheless you found the custom has not of itself had any influence in saving Lincolnshire from the depression common to other counties?—No, the fall in prices is said to be the great cause of it, and of course the custom has been powerless to arrest that.

49,622. Then to that extent all the evidence you have gained would lead to the conclusion that a material change in the relations of tenant and landlord, whether brought about by legislation or otherwise, would not materially affect the present depression?—No, not there.

49,623. You confine it to Lincolnshire?—I was only speaking about Lincolnshire.

49,624. But still you wish your answer to be limited locally to the case of Lincolnshire?—I should not be prepared to make a statement generally about the rest of the country.

Price of milk.

49,625. I observe that evidence was given you by a Mr. Powell of the Blankney Estate, with reference to the price that he was able to obtain for milk, and the price at which milk was then selling for in London the difference being a difference between 5½*d.* and 20*d.*?—Yes.

Railway rates.

49,626. Did that fact strike you as having any considerable importance?—The question of railway rates beats the Lincolnshire man, I think, with regard to the milk, at least that is what is said. I have not got the rates for milk here, but of course the county is a long way off for sending milk to London, and they cannot very well send milk up twice a day from there. There are very few men there who do sell milk in London, in fact I do not know of anybody.

49,627. I suppose in regard to the fish a great deal has been accomplished in the way of the rapid distribution of a very perishable commodity?—Yes, I suppose so, but I do not know anything about that particular trade.

49,628. You give some considerable importance to the evidence that you have obtained showing a very great variation of price between that obtained by the producer and that given by the consumer?—Quite so. Mr. Powell was advocating co-operation in both production and sale.

49,629. That would apply to many other articles besides milk, I presume?—Yes. That was one of his remedies.

Bad seasons.

49,630. (*Chairman.*) I believe this part of the country suffered very much between the years 1874 and 1882 from a series of wet seasons?—Yes, from 1875 to 1882.

49,631. And especially in 1879?—Yes.

49,632. A great deal of the land was very seriously deteriorated in consequence?—Yes.

49,633. It somewhat recovered between 1883 and 1890, did it not?—Yes. I have heard men say that they think the land has practically recovered from the effects of those bad seasons.

49,634. Of course the farmers through that period lost considerably owing to the wet seasons?—Yes, there is no doubt about it.

49,635. And their general position became very much worse?—Yes.

49,636. During the last three years I suppose they have suffered seriously from bad seasons?—The drought in Lincolnshire in 1893 affected them enormously.

49,637. Was not 1892 a bad year in consequence of the wet season?—Yes, 1892 was not a good year, but 1893 was the year which affected them chiefly.

49,638. In 1893 there was the main loss, but still there was a serious loss owing to the bad weather in 1892?—Yes, there was the wet weather then.

49,639. Then came the severe drought of 1893 which they suffered very much from?—Yes.

49,640. In 1894 did they suffer as some other parts of the country did from the bad harvest?—They had, on the whole, a very good harvest, but they suffered from the price they obtained for it.

49,641. I think that certainly, in some parts of the country, the crops were seriously damaged?—Yes, but I do not think on the whole that they suffered so much in Lincolnshire as they did in Cambridgeshire.

49,642. Did they suffer to some extent?—They suffered to some extent, and there is no doubt that, as a rule, the best samples of their barley were spoilt.

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Prices of barley.

49,643. Was part of the low prices which they obtained for their produce due to the inferior quality due to the bad harvests?—About a fourth of their barley was unsaleable; they did not sell it, but they fed with it.

49,644. The remainder was not fit for sale?—No; they fed their cattle on it.

49,645. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) On how much of it—about a fourth?—Yes.

49,646. (*Chairman.*) What was the remaining three quarters?—The rest was a fair sample.

49,647. Fit for malting?—Yes, some of it. The best barley, which came from the north, fetched a fair price.

49,648. Taking the average, was it up to the mark, or was the low price of the product somewhat due to the bad harvest?—No doubt, to a certain extent, it was due to the bad harvest.

49,649. Then in fact that part of the country, besides the low prices, has suffered also from three successive bad years, namely, 1892, 1893, and 1894?—Yes, but I should not say that 1894 was such a very bad season. The price of the bad samples went down to an absurdly low sum; there was damaged wheat being sold at 10*s.* and 12*s.* a quarter.

49,650. Was not the price to some extent due to the damaged quality of the wheat and barley?—Those very low prices were, but the good samples of wheat were selling at under 1*l.* all the autumn in Horncastle market.

Changes in the system of cultivation.

49,651. Has there been any change in the system of cultivation in that part of the country—has the rotation been extended from four years to a longer period?—Generally speaking, in North Lincolnshire there has not been much change. They say they can only farm on one system there. But in the south, where there is a splendid soil suitable for growing almost anything, they are growing almost anything, whatever they think may pay them, seeds or roots.

49,652. In the north there has been no change, you say?—Very little; they say they cannot change.

49,653. Has there been no attempt to grow temporary grasses and to extend the period of the rotation?—To some extent; but on the wolds, the heath, and the cliff they say they can only farm on the four-course system, as a rule.

49,654. They seem, according to your experience, to think that it is impossible that any modification can be made which would reduce the cost of cultivation and make them depend less upon corn crops?—I do not think on the wolds they could do much but grow turnips for sheep and barley.

Rent of large and small farms compared.

49,655. Will you turn to page 19 of your report; there you will find that the rent of the small farms up to 100 acres is considerably higher than that of farms above that amount?—It very much depends upon the situation.

49,656. You give the average apparently of farms up to 100 acres, and they range from 29*s.* to 21*s.*; 16*s.* 3*d.* is the lowest, but that seems an exceptional case; then coming to the larger farms, but omitting the very lowest, they average from 16*s.* to 23*s.*, and on larger farms still—above 400 acres—the average runs from 17*s.* to 19*s.*?—Yes.

49,657. Showing that the smaller farms fetch a much higher rent on the average?—I asked that question a good many times. At Grantham the farmers said they did not think that they did fetch more, considering the price of the buildings; I got the price of buildings per acre on farms in that district, and I found that a 100 acre farm worked out to 7*l.* per acre for buildings, and that a 1,000 acre farm worked out to 4*l.* 10*s.* per acre.

49,658. What do the farms under 100 acres work out to?—Lord Ancaster's evidence—and he has built a number of farm buildings—is, that on small farms of from 5 to 10 acres, they cost 30*l.* per acre.

49,659. On page 19 of your report, you say that for 100 acres the average is from 6*l.* 10*s.* to 7*l.* an acre?—Yes.

49,660. And for 300 acres the average is about 7*l.* 6*s.* 8*d.*?—Yes.

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49,661. Therefore, apparently from what you have said there, the cost of buildings in the smaller farms is not quite so great?—No, it is just about that, up to 300 acres.

49,662. (*Viscount Cobham.*) There must be something exceptional about that, must there not?—I cannot say that; these figures were worked out with a good deal of trouble because they entailed going into a great many estate accounts, and that was the result. I cannot say how they are made up.

49,663. (*Chairman.*) From that it would appear that in that part of the country there was not very much difference between small farms and the medium-sized farms; it is only when you get up to the very large farms that you get a reduction?—Yes.

Demand for small farms.

49,664. Is there a demand for the small farms?—Yes, they are let.

49,665. When they are vacant is there a demand for them?—On good land and near a town there is a considerable demand for them.

49,666. But taking the average of the country, should you say that there is still a demand for the small farms up to 100 acres?—Yes, but it has decreased. The mortgagees of the small men dare not sell them up, because they are afraid they will not get anything like as much rent as they are getting interest.

49,667. I mean, is there a demand at a reduced rent? I understand from your answer that where the mortgagees are unwilling to lower the rent there is a difficulty?—Yes.

49,668. But where the land is not mortgaged and where the owner has any control over it and makes reasonable reductions of rent, is there a demand for these farms; can he let these farms?—Yes, the small farms are nearly all let.

49,669. Then the main difficulty in letting has been in the very large farms, I take it?—There is more difficulty in letting the large farms because there are not so many men with capital in the county to take them.

Difficulty in letting large farms.

49,670. Is that the main reason, the difficulty of finding capital?—Yes; if they had capital a great number of men said they would rather farm on a large scale than on a small one.

49,671. Then the question is rather one of the difficulty of finding men of capital?—Yes.

49,672. Not from a difficulty of making a profit out of those farms?—Of course a man who had the capital would at present prices be afraid to put it into a large farm, he would rather put half of it into a small farm and keep the other half of his capital especially with falling prices, in fact I state that as one of the reasons for the greater demand for smaller farms.

Milk selling.

49,673. Has there been much extension of dairying in the county?—No, and I think as regards milk selling that the possibilities for development are not great. There are no large consuming populations in Lincolnshire, and where there has been competition the price has sunk so low that men have given it up. In a few instances where one or two men have got the monopoly of the milk selling no doubt they find it remunerative.

Butter making.

49,674. What about the making of butter?—The butter has not been at all of a good quality in Lincolnshire, and in Lincoln itself at a large butter shop they are selling Danish butter—in fact, I think that is the case in all their towns.

49,675. Apparently from what you say, that is very much due to the bad quality of the butter produced by these farms?—Yes, to the want of uniformity in the butter.

Co-operation.

49,676. May not something be done in that direction by co-operation with a view to improving the quality of their butter?—I am not an expert about butter making, but I have read a great deal about the way they make butter abroad, and I have asked a great many questions of merchants and of farmers. I have never heard any serious objection raised to the possibility of the English agriculturists competing with foreign ones.

49,677. Does it not seem to you somewhat strange that Danish butter should be sold in the towns of Lincolnshire in preference to the Lincolnshire butter?—Yes, I have frequently been told that we can produce as good samples as the foreigner but that we cannot produce the bulk.

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49,678. Is that not in a very large degree due to the want of co-operation among the farmers?—They send a uniform bulk over here from abroad because they have got co-operation abroad.

49,679. I gather that in your opinion the inferior quality is due to the want of uniformity?—Yes.

49,680. And that is due to the want of co-operation?—Yes, every farm-house makes a different sample, but the London merchants want a uniform quality for their customers.

49,681. Is there any possibility of some advance in that direction?—Yes, I should certainly say so.

49,682. When you spoke of the small owners or occupiers, were you speaking of men who lived entirely by their land?—Yes.

Subsidiary employment for small holders.

49,683. Are there many cases of men holding land or owning land who are employed on other pursuits?—In some parts of South Lincolnshire they have been driven to try and get other work because their land is not paying. At Market Deeping, where the land is excellent and where everything looks in favour of a small system of farming, I found that the majority of men had turned to something—carrying coal or keeping a horse and doing carting work of all sorts or working as labourers occasionally.

49,684. Is there room for much extension in that direction—I am not now speaking of holdings on which men may live entirely, but where they use their holdings as adjuncts to other business?—No, I do not think so, because there are not a great many large towns in Lincolnshire, and it is not a trading county. There is very little employment for them to get except from the big farmers at busy times. It is not customary in Lincolnshire, as a rule, for men to do other work.

49,685. Still there are towns in Lincolnshire, places like Grimsby and Lincoln itself?—Yes, but as a rule they have not taken to that sort of holding. That class of men began as labourers, and up to a few years ago, relatively speaking, they were fairly well paid, and saved money, especially those who boarded in the farmhouse; and they did not begin farming until they had got enough to get on a farm and be entirely independent of other labour.

Allotments.

49,686. And the labourers, as a rule, are mere labourers that have no land and no holdings?—Some of them have allotments.

49,687. Of course they have allotments, but I mean nothing like small holdings in the sense of anything above allotments?—No. In some cases near Sleaford a gentleman has let out some large allotments of three or four or five acres, and they have been very successful I think.

Assessment to rates.

49,688. Have the assessments of land generally been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rents?—No, I think in Lincolnshire, as a rule, they do not take rent as a basis of assessment.

49,689. You think, as a rule, that is the case?—Yes, I think I may say that is the rule.

49,690. Do you say they have had no abatements in their assessments?—They have, but they do not take rent as the actual basis of assessment; I mean if the land is reduced to 5*s.* an acre, which it would be in extreme cases, they would not take that as the rent.

49,691. I am not now talking of the laying down of an absolute rule; but would you say that on the average the abatements have been in proportion to the reductions?—No, I should not think they have. I asked a good many men who were members of assessment committees.

49,692. Did they give you any reason for not doing so?—They said that they thought it was unfair on the others in the same district who had not got reductions of rent.

49,693. Are there any districts where there have been no reductions of rent?—No, in all there have been reductions of rent.

49,694. What would you say has been the average reduction of the assessments?—I should not like to answer that question offhand, but I can give you the average reduction in rent. I have set out on page 141 the figures in certain years as a comparison; I have made a comparison between 1881-82, and the latest year I was able to get the figures for, namely, 1892-93.

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49,695. That table includes everything, does it not?—Yes.

49,696. Property as well?—Yes, that would include everything.

49,697. But the important thing is to separate the land from the houses?—Yes, but I had not got the material, I am afraid, to do that.

49,698. Then you have not seen the return which has been laid before Parliament on that point?—I think that it is lately that that return has been made, and after I had written this report.

49,699. It shows very enormous reductions in the assessments of lands. Taking the Union of Gainsborough, I see the assessment of land has dropped from 137,800*l.* to 85,292*l.*; in the Union of Grantham it has dropped from 135,331*l.* to 91,921*l.*; in Horncastle, from 131,081*l.* to 96,232*l.*; and in Lincoln, from 186,930*l.* to 131,298*l.*; showing very large reductions?—I was only able to give it altogether. The only materials I had were the local taxation returns.

49,700. On page 82, in paragraph 135, you say, "I "heard but few complaints as to the mode of assess- "ment?—Yes; there were not many complaints.

49,701. "The assessment committees do not take "rent as the actual basis, but, I understand, are "chiefly guided by it. They endeavour, as far as "possible, to determine the fair annual value, which "they consider is not always represented by the rent "paid. Several witnesses expressed strong opinions "that the rent paid should be conclusive evidence of "value." I gather from that, that although the assessment committees are not absolutely bound by the rent, yet they are chiefly guided by it?—Yes.

49,702. And that they reduce the assessment in proportion to the reduction of rent?—Yes; but I do not think that a Lincolnshire assessment committee would look at any rent under 10*s.* an acre.

49,703. But that is a very low rent?—Yes. I do not think they would look at that.

49,704. But still, in the main they have been guided by the rent?—Yes; I think they have in Lincolnshire.

Wages.

49,705. One word as to the labourers. You say that the wages of the labourers fell during the past winter?—Yes.

49,706. But rose again in the spring?—They rose again in the spring, but not so high as they were.

49,707. What should you say was the difference, as compared with two or three years ago?—When I was there wages were generally in the summer 15*s.*, and in the winter 13*s.* 6*d.* This winter they fell to 12*s.* in the majority of cases, and they have lately been rising to 13*s.* 6*d.* as a summer wage.

49,708. How does that compare with 15 years ago?—The wages in Lincolnshire have remained very much the same for a number of years, except during the seventies. On page 139 I put out the wages paid on a farm since 1837. Without considering the seventies, and beginning at 1878, those figures show that there has been very little change. But I might say that in 1887, 1888, and 1889, when the wages there were 12*s.* a week on that farm, I think it was exceptional. Why they fell on that farm I cannot say; but I know that generally the wage of 12*s.* is lower than has been paid since the sixties. It is true that on that farm they did fall to 12*s.* in those three years; but I had a great many other figures, although not so complete as these figures for that farm. It is generally stated that 12*s.* is a lower wage than has been paid since the sixties.

49,709. They appear to have been lowest between 1887 and 1889?—Yes; on that farm.

49,710. And they rose again to 13*s.* 6*d.* in 1890?—Yes.

49,711. But you think that fall was exceptional?—I think it was.

49,712. Would you say that they had been fairly maintained until the last year?—Yes.

49,713. When they fell 1*s.* 6*d.*?—Yes.

Employment of labourers.

49,714. Then I presume that the labourers have gained enormously by the very low price of wheat?—No doubt they have gained; but then there were a good many men out of work during the last two or three years in the winter.

49,715. But not in the summer, I suppose?—In the spring succeeding that very dry summer there were a number of men out of work and a considerable number of men did not get hired; but then, of course, that very dry summer produced no hay, so there was no feeding; and it produced no roots, so there was very little work. That was an exceptional year. There is no doubt about it, that labour has been knocked off in parts and that there are a good many men out of work.

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49,716. I think, generally speaking, that during the last winter there was a less want of employment than you expected?—Yes.

49,717. Mainly due to the fact that the crop of turnips was very good?—Yes.

49,718. And that there was a good deal of field for employment?—Yes, if it had not been for that heavy fall of snow this winter there would not have been, certainly, as many men out this winter as there were the winter before.

49,719. The previous winter was rather exceptional, due to the drought in the previous summer?—Yes, it was influenced a great deal by the drought.

Report on Suffolk. Condition of agriculture.

49,720. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think you give even a considerably worse account of Suffolk than you do of Lincolnshire?—Yes, Suffolk stands on a different footing to Lincolnshire.

49,721. There has been a much more considerable loss of capital there apparently?—Yes; taking the whole county the land is of very different quality, and it is difficult to grow anything else but cereals on a considerable proportion of it.

49,722. The result has been that a great many of the landowners are absolutely now without means?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

49,723. And their properties are bringing in no return at all?—No, and a great many properties have been sold and the men have gone.

49,724. A considerable amount of land has gone out of cultivation?—Some has.

Derelict land.

49,725. Could you give an estimate of the amount of land that is derelict in Suffolk?—I have given that on page 51 of my report. When I was in the county up to June 1894 there were eight farms abandoned, comprising 1,388 acres; and after Michaelmas 1894 there were 30 other farms abandoned, comprising 3,353 acres; that made 38 farms. I mention also in the paragraph alluding to these derelict farms, two farms of 565½ acres and 532½ acres respectively, which at that time were supposed not to be abandoned, at least the landowner did not want it said that they were abandoned, and does not want it said now; but the agent, who is a very well-known man in Suffolk, has written to me—I have got his letter—to say that they are abandoned, and that all the labour has been knocked off and nothing has been done to them since Michaelmas. So that would make above a thousand acres more.

49,726. These figures would hardly be complete, I presume; you could not make an exhaustive inquiry into this point?—I think I took all the steps that could be taken. I made the most complete inquiry that could be made, I think.

49,727. Then you think the figures are not far short of the reality?—I expect, from what I am told by several leading agents, that there are a few other farms which the landlords will not declare abandoned because they still hope to let them, but which have had nothing practically done to them since Michaelmas.

49,728. Would your figures include cases of farms that have been practically abandoned but a few cattle are allowed to run over them?—No. The definition I gave when I asked for these figures was farms which were "absolutely uncultivated either by landlord or by "tenant." I may say with reference to those eight farms that were abandoned before Michaelmas 1894, that it has been the custom on some of them to let by auction the rough feed, that is, whatever the land grows in the summer. An auction is held on the farm, and butchers and graziers will come and bid.

49,729. That land would still have to pay rates and tithe rentcharge then, would it not?—I gave instances where they have found it has not been really worth while to do it. I gave one instance in particular of a farm that has been abandoned where they lost a pound by letting it. They let the feed for 20*l.* I think, and the charges came to 21*l.*

Condition of buildings, &c.

49,730. And it results from this, I suppose, that a considerable number of landowners are totally unable to keep the estates up in any condition?—Yes, in some

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cases. Of course there are some very bad districts, much worse than others.

49,731. Did you find that the buildings were going back and compared very unfavourably with the buildings in Lincolnshire, for instance?—They never were as good as the Lincolnshire buildings, and the class of buildings is not the same. There is no doubt about it that generally speaking the buildings are going back. Of course there are a few rich landowners and some men who have bought property recently who have got capital apart from the land.

49,732. But there are very few properties in Suffolk where the rents are sufficiently high to enable the landowner to keep up buildings?—I should think in no case can a man do it who is dependent on land for his livelihood.

Average rents.

49,733. Would the rent average 10*s.* an acre in Suffolk?—I have given particular instances of the rents on the landowners' estates, because I always felt a difficulty in binding myself down to saying what was the average rent in the county. I have quoted the rents on a great many of the large estates in my report. I think in the Blything Union the average rent is about 12*s.* an acre.

49,734. Out of which the tithe rentcharge has to come?—Yes. On page 21 I give some of the rents per acre.

49,735. They run from something under 10*s.* to perhaps 12*s.* or 13*s.* an acre?—Yes.

49,736. Those would be on large properties representing a large extent of land?—Yes. In the appendix there is a table showing the assessment of occupations of 20 acres and upwards in the Blything Union; three parishes, comprising 8,700 acres are assessed under 10*s.* per acre; and 19 parishes, comprising 85,543 acres, are assessed between 10*s.* and 15*s.* per acre, and the rents per acre in the whole union (92,316 acres), average 14*s.* 8*d.*

49,737. Nevertheless on these large properties you still find the buildings are fairly well maintained?—Yes, on properties where landowners have made money elsewhere.

49,738. Amongst the tenant farmers there seems to be almost a feeling of panic and despair?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

49,739. It seems to be rather a special characteristic in Suffolk that even on the estates of very wealthy men and where land is fairly good there are no applicants for farms?—Yes, in many cases.

49,740. Notwithstanding the most liberal treatment? Yes. But there are one or two better districts in Suffolk where there are still applications for farms.

49,741. (*Chairman.*) Where are those?—In the Samford Union, which is near Ipswich; I think the land is all let there, but it is an exceptional district. It is close to the River Orwell, and they can bring up manure by barges from London, and they can send their produce back by barges to London. Then of course, the land being near the river, they have moisture, which is so wanted in the eastern counties.

49,742. *Viscount Cobham.*) And the water competition would also affect the railway rates there?—Yes.

49,743. But probably the proximity of a large town like Ipswich is the main factor?—That is no doubt another reason. Then you might also take just the immediate district of Felixstowe, Lowestoft, and one or two such places, but they are quite the exceptions.

Average rents.

49,744. I think you say that rents range from, practically, nil to about 20*s.* an acre, excluding accommodation land?—Twenty shillings an acre was put as the very top price.

49,745. Did you come across any large farms that are let for a pound an acre?—No, it would be exceptional land, and a small farm, that was let for that.

49,746. Special cases, in fact?—Yes. I found men farming, with no rent, and other men farming at 2*s.* 6*d.* and 5*s.* an acre.

Cottages.

49,747. You found the cottages in a somewhat low condition in Suffolk generally, I see?—The cottages in many of the open villages are very bad indeed.

49,748. Are open villages common in Suffolk?—Yes, there are a good many of them. The cottages on the large estates are wonderfully good. There are extremes in Suffolk: you either get them very good—I do not say too good—but so much money has been spent on them that they cannot possibly be a remunerative investment or anything like it—or else they are very bad. There is a much greater uniformity in Lincolnshire, where I was just before.

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49,749. There is a large number of villages where the cottages belong to speculators, small owners, and shopkeepers, is there not?—Yes.

49,750. Who make a good deal of money out of those cottages, no doubt?—No doubt they do. They buy a row which ought to be destroyed, and they let them for the same rent that a new cottage costing 200*l.* would let at.

49,751. You point out a danger that exists in your mind, namely, that the extension of local control is more likely to lead to deterioration than to improvement as regards this class of property?—I have always held that opinion very strongly. I have been into hundreds of these cottages in the eastern counties, and measured them, and stayed in some of them. I have spent weeks going into cottages and talking to the class of people who owned them. I quote in the report, I think, the case of a railway porter whom I know down there, who told me that he considered cottage property the best investment for a poor man's savings. That is the opinion of that class of person. They sometimes buy a tumbledown cottage for 40*l.* to 50*l.* and they let it for 4*l.* or 5*l.* a year.

49,752. That being the case it is not likely that if the power is in the hands of this class in Suffolk sanitary conditions will be observed or enforced?—No, it is not.

49,753. (*Lord Rendel.*) Is it not always an axiom that the small owner is the worst owner?—He is necessarily compelled in many cases to be a hard landlord. I found a case where there were five cottages in very wretched repair. They were owned by the unfortunate widow of a coachman, who, when she had paid the mortgages on this property had 5*s.* a week to live on, and she was living in the fifth. Her position was a desperate one as an owner; she could not repair them, and of course the sanitary authority do not like to close them because they have sympathy with her—and one can understand that.

Tenure.

49,754. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is there any strong feeling as to the existing conditions of tenure?—No, certainly not; it was the exception to hear of it. I have quoted in the report the whole of the evidence which was given as to any desire for change. The fact is that in Suffolk the position of the farmers is so desperate that they will not listen to any suggestions which one may make to them with reference to such questions. At the meetings I put the points to the farmers which had been raised by this Commission, but it was with the greatest difficulty one could engage their attention upon anything except the question of prices. When I asked them about the Agricultural Holdings Act at the Bury St. Edmund's meeting, at which there were several hundred people present, they laughed at me.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

49,755. One farmer, I see, said "As to fixity of tenure "we are all too much fixed already"?—Yes.

49,756. One man was in favour of a four years' lease?—Yes.

49,757. And another man of a long lease with the option of a break?—Yes. The landlords would be only too glad to make any arrangement if they could get tenants.

49,758. You could find no views in support of an amendment of the Act?—They said they were losing money by wholesale, and that whatever amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act might be necessary was nothing compared with what a rise in price would do for them.

The Suffolk custom.

49,759. The Suffolk custom is, I suppose, almost universal in Suffolk?—Yes, on the whole, I think, that the custom is fairly satisfactory; it is not as satisfactory as the Lincolnshire custom, and there is more grumbling about it. On the whole there was not very much grumbling, still there was more than in Lincolnshire.

49,760. It seems, in fact, as if matters had got beyond the improvement of conditions of tenure or of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, in the greater part of Suffolk. That was the distinction I found between the eastern counties and the northern counties, the northern people are well enough off to discuss these things.

Farm accounts. Successful farming.

49,761. Do you find here and there men who are holding their own?—Yes, I did as far as one can say

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without being able to produce their accounts. I have produced the accounts of one or two men. They were the men who were doing better than anybody else, and for that reason I hardly thought that putting forward these accounts was a fair sample of the farmers' position.

49,762. Were they farming fairly representative farms?—They were farming in the best district. On pages 91 and 92 I give the accounts of a farm in East Suffolk to which I might refer you.

49,763. I see that the average annual profit from 1887 to 1894 was 456*l.* 17*s.* 1*d.* or 7·9 per cent. on the capital employed, nothing being charged for management, no interest being charged on capital and no produce from the farm consumed in the house?—Yes, but the Suffolk farmers would say that was not at all a fair instance, I should think that man was doing as well as anybody, perhaps better.

49,764. With five per cent. on the capital there would still be a clear profit?—Yes.

49,765. What sort of farm was this, would you say it was a good farm?—I went over it, it is one of the best farms in Suffolk, taking situation into account.

49,766. You state that the "soil is very mixed, some "light, poor, and sandy, some very heavy, and some very "good mixed"—a sort of average farm, in fact?—He lives within two or three miles of a large town and he sells milk as you can see. His milk business has very largely increased—in 1891 it was 188*l.*; in 1892, 290*l.*; in 1893, 502*l.*; and in 1894 nearly 500*l.* He goes in pretty heavily for stock.

49,767. In fact, he has increased his output all round except in corn, which has fallen, but not very much?—Yes. He is a man with plenty of capital.

49,768. Is he a Suffolk man?—Yes.

49,769. Has he and his family been on that farm for any length of time?—He has been on that farm since 1884. He farms a good deal of land. On page 93 is the general farming account for the year of all the land that man farms. He is really farming 1,700 acres.

49,770. That account only shows a profit of two per cent. on the capital?—Yes, for that year. He is farming in a very large way.

49,771. Does he do any dealing as well?—No.

49,772. Is there any reason why he has done so much better than his neighbours?—He is a very good judge of stock, and he has not done badly, as you can see, in the milk business—in fact, the milk business really saved him.

49,773. Where does he sell his milk?—In a large town he is only three miles from it, and he can deliver with his own carts. If it was not for the 500*l.* for milk he would not have made a profit at all.

49,774. (*Lord Rendel.*) The milk and the sundries almost equal the amount of his corn?—Yes. The milk in 1893 made his profit. He has doubled his milk in the last two years for the reason that he is a man with capital and a man who will take up anything that he thinks will pay.

49,775. (*Viscount Cobham.*) His special advantage was proximity to a large town?—Yes, no doubt that was it.

49,776. What breed were his cows?—Shorthorns chiefly, but he had gone over to Denmark and got some Danish cows and he was trying some of them. He takes a great interest in all dairying matters and was one of those men who advocated the creation of creameries and factories. He holds the opinion that we may do a great deal more in England with our butter than we have done in the past.

49,777. Had he a good opinion of the Danish breed?—Yes, he had found it economical. The Danish cows gave a great deal of milk and did not cost a great deal to feed.

Scotch farmers.

49,778. Do you think there is room for a considerable extension of arable dairying in Suffolk on the Danish system?—The Scotchmen are trying it. There are a good many Scotchmen there.

49,779. How are they getting on?—I have given the evidence of the Scotch agents because I thought it would be better to get Scotch evidence as to their position and because the Scotch agents brought them down. I think I ought to state that it is generally the opinion of the Scotch agents that they are generally by no means a good type of Scotch farmer; that is what they generally said as a rule. It was generally said that the good type of Scotchman had not come. Then it must be remembered also that they have come from Ayrshire, which is a grass country, and that they do not understand plough land at all or arable land, and so landowners find that they do great harm to the arable land. Still they are just existing and in some cases they exist where the Suffolk men have not been able to.

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Farm accounts.

49,780. Can you point to any other accounts showing something of a profit?—On page 66 I give the figures for two farms, farmed by the same family since 1839–1840. Farms A. and B. show an average annual profit during a long series of years. You will see that in 1839–43, in fact right up to 1875, they were making on farm A. over 700*l.* a year; then for 1890–93 the average profit was 45*l.* and for 1893–1894 the loss was 32*l.* In the next farm B., held by the same family, you see the profit in 1893–1894 was only 7*l.* 12*s.*

49,781. Dealing with the present day there is a dead loss going on?—Yes.

49,782. And has been for a considerable time past?—Yes. For the next farm on that table I give very detailed accounts. A man went into it who came from a farming family. He has put a good deal of money into this farm; it is a good farm and he gives his balance sheet. That is shown in Appendix A. 1 (C), which begins on page 85 and continues over two or three pages. The result of his farming from 1883 to 1893 is a loss of 204*l.* He is giving it up; he is going back into the business which he came from, which was a cake and manure business.

49,783. (*Chairman.*) Now taking the next farm, on page 66, D.?—There was a profit there; that is the one we have discussed which is near Ipswich. D. and E. are the farms we have already alluded to.

49,784. Between the years 1877 and 1894 the occupier of D. seems to have made an average profit of 8·4 per cent.?—Yes.

49,785. And in the case of E., another farmer, farming 590 acres, between 1887 and 1894 made a profit of 3,654*l.*, an average of 7·9 per cent.?—Yes. Those farms are both in the good district which I alluded to first—the Samford Union.

49,786. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You said that at one time early in the century there was a great deal of dairying in Suffolk?—Yes, when Arthur Young visited the county, dairying, I think, was one of the chief sources of their income.

49,787. (*Mr. Everett.*) In the last century, I think, not in this?—Yes.

49,788. (*Lord Rendel.*) You quote a gentleman as saying: "At the beginning of the present century a "large portion of the dairy produce sent to the metro-"polis came from the county of Suffolk. It was then "essentially a dairy county"?—Yes, I think that was quoting Mr. Herman Biddell's evidence. Then I quote what Arthur Young said about it.

49,789. (*Viscount Cobham.*) There is a development of dairying going on now to some extent, is there not?—Yes, the Scotchmen have started selling milk in London, or rather, I do not say they have started it exactly, but they are doing more than anybody else at it.

49,790. Do you think there is much prospect of further development in that?—It is a long way to London, and I have met a good many farmers who tried it and gave it up. They say that the railway rates beat them. But the Scotchmen say the Suffolk men do not understand the business; they do not understand how to feed their cows, and they do not understand how to do it economically. The Scotchmen pursue an entirely different system; they keep their cows indoors. The first thing a Scotchman requires, when he comes down, is a byre to hold about 60 cows, which the landlord has to put up for him.

49,791. Does he keep them indoors all the year round?—He keeps them indoors a great deal and the other men keep them out in the yard. The Scotchmen feed them on hot food and they buy grain from the breweries; they feed on a different system. Then also, they have Ayrshire cows, which they consider much more economical.

Land going to grass.

49,792. Is much land going to grass?—Not to good pasture, but there is a lot of rough grass land.

49,793. Not properly seeded down, but tumbling down?—Yes, but then the fact is that land is reduced to such an appalling condition that they sow it with

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grass seed as the last resource, and no one could expect the grass to do on such land at all.

49,794. And it is not properly treated after it is sown?—Neither before nor after it is sown.

49,795. Is much of the land fairly well adapted for carrying pasture?—No, there is not enough moisture; the east winds all the spring are very much against growing grass.

49,796. Probably like Essex, though in a less degree?—Yes, there is very little good pasture there comparatively speaking.

Creameries and butter factories.

49,797. Do you think that intelligent arable dairy farming might pay if the necessary capital and knowledge were forthcoming?—The secretary of the Akenham Dairy Company went into the dairying question a great deal with me, and he advocated the creation of creameries and of butter factories. He gave me an example, which I quote, of how he took up a sample of their butter from the Akenham Dairy Company to a wholesale man in London who is buying very largely from Denmark. The man said it was a very good sample and he asked him to supply him with 700 lbs. a day. He said it was quite impossible. Then the merchant said he should continue to buy the butter abroad till it was possible, but he said that the sample was just as good as the Danish or the Brittany—I forget which it was.

49,798. You can hardly say there is sufficient capital left in the county for any large development of that description, can you?—No, I do not think it would come from the farmers; I think it would be very difficult to get the farmers to take it up.

49,799. Or the landowners?—The landowners in Suffolk, I do not think, could afford it.

Landlords' improvements.

49,800. (*Mr. Clay.*) You said, I think, that in Lincolnshire, the landlords had been not only resident, but had paid a great deal of attention to the improvement of their properties?—Yes.

49,801. Do you consider that that is a very healthy state of matters?—Yes, certainly.

49,802. If all other landlords, like those in Lincolnshire, had performed the same duties to their properties and their tenantry, matters might have been a little different from what they are?—In Lincolnshire the property has been in the hands of many of the landowners for a great many generations, and they have also been men of considerable capital, taking the average of Lincolnshire landowners; and I should say that has obtained more in Lincolnshire than in Suffolk.

Position of landlords.

49,803. Has Suffolk benefited as much as Lincolnshire from a resident proprietorship?—The proprietors have not been able to be resident in many cases since the last 15 years, because they have been obliged to go away or let their houses.

49,804. Is that from having decreased rents and perhaps mortgages upon their properties?—Yes.

49,805. Then this agricultural depression is a very serious matter for the country?—Yes, it is very serious indeed. The farmers themselves raised that very question. They said the men of capital have gone in many cases, and the village shopkeepers and others are generally suffering from that cause.

Position of labourers.

49,806. Do you look forward to the labourer unfortunately suffering from the same cause as the tenants and landlords have suffered from?—In Suffolk he has suffered from it in the last 18 months or two years.

49,807. Have the tenants in Suffolk been an industrious, hard-working class of men?—Yes, I am sure of that.

Tenant's capital.

49,808. Has their capital got short?—Yes, very short indeed.

49,809. Is that not by paying perhaps too much rent for the land?—In certain cases it might have been, but generally speaking I should say certainly not.

Reduction in rents.

49,810. Why?—Because rents have been reduced enormously. I do not think there is any property in Suffolk, except perhaps one or two in very favourable districts, where the gross rental of the property is not 50 per cent. at least less than it was in 1879.

49,811. Yes; but perhaps they may have been paying too much rent before even the bad times came on to leave them any capital for an emergency?—I have set out the rents per acre before the '70's, and at the '70's, and at the present time on some of the large properties. At the present time 1*l.* an acre is the top price for agricultural land of any sort. There are many men farming at a rent which leaves a dead loss to the landlord at the present time.

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49,812. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think that the Table to which you are referring shows that the rents have fallen to a point considerably below any point reached in the last 60 or 70 years?—Yes.

Changes in system of farming.

49,813. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have the tenants in Suffolk and some other places you have gone over been adapting themselves to the change of circumstances in the business and trade of this country?—It is difficult, I understand, to make any radical change in the use of a great deal of the land in Suffolk. The very heavy clay land is suitable only for wheat, and a good deal of the light land is only suitable for either barley or wheat when prices are at a certain point; they have got below that point and the land has been allowed to go. The farmers have extended their course and they are farming on the five or six course system with the object of knocking off the labour; but otherwise they have not been able to go in for market gardening and so on, because there is very little soil in the county fit for it.

49,814. In your report on Northumberland, I think, you said that you found there among the tenantry that they adapted themselves to circumstances which might be more profitable?—It is more possible there to go in for sheep and for stock. I do not say for one moment that it might not be possible to go in more for either milk selling or butter making if there was a radical change brought about, particularly in the mode of making butter. But that would be more for the opinion of an expert on the subject than for me.

Successful farming.

49,815. You give us a very striking example of a man in Suffolk with capital, energy, and tact, who has made his farm pay in the midst of all this serious depression which surrounds the farmers in Suffolk?—Yes; but he is one of a few. He does not consider it at all a satisfactory position himself, because he says he has got no interest on his capital; and he charges nothing for management, and gets nothing out of the farm. He is one of the best farmers in Suffolk. He is within three miles of a large town.

49,816. (*Chairman.*) Who is that?—He is that man whose accounts we discussed—D. or E., who got 8 per cent. I should not like to put his account forward as a sample of a Suffolk account.

49,817. (*Mr. Clay.*) Might not farmers, if they were to stop more at home and look more closely into their business—which unfortunately now they do not do as much as they did 30 or 40 years ago—might they not find it better both for themselves and for their landlord? At any rate, it would bring more practical experience and more capital into the business?—I do not know that on a large farm, where a man has got a good foreman and everything goes more or less mechanically when once it has been started, it would be so necessary as on a small farm.

Farming capital.

49,818. As a general rule, do you think the Suffolk farmer has sufficient capital to cultivate the land and make the most of it?—Not now; certainly not.

49,819. Had they that capital do you think to begin with?—Yes; they did have it.

49,820. Twenty years ago?—I should certainly think so. I should think in the Crimean War time some farmers made a great deal of money. I remember one of them told me he bought the farm he was renting out of the Crimean War prices.

49,821. Has that capital not disappeared by, perhaps, lower prices and too much rent for the subject they were dealing with?—I cannot say that they paid too much rent. I assume that the farmer is the best judge of what rent should be.

49,822. But a farmer may be wrong in giving more rent for an article in bad times than what he made up his mind to begin with?—Yes, he might make a mistake; but then I cannot imagine that all the Suffolk farmers would have made a mistake.

49,823. It must be the extra rent that he has been paying and the extra expenses he has been put to which have brought him into this position?—The evidence in Suffolk is, that the rents, when I was there had been fairly reduced to meet the times; in fact, they had been so reduced that the landowners have had to leave the country.

49,824. The tenant has to leave the country now?—Yes, they are both leaving the country.

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49,825. What is to become of the country?—Suffolk an be given away to anybody who will take it.

Compensation to sitting tenant.

49,826. You have a paragraph on page 28 of your Suffolk Report—No. 42—the marginal note of which is "Compensation to the sitting tenant." You are dealing there with the Marquis of Bristol, are you not?—Yes.

49,827. Does he give a per-centage back for the interest on the unexhausted earnings of the sitting tenant after making the rent?—That is in his agreement. I made a good many inquiries about that clause. It has never been put in operation.

49,828. But that is in his agreement, I think you say?—That is in his agreement, but it has never been put into operation.

49,829. The clause reads thus: "The landlord agrees "that in default of any special agreement, if upon the "determination of this tenancy the tenant continues "in the farm, the improvements, with the exception "of the last two items of the first schedule, for which (had he quitted the occupation) he would have been "entitled to compensation under the Agricultural "Holdings Act, 1883, may be valued in a manner by "that Act, or as by this agreement provided, and the "tenant shall thereafter, during his resumed tenancy, "receive interest upon the sum awarded at the rate of "4 per cent. per annum. Such interest to be deducted "at the time he pays his half-year's rent. But if the "landlord at any time during the resumed tenancy "pays the amount awarded, or any part thereof, in "such case the said interest or proportionate part "thereof shall cease to be so paid." Did you receive that as a part of a lease or of a yearly agreement?—That agreement has never been put into operation, because it excludes cake and manure, and Lord Bristol does all the other improvements. He does all the substantial building, he does all the repairs, and he does the drainage.

49,830. Does he deal with the sitting tenant in that way so that he should not be rented upon his own improvements?—This clause could never apply on Lord Bristol's estate as long as the present state of things continues because it happens that Lord Bristol does the whole of these improvements. I know his agent very well, and I asked him about this clause, and I think that he has got a very hazy idea what it means.

49,831. Is the meaning of the clause that you put in your report, that if a farm has developed into the improved position made by the tenant that the tenant is, I do not say entitled to full compensation in money, but that he is entitled to 4 or 5 per cent. on what that money would come to being taken off the rent?—That was not the real intention why that clause was put in by Lord Bristol. He held the opinion, that on a property where there was a poor landlord, and where the landlord had not got sufficient capital to put up a building, if the tenant had capital and chose to put out the money he should not have to bear the whole burden, but the landlord should pay him interest upon it.

49,832. That is just what I am coming to. I am looking upon this as a benefit to the landlord because the landlord has not to pay the principal sum?—Yes, that would be so.

49,833. But the sitting tenant, the man who has taken the farm, is to be allowed so much a year on the improvement; if the cost of the improvement were to come to 800*l.* then at 4 per cent. that would come to 32*l.*; and he is to be allowed 32*l.* off the year's rent—was that your meaning?—Yes, if it was possible in Suffolk.

49,834. I am not saying whether it is in Suffolk or not; I am taking the general principle; that was your meaning, was it?—If there was a rich tenant in another county who could afford to put up a building no doubt it would be an advantage to the landlord to be able to get a tenant who would put it up, and to have only to pay him interest on it.

49,835. That is why I put this matter to you; I think in doing that the tenant is entitled to 4 or 5 per cent. on what the compensation money would come to?—Yes, the compensation would decrease, I suppose, as the life of the building declined.

49,836. Still the sitting tenant is entitled to even interest on money docked off his rent, the interest on the money that he has spent upon the farm in improvement?—Yes, if he put up the building.

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49,837. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You speak entirely of buildings, which is a totally different matter from what Mr. Clay refers to, I think, which is the benefit to the land of what the sitting tenant may have done; that is not what you got out of the agents at any rate?—No.

49,838. That is not their reading of this clause?—No.

49,839. The clause refers entirely to buildings put up?—Yes, that was what was in Lord Bristol's mind I understood when I asked him about it, and what made him put that clause in his agreement.

49,840. So that it does not cover really the point Mr. Clay has been driving at?—No.

49,841. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Does it mean to include the draining?—I could not say that.

49,842. Supposing it did?—Supposing it included draining?

49,843. Supposing this was a general clause to cover everything?—Do you mean cake and manures too?

49,844. Yes, that a man who was sitting on and not quitting was to get this compensation during the time he was taking out the benefit for what he had done himself; I was going to ask you would not the end of that be that the landlords would simply have to regulate the rent so as to cover what he had to pay to the tenant in interest?—I should say it would, but I should say further that it would be a most extremely difficult thing to arrange, because supposing he was compensated for some walls which would last say 30 years; that he was compensated for a building which might last 50 years; that he was compensated for lime which might last 8 years; he would then be compensated for a lot of things which had different lives, and it would be a most extremely difficult matter I should think to work out the rate of interest which would be really due for each year.

49,845. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The clause is only suitable for permanent improvements, is it not?—That is what it was intended for; but then as far as Suffolk is concerned, things have reached such a stage that there is no tenant ever likely to put up a building.

49,846. (*Mr. Clay.*) I was only asking you with reference to the meaning of the clause?—Yes, I understood that.

Buildings in Suffolk.

49,847. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) As to the buildings necessary to carry on these farms, does the climate in that part of the country make it possible to carry on with less permanent buildings than other parts like Lincolnshire where the buildings are evidently so much better?—No, I do not think so.

Fixity of tenure and land courts.

49,848. As far as I read your report, there is really no complaint as to fixity of tenure?—No, none.

49,849. And no demand for a land court?—No.

The Suffolk custom.

49,850. Then on the whole is the Suffolk custom as favourable to the tenant, or is it considered by the tenants to be as favourable, as the Lincolnshire custom?—No, I should hardly say that, but they consider it a great deal more favourable than the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Valuers.

49,851. Are the valuers held there in the same high esteem that they are in Lincolnshire?—No, not quite. I came to the conclusion—although I did not put it in my report—that it was rather the lack of uniformity in the awards which made their custom less successful than the Lincolnshire one.

49,852. Have they not a Valuers' Association there the same as in Lincolnshire?—No, they have not; there are a certain number of well-known men who are always employed.

Compensation for breach of agreements.

49,853. I see you notice that a breach of an agreement is not taken notice of by the valuers unless actual damage is sustained?—That is so. I asked all the leading valuers that question.

49,854. Do they act in the same spirit of easy manner in regard to other agreements that are entered into between man and man?—They wish proof of actual damage. In fact—they expect it—they demand it—before they give compensation.

49,855. They do away with all penal clauses in fact?—Yes, in practice.

49,856. In that county is it understood and taken for granted that everyone that enters for a farm is under the custom without any agreement at all?—If nothing is said they would go in under the custom of the country, but on a good many of the large estates there

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are definite schedules for compensation in the agreements.

49,857. They are schedules which are agreed to?—Yes.

49,858. Would the valuers in Suffolk put these aside in the same way that they do other agreements?—No. Then it would be simply a question of how much dilapidation there had been. I may say that when that is the case in many cases landlords do not claim dilapidations unless there is anything very bad. At Wickham Brook I had a meeting, and the farmers made the somewhat astounding statement that they did not know of a single case in the neighbourhood where a man had been dilapidated when he left his farm. Under the custom the valuers would consider what dilapidations there are, but the amounts awarded would not be so large as under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

Scotch farmers.

49,859. There is a good deal said on page 70, some of it flattering and some of it not flattering, about the Scotchmen who have gone there?—Those remarks were made by witnesses.

49,860. I understand that. They are quoted chiefly from agents, I see?—Yes.

49,861. One remark, is "A good Scotchman will pay his rent to the hour," and anothe "They won't lose money"?—Yes.

49,862. That is surely what we want in these days, go where we like?—That was their general character, that they were never behindhand in their rent.

49,863. The reason why they have been able to hold their own in the county where the others have gone to the wall very largely is that they and their families do very much harder work and live very much more economically?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

49,864. Does it not point to the fact that these agents ought to have some restrictions in their leases with these men if they do not want their land run down?—You see it is a case of taking these men as they are or not taking them at all. I understand from what these Scotch agents have said that they are men with practically no capital. They have come from Ayrshire and they know nothing about arable farming, and what is more, they have not got the capital if they did. They take a large area of this worn-out land at a cheap rent and they bring down a lot of Ayrshire cows and let the place run wild and get what they can off it by selling milk. I do not think the agents could restrict them. If they did they would not get them, because they have not got the capital to farm that land as a Suffolk landlord would desire it to be farmed. They could not farm on the four or five course system.

49,865. No, but by laying down restrictions they could surely prevent them so utterly impoverishing the land as seems to be represented here in the same way as they do in Ayrshire?—I take it that there is much more grass in Ayrshire than in Suffolk. You see the proportion of acres of grass land on a farm is very small in Suffolk.

The Suffolk custom.

49,866. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When you say there is not so much unanimity about the custom in Suffolk as there is with regard to the custom in Lincolnshire, is that because it is not so definite?—That is what I suggested. The awards are not so uniform. I believe there is an implied understanding of what is usually given, but it is not definite like it is in Lincolnshire.

49,867. If I am rightly informed it is not so extensive, is it?—No.

49,868. It does not extend to matters of a quasi-permanent character?—No.

Condition of agriculture in Suffolk.

49,869. You found the condition of Suffolk, on the whole, worse than Lincolnshire?—Yes, certainly.

49,870. Is that because of the quality of the land, or what is the reason in your mind?—The quality of the land, I should say, in the first place.

49,871. And being such good land, of course it has suffered most?—Yes.

49,872. And part of it has gone out of cultivation altogether?—Yes. It is land of a character which makes them necessarily more dependent upon the growth of cereals.

49,873. I think it is between 5,000 and 6,000 acres that have come under your own knowledge as having already gone out of cultivation practically?—Yes, I think that is it roughly.

49,874. In spite of this great depression, and the great trouble under which the farmers are suffering, you do not find any demands for extreme legislation with regard to land or for land courts?—No, they are opposed to that sort of thing.

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49,875. They think it is useless?—Yes, absolutely useless.

49,876. They consider in the face of troubles from which they are suffering, which they believe arise from the fall in prices, that it is entirely beside the point to put these questions before them?—They can get land on practically any terms they like, except, you may say, some of the best land in the Samford Union, which there might be a little competition for. As in Lincolnshire the landowners tried farming their own land six or seven years ago and some of them made enormous losses—I have quoted one large landowner in the report; and on that estate it was determined then not to have any land on their hands again. So that when the farmers throw the land up now it will go out of cultivation.

Rent.

49,877. There are no complaints, as a rule, about the rent being too high, are there?—No, they are very exceptional.

49,878. They point to the times of higher prices and higher rents and tell you that they made great profits and did will then?—Yes.

49,879. Whereas with very low rents and low prices they are all ruined?—Practically all ruined. I found men farming without paying rent at all. I found one man leaving a farm he had been farming for three years with no rent, and a considerable portion of that farm was grass. He was eight miles from a railway station.

The currency question.

49,880. You found a good deal of feeling upon the question of the currency, did you not?—Yes, particularly in the Ipswich district.

49,881. At a good many meetings that you attended?—They raised it at all the meetings.

49,882. At all the meetings that you went to?—Yes.

49,883. Was it discussed with some understanding of the subject apparently?—A good many of the leading farmers in the west and in the east were very interested in the matter and discussed the question at considerable length at all the meetings; in fact, the question of the currency was generally brought forward in the form of a resolution at the meetings.

49,884. There is evidently a growing feeling in favour of it?—Yes, certainly, in Suffolk and in Lincolnshire.

Prospects of Suffolk agriculture.

49,885. I gather from your evidence as a whole that you form the grimmest opinion both of the present and of the future prospects of agriculture in Suffolk?—The future is about as black as can be. There is a very large number of farmers who have given notice to quit at Michaelmas next, and the landlords say they cannot raise the money to farm the land.

49,886. Are those farmers who have given notice going out of business wherever they can?—A good many of them are, I expect. A farmer whose accounts I have given has farmed for 10 years on the Duke of Grafton's estate; he is a man with plenty of capital, and he is going out of the farming business.

49,887. I want to call your attention to one statement in paragraph 118. You say, "The agriculturists in "Suffolk say, in effect, 'We are losing money and are "'on the high road to a supreme disaster, and, while "'this is the case, to discuss questions such as tenure, "'tenant right, the law of distress, marking of foreign "'meat, &c.' is simply throwing straw to drowning "men." Would that be the general expression of opinion on the part of the farmers in Suffolk, as far as you are acquainted with it?—Yes, certainly; they would not let me discuss anything of that sort at meetings.

49,888. In the last paragraph of your report you express the opinion that agriculture in the county of Suffolk is well nigh strangled?—Yes.

49,889. That is speaking of it as you find it now?—Yes, as I found it when I was there last, and I have been in communication with Suffolk people every day for the last year.

49,890. All this, or by far the greater part of this, you attribute practically to the fall in prices?—Yes.

49,891. And as regards the prospect in the future unless there be a change in the prices, do you see any hope whatever for agriculture in any direction in that

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county?—No, none, unless it is possible to do something with reference to butter-making: but that would take probably a great many years; perhaps the next generation will be able to make it.

Rents.

49,892. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Were the rents in Suffolk ever very high as compared with other counties?—No, I should not think so at all as compared with other counties. I have given the rents in the seventies as far as I could.

49,893. In the seventies they seem to have been low as compared with what they were in other parts of the country?—The seventies were the highest point; I tried to collect as many cases as I could.

49,894. Were they higher in 1870 than in the Crimean War?—Yes, I think so. I think that men were making money in the fifties, and the sixties, and the seventies. I should not like to say off-hand how much, but, of course, that 30 years was the time that the farmers made money, and they probably had more money in the seventies than they had in the fifties.

49,895. They would be exceptionally well off in those years in Suffolk?—Yes.

49,896. Because they were not heavily rented?—I asked a very great number of farmers whether they thought rents were too high in the seventies, and they said they would much rather go back to the seventies now.

49,897. The point I wanted to make was that Suffolk has always been a low-rented county, has it not?—I should say it has been a fairly-rented county. I heard no complaints of the rents in the seventies, and that is as far as I can go.

Rates taxes.

49,898. The rates in the £ seem very light on the whole?—The rates in Suffolk have gone down in some parts.

49,899. I see in this account that you give of farm D. on page 91, that the rates and taxes on that farm of 260 acres have gone down from 30*l.* in 1877 to 14*l.* 10*s.* in 1892, and 7*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.* in 1894?—Yes, but I do not understand that 7*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.*

49,900. Leaving out the 7*l.* 8*s.* 9*d.* in the three years 1891, 1892, and 1893, they were very much lower than they were in the early years—they were 17*l.* 4*s.*, 14*l.* 10*s.*, and 15*l.* 14*s.*, as compared with 30*l.* in 1877?—That of course includes taxes, and there is no doubt about it that the man got remission for his income tax that year; you see he lost money.

49,901. Taking the three preceding years they seem very low—they would have been low if they had only been for rates?—Yes.

49,902. It does not come to much more than a shilling an acre reckoning rates and taxes, does it?—No.

49,903. In farm E. you show that there has been a great fall in the rates and taxes?—That is in the same union.

49,904. How do you account for the rates keeping so low although the rents have fallen so considerably?—They have been assisted by Treasury subventions for one thing.

49,905. And the expenditure has also gone down, I think?—The expenditure has gone down.

49,906. In the rural unions?—I see the expenditure has gone down in nine of the unions.

49,907. In your table on page 108 there are no high rates anywhere?—Comparing 1883 with 1893 I see the total expenditure is less in half the unions and in the other half of the unions it is more, but of course the Treasury subventions have to be taken into account.

49,908. The nine in which it is more comprise towns such as Ipswich, Bury St. Edmund's, and so on?—Yes, quite so

49,909. In the rural unions generally there seems to have been a decrease in the expenditure that is borne by the rates, and the rates in the £ still seem very low notwithstanding the terrible condition of agriculture in the county?—I have set out what the rates in the £ are. I have taken whole unions, which include what towns there are; but they do not represent the urban districts.

49,910. I am taking it as representing the rural expenditure?—Generally speaking, I think that the expenditure has decreased more in Suffolk than in Lincolnshire.

49,911. Yes, but looking at that table at page 108, which I think takes in all the unions in the county?—Yes.

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49,912. The rate in the £ in 1892 and 1893 appears to be very healthy, for the rates are considerably below the average rural rates for England, with the exception of Risbridge Union, where they are 2*s.* 10*d.* in the £?—Yes, but it is very difficult to say what is a healthy rate in the eyes of the farmer.

49,913. I suppose the lower it is below the average of England the better it is?—Yes.

49,914. It is some consolation to find that, in the great depression of agriculture which prevails in Suffolk, the rural rates are still less in the £ than they are in the average of England?—Yes, it would be, but I have not compared these figures with the average.

49,915. The average, I think, according to Mr. Fowler's report came out to 2*s.* 3*d.*?—I know it was over 2*s.*

49,916. There is only one of these unions where it is over that amount, and there are a great number where it is 1*s.* 7*d.* or 1*s.* 6*d.*, or 1*s.* 9*d.*, and so forth?—Yes, there are.

49,917. Is there any good grass land in the county?—There is some, but there is not much of it.

The grass lands of Suffolk.

49,918. One would gather from the quotations you make in the earlier part of the report that there was good grass in the county in the early part of the century?—Yes. It had probably taken a very great number of years to grow; and that is the difficulty of course of turning land down to grass now.

49,919. The mischief was done when they turned it down into corn land?—They ploughed up land which never ought to be ploughed up, and which only paid to grow cereals when the price was at least 40*s.* a quarter.

49,920. And then did not command a very high rent?—No, because in order to grow cereals at all that land had to be clayed as it was a very light land. That was an operation which cost a farmer 3*l.* an acre. Of course it is perfectly impossible to do anything of the sort now.

49,921. Then what has done the great mischief in Suffolk was the ploughing up of this land?—Yes, the ploughing up of that bad land did mischief.

49,922. What would it take to get it back again?—It would take years, I should think, because it has been absolutely exhausted, and I did not come across any instance where people were really trying it properly. If they laid it down to permanent pasture and prepared it properly, and sowed it properly with seeds, and top-dressed it at the end of three or four years, and so on, it might as an experiment be worth trying, but I do not think it has been often tried.

Land unfit for cultivation.

49,923. (*Lord Rendel.*) Do you estimate that there is any very considerable quantity of this land which it would have been better never to have cultivated?—Yes, there is a great deal in the north, in the Thetford district, but they abandoned that 10 or 12 years ago to game. It was given up then, and all through the Maharajah Dhuleep Singh's property, and all round that district where the light land is it has been all shooting for the last 10 years.

49,924. I suppose the same causes have led in a very large degree, throughout all the counties you have examined, to the same result—the ploughing up of land?—Not in Lincolnshire, I think; in Suffolk certainly they ploughed up land which was only remunerative to grow corn when corn was at its highest, or nearly at its highest.

49,925. Would you be prepared to find that a very considerable area of land had been brought into cultivation which never could be cultivated except under conditions of price which were artificially raised?—I should not say a very considerable area. There was a great deal in the north and north-west which has been, but it has not been really cultivated for 8 or 10 years.

49,926. But that land, I suppose, still is brought into account when the depressed condition of agriculture is stated?—I really hardly visited that district as I knew it before; I knew there was nothing to report upon there. Some people say that planting might be successful on that very light land; I have heard men say that.

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49,927. In the counties you have studied there have been very large enclosures, I presume, of common waste land?—I cannot say that, there is no evidence of it because it is all cultivated in both those counties; they have been first-rate farming counties.

49,928. You have not gone into the past history of it?—No.

49,929. You have no means yourself with your large experience now of saying to what extent the great enclosures of the early part of the century have led to the cultivation of land which could not be successfully cultivated without the support of special prices?—No, I cannot say that; a very great deal of Lincolnshire has been brought into cultivation, and very successful cultivation, within only this century.

49,930. That is from a special circumstance altogether?—Yes.

Dairying in Suffolk.

49,931. May I go back to an early part of your report, to which some reference has already been made. You state that Arthur Young gave interesting information about the Suffolk dairies in 1786?—Yes.

49,932. You say he mentions "a tract of country in "the north-eastern side comprising about 20 miles long "by 12 miles broad as 'the seat of dairies,' and within "which area 'nearly all are good'"?—Yes.

49,933. You also observe that Mr. Biddell, a high authority, and Mr. J. A. Smith, state that at the beginning of the present century a large proportion of the dairy produce sent to the metropolis came from the county of Suffolk?—Yes.

49,934. The county was then essentially a dairy county?—Yes.

49,935. Do you think that the change made in ploughing up very largely and in adopting corn growing very largely in Suffolk, was a change which has proved partly a cause of the present special depression in Suffolk?—No doubt at the time they ploughed it up, it was a better business to go in for cereals, and no doubt a great many men made their fortunes out of it; but how far they could change and now make money by selling milk it is difficult to say. The Scotchmen are gaining a poor livelihood out of it. It will take a great many years to make that land anything like good grass land, and it wants capital spent upon it at once to start it.

49,936. Do you think that the prospects are sufficiently good to warrant any effort at an experiment on a larger scale than the experiment already being made at Akenham?—Mr. Smith, who was the secretary and gives lectures throughout the eastern counties, was of opinion that a large experiment ought to be made, and he mentioned the Isle of Ely, which is a dairying centre, as the most favourable place for a butter factory that he knew of in the eastern counties. He considers that there ought to be creameries at different parts, and that there ought to be a large butter factory in some central part, and he thinks if this were done there would be a great impetus given to dairying.

49,937. Suffolk would have a great advantage over Lincolnshire, I suppose, in reference to the markets?—They are nearer London, and they have got rather larger markets themselves. Ipswich is a good market, and so is Felixstowe and Lowestoft.

49,938. I suppose, as compared with the beginning of the century, there would be an enormous development of what markets then existed?—The markets would be much greater now; I suppose London would be enormously larger.

49,939. On the other hand, it remains to be seen how far dairying might run out the land?—Yes, some people hold the opinion that dairying injures the land, but I have heard contrary views expressed; I mean that it can be done without injuring the land.

49,940. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You mean milk selling?—Yes; it depends on what is put back, and it depends on what the cattle are fed on a good deal.

49,941. (*Lord Rendel.*) I suppose there is no suitable labour on any large scale in the county at present for milking, and butter making, and so on?—No, I should think the labour would be difficult to get for that class of work.

49,942. It would all have to be found?—Yes, it would have to grow.

49,943. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And to be created?—They are finding it very difficult in the dairying counties now to get either men to milk or women to make butter and cheese. Of course if it was done in factories it might be different.

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49,944. (*Lord Rendel.*) Nevertheless, do you think you could find a sound opinion in favour of some exceptional experiment in this direction?—Yes; certainly. The men who understood dairying thought that the only way to retake possession of the British markets in butter was to start creameries and butter factories. Mr. Smith expressed that opinion also to Mr. Ernest Prentice, and Mr. Fiske, who is a well-known member of the Dairy Farmers' Association and who farms largely himself, are very strenuous advocates of that in Suffolk.

49,945. Would an important experiment in any part of the country of an analogous character be also favourable to Suffolk as an example of what might be done?—Yes; I should think it would be. It is an experiment which a great many people whom I have met desire to see tried, at any rate. They draw attention to the enormous imports of butter, and they say we can make just as good butter if it is done in a certain way. In Ireland, I went through some of the butter factories there, and the small farmers there told me it was a very great advantage to them to be able to have a ready sale for their milk without having the risk of not selling their butter.

49,946. Then taking the two facts, that Suffolk appears to have the blackest outlook of all the counties you have examined, and that Suffolk originally prospered as a dairying county, would you be inclined to support with your own opinion the suggestion that a considerable experiment in the direction of dairying, Suffolk land would be of great value to that county?—I think it would be a very valuable experiment to make and might turn out well. There is a colony of Devonshire farmers there, and they make better butter than the Suffolk people. They have not been there very long, but they find that they get a ready sale for their butter and a good price for it. There is, no doubt, a demand for good butter if it can be got in sufficient quantities.

Cottages and resident ownership.

49,947. You make some reference to the cottage property and to the condition of cottages in what I think you described as open villages?—Yes.

49,948. I think you point out that the smaller owners are not in a position to maintain a lot of the cottages in a condition satisfactory to the labouring population?—Yes, that is so.

49,949. And that they receive some indulgence from the local authorities?—Yes.

49,950. Are there cases in which the residents of these cottages are owners?—There are not many, I should think.

49,951. Do you think that the small ownership derives its origin very much in resident and small ownership?—No, I do not think so. There are a certain number of cases where squatters put them up on waste years ago, but I think most of those have tumbled down. They simply built them of clay lump, and there are very few of that class of house left. I went into hundreds of cottages in Suffolk for the Labour Commission; I spent weeks in doing it, and I did not find a single instance of a labourer owning his own cottage.

49,952. Would you be prepared to favour the growth of a resident ownership?—I do not think it would be possible, because a labourer does not want to be fixed. In Lincolnshire they have got a very good co-operative society, and they have tried that there, but if I remember right only one or two agricultural labourers have attempted to own their own houses. You see it stops them in their promotion. If a labourer has got any ambition at all it is in the direction of being a small farmer, and if you give him his cottage in a certain spot he becomes a permanent agricultural labourer in a restricted area.

49,953. And tied to particular employers?—Yes, and if he gets a chance of being a foreman 10 miles off he cannot move.

49,954. Has it been within your observation that the objection of the labouring classes of the higher trades to resident ownership is of the same character?—No. I think that a good many men on small farms of 50 or 60 acres like to own the land and to own the house, although if they can rent them moderately they are probably better off.

49,955. Taking the case of the smaller towns and of the handicraft labour in the towns in your enquiries

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on the labour question, have you found whether the resident ownership was popular among them?—In towns, immensely. I am thinking rather of the Lincoln experiment where a great many of the artisans own their own houses, or are in process of owning them, and it is difficult to find a more thrifty, or a more intelligent, or a more law-abiding set of citizens than in Lincoln.

49,956. But you draw some distinction between their position and that of the scattered agricultural labourers?—Yes, because the agricultural labourer cannot be fixed down.

49,957. You found it to be a tie upon his promotion in life?—Yes.

49,958. And then there is the obligation it imposes upon him to work for a particular master?—Yes. *Mr. A. W. Fox.* 23 May 1895.

49,959. With a less command therefore of freedom in settling terms?—Yes.

49,960. Therefore the resident ownership in the agricultural classes is possibly for that reason non-existent in Suffolk?—Yes, chiefly, though perhaps partly from want of means.

49,961. A small ownership, therefore, of small houses is an unmixed evil in your view?—For the agricultural labourer.

49,962. It does not tend to throw such houses into the hands of resident owners?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

(For Mr. Wilson-Fox's further evidence, *see* page 408).

Ninety-sixth Day.

Friday, 24th May 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.,
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Joint*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. SETH TAYLOR called and examined.

Mr. S. Taylor. 24 May 1895.

49,963. (*Chairman.*) You are, I believe, a flour merchant on a large scale, and owner of the Waterloo Mills in London?—Yes.

49,964. Your dealings in wheat have been very great of late years?—Yes.

Increased importation of foreign wheat.

49,965. You come here to tell us what your experience of late years has been with regard to the increased importation of foreign wheat and flour and the fall in the price of wheat?—Yes. The great fall in the prices has, of course, been due to the excess of the supply over the requirements, and during the last few years more particularly it is due to the extra growth in Argentina, which has thrown an extra supply upon us which was quite new to us.

49,966. Since when have the imports from the Argentine assumed a large amount?—In 1886 the production in Argentina was 3,000,000 quarters; and it did not vary very much up till 1891, when it was 4,000,000; in 1892 it was 6,500,000; and in 1893 Argentina grew 11,000,000 quarters.

49,967. Do you know what the imports into this country were?—I can hardly tell you. I should think that for the last few years we have had two-thirds of the crop.

49,968. Then do you consider that the great fall in price which has occurred recently has been mainly due to the fact that the growth of wheat has been so enormously increased in the Argentine Republic, and, therefore, a fresh competitor has come into the market?—Yes, and that, of course, has been much assisted by the low rate of exchange. Their paper currency has given them such a great advantage in being able to produce it at a much less price than any other country.

49,969. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Where is that?—In the Argentine Republic; their paper currency is so depreciated that gold is now, I suppose, at 260 or 270 premium there.

Decreased area of wheat in Great Britain.

49,970. (*Chairman.*) Is it not the fact also that although the acreage of wheat in the United States has somewhat decreased of late years, yet in consequence of a succession of very good harvests the production of that country has been enormously increased?—Yes, but "somewhat" hardly expresses the reduction of our acreage here in wheat, because it has been so largely reduced.

49,971. The English production forms a very small item, you mean?—Our own production was in my time the principal supply we had, but now it has a very small influence. We grew some 14,000,000 when our consumption was perhaps only 20,000,000, but now, when our consumption is 28,000,000, we do not produce more than 7,000,000, so the ratio is altered entirely.

Consumption of wheat.

49,972. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the consumption now?—Roughly 28,000,000.

49,973. That is quarters?—Yes.

49,974. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Of course it increases every year?—Yes, naturally, with the population.

Production of wheat.

49,975. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What was the production last year?—It was 7,400,000 quarters in 1894.

49,976. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That was rather more than in one or two of the preceding years, was it not?—The produce in 1892 was 6,300,000, in 1892 it was 7,600,000, and in 1878 we grew 12,500,000.

Causes of fall in prices.

49,977. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that the great fall in price has arisen, first, from the excess of production over consumption in different foreign countries, and especially in the United States and the Argentine Republic, I suppose; secondly, from the lower cost of production in these countries; thirdly, from the great fall in freights which has taken place——?—Yes, but rather more is it due, in Argentina, to the high rates of exchange.

49,978. I was coming to that; and, fourthly, it has arisen from the depreciation of paper and silver currencies?—Yes.

Commercial gambling.

49,979. Do you consider that it is also due in some respect to the great speculations which have taken

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place, and to what is known as options and futures?—I think options, when there is a superabundance, have a depressing influence rather than otherwise. You see it makes people who sell wheat forward, take liberties with the market when they know that there is an excess of wheat in the world; and so there is a great deal more wheat in circulation, or purported to be, than really exists. The sale of options and futures, therefore, rather accentuates the position.

49,980. (*Mr. Channing.*) In the last few days there has been a great rise in prices, has there not?—Yes.

Fluctuations in the price of wheat.

49,981. Is that not also due partly to speculation?—I think public opinion has rather turned round. So much is due to sentiment; public opinion drifts very much in one direction, and at the first turn in price we had a few weeks ago consumers would not believe in it; but the rise having been continued the consumers are now coming in, and are very sore indeed that they have missed their opportunity.

49,982. (*Chairman.*) What is the lowest price to which wheat has fallen within the last few months?—The lowest English price was 17*s.* 6*d.*

49,983. Was that the average?—It was the English price last autumn.

49,984. That was partly influenced, I suppose, by the bad quality?—To some extent as compared with foreign wheat. I will give you the exact quotation. The English average for October of last year was 17*s.* 8*d.* per quarter.

49,985. Was that partly influenced by the bad quality?—No; the quality of the year's wheat was not so bad.

49,986. Then the low price was not much influenced by it?—No.

49,987. What was the price of, what may be called, standard wheat?—The average of foreign wheat would be, perhaps, 2*s.* in excess of that.

49,988. I believe there has been a rise within the last few weeks?—Yes.

49,989. What has it been?—It is within the last few days that the great rise has taken place. I have no record yet, however, of what the English wheat is; but I should think English wheat to-day would be 24*s.* or 25*s.* at least, judging from the price of foreign wheat.

49,990. What has been the rise in foreign wheat?—I have not the figures showing what the actual returns are of English wheat, but I should think foreign wheat would be 27*s.* or 28*s.* now on an average price; that is, taking to-day's price.

49,991. Then there has been a rise of nearly 8*s.* a quarter?—Yes, there has been a rise of 8*s.* a quarter.

49,992. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What was the price for foreign wheat?—27*s.* or 28*s.*, you may say, taking an all-round price. Of course, it is very difficult to fix the price, because some wheat is much under and some over 30*s.*

49,993. This has occurred mainly only in the last few days?—Yes.

49,994. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is there much English wheat coming forward?—No, but I should think this rise in price will bring it out.

49,995. Do you think there is a good deal left?—I have not the means of knowing exactly, but I should think there is an average quantity left.

Commercial gambling.

49,996. (*Chairman.*) Then is it your view that when the quantity is in excess of the demand, the speculations in options and futures rather tend to depreciate unduly the value of wheat?—Yes.

49,997. I presume, *e converso*, that when the demand has become a little in excess of the supply, the reverse would happen?—Yes, I think you may take that.

49,998. That at all events is your view?—I think so.

49,999. Part of the sudden rise may be due to that then?—I think the general tendency is to depress, though it may exceptionally tend to inflate it. People are oversold, and they get frightened, as bears do, at a certain point, and rush in to cover, and that rather unduly inflates it.

50,000. You state it as your proposition that when wheat is in excess of the demand, the effect of the speculation is unduly to depress wheat?—Yes.

50,001. Therefore, when the reverse happens, when the demand is perhaps overtaking the supply, one would expect the reverse to occur?—I do not think it would be so as a rule. It is really a question for the people who are uncovered. They get so frightened; they have sold a great deal of wheat as bears, and they generally rush in when things look dangerous, and so rather temporarily inflate the market.

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50,002. One would have supposed that if there had been large speculations in options by people who had been selling for the future, on the assumption that the quantity was largely in excess of the demand, they must have fallen into a very unfortunate hole, looking at the enormous rise of price which has occurred during the last few weeks and which amounts practically to nearly 40 per cent. being, as you say, from 17*s.* 8*d.* to 25*s.*?—No; the 17*s.* 8*d.* was the average for last October.

50,003. I am taking the lowest price; it is a rise of getting on to 50 per cent. in a few months?—The English average for barley was 20*s.* 6*d.*

50,004. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Would you say there has been a rise of 20 per cent. in about a fortnight?—Within a month there has been a rise of nearly 20 per cent. in wheat.

50,005. (*Chairman.*) Then the price of wheat you may say has now got back to the point from which it fell in the course of last year?—Yes, I should think you may.

50,006. Would you say it has got back to the average of what it was in 1893?—The English average in January 1894 was 26*s.* 3*d.*, and in February 1894 it was 25*s.*; I should think it is approximately that price now.

50,007. Then the fall in price from that period up till recently was abnormal, and apparently not justified by the quality of the wheat?—Of course you must consider that Argentina did not produce so much last year as she was expected to produce, by some two or three million quarters.

Effect of low prices.

50,008. Do you suppose that the low price to which wheat had fallen had already begun to operate in the minds of the producers, and that they were not cultivating so large an area in some parts of the world?—I think the tendency of the low prices is to squeeze out production, because people find it unprofitable. It is not a thing that operates straight away, it must take its course. I think when we get consumption overtaking supply again, it will take a little time to put it right on the other side. A baker bakes a batch of bread too much to-day, but he puts his position right in 24 hours, for he bakes a very short batch to-morrow, and in that way puts his stock right; but with the farmer it is a question of years if he wants to alter his production. I think that naturally—though of course the general range of prices may be and will be lower doubtless in the future because of the increased acreage and the number of countries who supply us now—but we shall have the swing of the pendulum backwards and forwards, as we have done in the past.

Future prices of wheat.

50,009. Is it your view that we may look, on the whole, for a somewhat higher range of prices for wheat in the future?—I cannot tell you when, but I have no doubt that in the course of time we shall see a higher range of prices again.

50,010. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you mean that you expect to see a permanently higher range?—No. When consumption and demand overtake supply, naturally then those who have it to sell will feel very strong, and be more independent about it, and that will naturally produce a higher level of prices for a time.

Commercial gambling

50,011. (*Chairman.*) Apparently, from the accounts in the newspapers, there are violent speculations going on at this moment in America on the subject of wheat. I see in to-day's paper that there is this telegram from Chicago: "Wheat.—At the opening traders pushed, "shoved, and struggled, and soon 80 to 80¼ cents was "bid for July. Trading was enormous, and it is "estimated that probably 200,000,000 bushels were "bought and sold. Every broker loaded out town-"buying orders. There was another bulge to 82 cents "in the afternoon. The market was very nervous "during the last hour, selling from 81 cents to 81¾ "cents; and it ruled very erratic, finally closing with "a decided slump, owing to heavy profit-taking at "78¾ cents"?—Wheat in America serves the purpose of our Stock Exchange; it is dealt in from the millionaire to the boy in the street. They all have their fling in wheat. People who know nothing about it, and who would hardly know wheat from barley—a great many of them—go in for it. It is the fashionable article of speculation there.

50,012. But for every seller there must be a buyer and for every buyer there must be a seller?—Yes, but they may know equally nothing about it.

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50,013. One does not understand why these speculations should in the long run affect the price?—When the people are selling wheat blank and in options, more wheat is apparently in circulation than exists. If I want to buy wheat myself, and if a man sells me 50,000 quarters of wheat, it does not matter to me whether he has them or not; it is stock to me, and as long as the man is good, either to deliver the wheat or to pay me the loss or the difference that I should have to pay in the market for it, it serves my purpose equally well. It is like a man trading on bills; until the bills have to be paid, the man appears to have a good deal more capital in his business than really he has; and so people do not care whether they hold the wheat in the shape of actual produce, or whether they hold it in the shape of contracts, because they are equally protected and profited if there is a rise in the value of it.

50,014. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Then if you do not want the wheat, I suppose you would pay him the difference?—Yes; but, as a rule, people in trade would take it; but, of course, if we did not take delivery of it, we should have to pay the difference. If you hold the actual wheat, you have the benefit of it if it goes up, and if you take the delivery of the actual wheat and it goes down, you have to sell it at the depreciation, whatever it may be.

50,015. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You do not take so strong a view on the subject as Mr. Smith did in his evidence, of which you have, no doubt, heard?—I have not read his evidence, but I have heard that he felt strongly that options did depress the market. I feel very strongly that they do depress it in times of abundance; they accentuate the position and are very damaging then.

50,016. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) This system of buying and selling options and futures does very greatly affect the price?—Yes, I think it is very damaging to the price as a rule.

50,017. But it affects it both ways—sometimes it causes the price to rise and at other times to fall?—The rises are exceptional, and it is cases of panic when there is a smart rise. You must recollect that when a man has sold blank he is in a position of unlimited liability; he never knows where he is going to be taken to. He gets frightened. He says, "I can pay "my debts up to the present, but it may go up still "more." He cannot limit it; he has unlimited liability, and he never knows where he may be taken to, so he covers in generally upon unfavourable terms.

50,018. (*Mr. Giffen.*) It is a very dangerous thing to sell blank, is it not?—Very dangerous. I never knew a bear to keep his money yet.

50,019. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Still, at the present moment, do we understand from you, that you attribute this rise in a great measure to the speculation that has been going on?—I do not think so altogether. I think there is no doubt that it has been accentuated by that speculation, because people have got frightened. The American prospects are not so good as they were, and that has given them a sort of basis to start upon. When people find it is going to be against them a man says, "I owe "so much to-day, and if it goes on like this I shall not "be able to pay my debts," so he closes his account. It is very much like our mining market here has been of late.

50,020. (*Viscount Cobham.*) But that has operated to raise prices, has it not?—Yes, it has; of course the re-action has not come yet.

50,021. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What would be the course of prices, would you suppose, without this speculation and this buying of options and futures; would it be much steadier?—I think prices would be steadier. Twenty years ago we used to lead in our market; the demand or the excess of supply here led, and America followed us. Then we could tell quite well that if we had good markets here to-morrow American quotations would be dearer in response to ours. Now we follow America, and it is just the other way about.

50,022. (*Viscount Cobham.*) If you think we have got to the bottom of wheat prices it would be rather a pity if this system of speculation were to stop, because in a rising market it tends to enhance prices?—I am not prepared to say that we are now at the bottom, but the price we reached last year must have been the bottom price.

50,023. (*Chairman.*) If your argument is sound then it would seem to follow that speculation is now in favour of this country, or, at all events, of the growers?—I do not think the extreme low price was ever justified. I think the present price is a much more consistent price than the price which existed last year. But the man is not born who can give an opinion as to the course of prices.

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Importation of wheat from India.

50,024. The import of wheat from India seems to have very largely fallen off in the last few years?—Of course the low price has discouraged the production there, and then the paper currency of the Argentine has beaten India out of the field so far as the advantage that her silver currency gave her goes. Then they have not had good crops, their weather has not been very favourable, and I think the consumption of wheat in India itself has increased somewhat.

Production in Argentina.

50,025. Do you really believe that the increased production in the Argentine Republic is due simply to the depreciation of their paper?—Yes. You see that a sovereign is worth nearly four times as much in their paper that it purports to be. These men who cultivate in the Argentine are Italians, who live on home-grown produce. They do not go in for European luxuries, so they do not feel the difference in the exchange themselves; they live on maize and meat produced in the country, and the money they get for their wheat they spend in the same proportion and in the same ratio. But they feel the difference when they come to import European goods or machinery, then, of course, the difference comes in; but as long as they are living as these people can do on their native produce they do not feel the difference.

50,026. (*Mr. Everett.*) And they get now nearly four times as much money in their currency for their produce as it sells for in English money in England?—Nearly four times as much, you may say, in their currency.

Depreciated currency in Argentina.

50,027. (*Chairman.*) It would seem to follow from your remarks, that the more a county depreciates its currency the better for it?—No. It is almost as if we had discovered the philosopher's stone; the Argentine grower is satisfied with the price he gets, and we are getting it at about half the price we can produce it for.

50,028. Is it a benefit to this country, or to the Argentine?—I think the masses of this country are benefited.

50,029. Who are benefited by it?—The masses, the consumers.

50,030. In this country?—Yes.

Effect.

50,031. Or consumers generally?—Consumers generally. Of course not the merchants, and the producers here, they, of course, are suffering, but the good of the greater number is served by the low price.

50,032. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is not the growth of agriculture in a new country, I mean the increase of its productive ability, an enormous benefit to that country itself?—Yes, it enables it to exist; without it the people there could not exist.

50,033. (*Chairman.*) Then apparently this depreciation of the currency in the Argentine Republic is an immense benefit to the Argentine Republic, inasmuch as it encourages production, and it is a benefit to the rest of the world also inasmuch as it lowers the price of wheat?—To the consuming part of it.

50,034. (*Mr. Everett.*) Not to the rest of the world reckoning producers as part of it?—No, to the masses who consume the produce.

50,035. (*Chairman.*) Therefore it would seem to follow that the more a country depreciates its currency, the better for all the world?—Not for taking a high social position; but these natives, who are content to live on the mere necessaries of life, are enabled to live by it.

50,036. Then have you any suggestions to make in reference to the present depression of agriculture?—I am afraid it is rather beyond me; I think the problem is too deep a one for me to solve.

"Protection" and bounties.

50,037. I presume you think that a protective duty on wheat is out of the question?—I do think so.

50,038. You are not opposed to the idea of a bounty on wheat-growing, I understand?—No, I think a bounty on wheat, if the people would submit to it, would be an advantage.

50,039. And I believe you are favourable to a duty on flour as distinguished from a duty on wheat?—A duty on wheat must be a tax either in the shape of a

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protective duty or of a bounty; it must be a tax on the country in some way but a duty on flour would not be felt.

Price of wheat in America.

50,040. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is not this rise of prices in America due to the bad prospects of the American crops?—That, as I mentioned, was really the foundation of it; that gave the first impulse.

50,041. It was caused by bad weather and the attacks of insects, was it not?—Yes. The prospects are not so good there. It is very difficult to assess the reports at their proper value, but I have no doubt that gave the start to the rise in prices which has occurred.

50,042. But you do not know whether there is any actual foundation for it?—I am informed that there is a foundation for the reports.

World's wheat area.

50,043. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Could you tell us whether you have made any calculations as to the increase of the wheat area all over the world, setting off the reductions in some countries, such as this country, against the increases in other parts of the world?—The increase in the production of the world in the last 21 years has been nearly 100 million quarters.

50,044. From 200 millions to 300 million quarters, would you say?—From 220 millions to 318 millions the production of the world in the year 1873 was 220 millions, as against 318 millions in 1894.

50,045. Are these averages?—They are figures which are very dependable; they are not assessments made before the crop; they are the results of the export and the consumption of the country taken after the event.

50,046. But could you say whether that figure for 1873, for instance, was a good average of two or three years about that time or not?—In 1873 it was 220 millions; in 1875, 223 millions; and in 1876, 216 millions; so that you get a fair average there. The 220 millions would be a mean figure.

50,047. At the present time do you think that 318 millions would be about the same sort of average figure?—I should think it would. In 1892 it was 300 millions; in 1893, the world grew 314 millions; and in 1894, the world's growth was 318 millions.

50,048. It is, rather, perhaps, a high figure then?—Yes; I think, perhaps, that the Argentine having turned out a greater deficiency than we expected, these figures are full as compared with the others.

50,049. On the whole your figures seem to me to show rather an extreme increase, and I wish to ask the question for that reason, whether you have compared it with the increase of the wheat consuming population throughout the world?—I have not the figures here of the wheat consumption of the population, but these figures have been very carefully compiled. Of course, they, as all such figures must be, are to be taken as approximate, but I think they are very fairly dependable, as far as they go.

Consumption of wheat.

50,050. You mentioned that you thought there had been some increase in the consumption of wheat in India?—Yes, among the native population, but not to a large extent. I imagine that is one of the causes—to some extent, but, as I say, not to a great extent.

50,051. You could not say that the increase in the growth of wheat generally has been much in excess of the increase of the numbers of the wheat-consuming population of the world?—Yes, it has rather; that is what we have suffered from in the last few years, the growth of wheat has rather outstripped the consumption.

50,052. But only rather outstripped, it has not greatly increased as far as you can conjecture?—I suppose the annual increase of consumption is some three or four million quarters; three million quarters, perhaps, would be the annual rate of increase of consumption, and the increase in production has been in excess of that.

50,053. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are you talking of the increase of consumption in the world?—Yes, in the world it would be about three millions in the wheat-consuming countries.

50,054. Three million quarters you mean?—Yes.

50,055. (*Mr. Everett.*) It would be a constantly increasing margin evidently?—Yes, *pro rata*; but that would be merely, roughly speaking, 1 per cent., I think.

50,056. (*Mr. Giffen.*) But you could not say that the increase in the production of wheat has been enormously in excess of the demand?—No, I think there has been a sufficient excess to justify taking liberties with the market, but I do not think the excess has justified the extremely low prices to which we have gone.

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50,057. Have you found at all that wheat is an article where the consumption per head of the wheat-consuming countries does not increase very much; and does that not affect the question of prices?—I should think the consumption per head in this country is rather less than in other countries, because our people earning a better wage are eating more meat and other things.

50,058. Precisely, but does that not affect other countries to some extent as well?—Yes; to some extent, but it would not have the same effect in all European countries.

50,059. All that would have an effect on the price, and that is a point we must consider?—It is a point.

50,060. As well as the mere increase of the production of wheat?—Yes.

50,061. (*Mr. Everett.*) Would there not also be a margin constantly of people who become consumers of wheat, but who had hitherto been consumers of rye, and such things?—Yes, that has happened in Germany. I think the deficient rye crop in 1891 in Germany made people eat more wheat, and I do not think they have gone back to rye.

50,062. (*Mr. Giffen.*) The area under rye, I believe, has not been increased of late years?—No, I think the tendency has been to go from rye to wheat. There was a great dearth of rye in 1891, and a great many people in Germany then adopted wheat bread instead of rye bread, and they have not gone back to rye to any large extent.

50,063. Is there not a tendency in some countries, where the scale of living has been rather low, to take to the consumption of wheat under those circumstances?—Yes, I should think that might perhaps compensate for the countries where they have been earning better wages, and where there is a higher state of civilisation, and where the wheat consumption has decreased; I think perhaps you might put the one against the other pretty much.

50,064. Is there any other country, besides Germany, which you could state distinctly as having increased its consumption of wheat?—No, not to my knowledge. I have some figures here which are very interesting about the quantity of bread consumed in different countries. It varies tremendously, according to the country. This is taken from a Swiss paper, which appeared some time ago. In France, the average consumption of bread stuffs, or flour, or wheat in some shape or other, is about 705 lbs. per head of population. Of course, France is a regular bread-eating country, and they live on farinaceous food very much. In Switzerland, the average consumption of bread stuffs is 405 lbs. per head; in Spain, it is 418 lbs. per head; in Belgium, 378 lbs. per head; in Hungary, 361 lbs. per head; in England, it is 352 lbs. per head, which is only about half the consumption per head of bread stuffs as compared with France.

50,065. (*Mr. Everett.*) That is very remarkable?—It is very speculative.

50,066. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Did you get the consumption in the United States?—That is about the same as in our own country; it is 357 lbs. per head. In Italy it is 310 lbs.; in Holland, 283 lbs.; in Austria, 187 lbs.; in Portugal, 176 lbs.; in Denmark, 165 lbs.; in Norway and Sweden, where they eat black bread, 66 lbs.; in Russia, where they eat black bread again, 99 lbs.; and in Germany, 143 lbs.

50,067. Are there not some of these countries who are large consumers of potatoes as well as black bread?—Yes, and that may affect it to some extent.

50,068. You are not aware whether there has been a large increase in the consumption of potatoes, in Russia, for instance?—I do not know how that has affected it. Of course, these figures can only be very approximate; still they are interesting, as showing in round figures what the effect is.

Bounties

50,069. With regard to your suggestion that the position of wheat growers in this country might be improved by a bounty on the production of wheat in this country, do you attach much importance to that as a practical suggestion?—The advantage to the nation of encouraging such an industry as agriculture would

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justify its consideration, only I think the difficulty is that people would feel that the benefit would go so largely to the landowner.

50,070. Might not the effect be to eventually increase the evil from which we are suffering, namely, that of an excess of production of wheat over the demand for it?—I do not think that, because the whole possibility of our growth here is limited, you see.

50,071. Suppose you add a few million quarters, say, 10 million quarters, to the 318 millions that are now produced throughout the world, would that not have a very great effect upon the price?—Yes, but if we get the industry here, or rather if we retain the industry, it would, of course, be an advantage. I do not say I can recommend it, but I think it is a suggestion which is worth considering, because there is no doubt at present agriculture is almost squeezed out.

50,072. Still, you have not followed out what the consequences might be of a bounty of that kind?—It is a tax upon somebody, and if the Imperial taxpayer will bear it, I think perhaps the country can afford it; but I do not think the masses will bear it.

50,073. I am rather looking at it from the point of view that it would not do any good so far as the agriculturists in this country are concerned, because it would tend to bring about an excess of production, and then the price would go down again to pretty much what it is now?—I think it would rather tend to discourage agriculture in other countries than in our own to some extent.

50,074. But other countries might take to the same expedient and give bounties also in a similar measure?—Of course anything which reduces prices is good for the masses. It is only a question whether we, as taxpayers here, can afford to say we are willing to pay a tax for the benefit of this particular industry. The difficulty that I have mentioned is that the feeling would be that it would go largely in the landowners' pocket; that is where I think the difficulty would come in.

50,075. You are aware, I suppose, that we had bounties upon the export of wheat in this country during the last century, I think?—Yes.

50,076. And that the results were not altogether satisfactory?—I do not know what the effect of that was; I am not posted up in it.

50,077. You have not gone into the history of that?—No. I have not gone as far as that.

Commercial gambling.

50,078. How much of the fall in the price of wheat would you attribute to the system of options; how far did the accentuation go that you speak of?—I do not think it is possible to say how much; one can only speak generally; I think it did accentuate it.

50,079. It would not be what Mr. Smith told us, namely, that the price of wheat was 24*s*., whereas but for the system of options it would be 40*s*.?—I do not think he is capable of assessing what the difference would be. I think he can tell the direction in which it would affect it, but I do not think he can assess the amount at all.

50,080. You do not believe in anything of that kind?—I do not think that would account for it altogether, but I do think it does have an effect. I say that when there is an excess of supply it makes that excess appear still greater than it is. You can tell that from the fact that when we have had a really legitimate extra demand and there is a better feeling in this consumptive country, America has practically jumped upon us, instead of becoming dearer to-morrow or the next day, as it used to do when we led the way. When there is a little rise people think it is a good time to sell options; when there has been a little inflation they sell, and so put a lot of paper wheat on the market, which has the effect, as I say, of taking the sentiment out of us.

50,081. Still, I think, you have not gone minutely into the question, theoretically as to how far that effect would result from the system of options; you speak of paper wheat, for instance?—Paper wheat is option; I mean that when I say paper wheat.

50,082. Is paper wheat on the market if somebody else has bought it—if there is a purchase to set off against the wheat that has been sold?—People are merely backing their opinion; they think it is a safe thing to sell it, but the wheat does not exist at all.

50,083. Somebody else has bought it, and, so far, has taken it off the market?—If you have competed yourself as a man of capital with a man who is trading on bills, for a long time, till this man gets to the end of his tether, you suffer very much, because he is working on a system of credit, and you are working on actual money.

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50,084. That applies to every business, and is not a thing special to this system of options?—I think the man who is trading on bills finds that it gives him an appearance of having capital which he has not; and so those men who sell wheat in options have the credit of having so much wheat which they do not possess. I think it is undoubted myself that the tendency of this system is to depress the market.

50,085. Would it have made the price of wheat this last few months, for instance, 2*s*. a quarter less than it would otherwise have been?—It is very difficult to estimate; I should think it would be fully that amount; but I think it might be easily more than that.

50,086. But it would not be a large amount, would it?—It is so difficult to say; I do not think anyone can assess it. You can only assess the direction, I think; you can only see the direction in which it effects it; it is an unbounded quantity, I think.

50,087. Is not the whole idea as to whether it causes any depression at all or not, one of mere speculation, and one on which you have very few data to go upon?—I know from the effects on the market that the options do depress our legitimate consuming market. You see all rises are sentimental to some extent. They are the effect of opinion; it is not the fact so much as opinions which govern it; and if there are people who are willing to back their opinion by selling a lot of wheat forward, and take the risk of it, it has a depressing effect on the market generally.

50,088. If people at the same time are backing the opposite opinion, does not the one balance the other?—Yes, but I do not think it obtains to the same extent.

50,089. But you cannot explain to us why it is the one opinion overpowers the other, so that there is not a complete set-off in the balance?—I say when there is the knowledge of there being an excess of supply of wheat in the world, it makes people who are inclined to take a bear view, very venturesome indeed in the risks they run.

50,090. But somebody of the contrary opinion takes the opposite view?—When you get to higher prices and when there is scarcity, then, of course, they dare not do it; but I say when there is an excess it makes the depression worse. When there is a knowledge that wheat is in a few hands and actual wheat is short, they dare not take the liberties with the market which they do at other times. The option sellers are very much like butterflies, they come out when the sun is shining, when everything looks as if it was going on for ever, and there is never going to be scarcity again, but they disappear whenever there is any real scarcity; they dare not face it; in fact, at the very time they ought to come out and to sell with advantage to themselves, they dare not do it.

50,091. Have you compared these markets with the Stock Exchange markets, for instance, where the opinion prevails, that speculation rather tends to keep up the prices, and to make them steadier than they otherwise would be?—I do not know what the effect would be on the Stock Exchange. I feel pretty certain from very long experience that the effect of the option market has been to depress it. We might easily have got a rise in the last few years legitimately, but for the bears or option sellers who have come out, and put these immense quantities of wheat on the market. As the Chairman said just now, 200 million bushels of wheat have been sold in one day, and that wheat does not exist.

50,092. That was not in one day?—That wheat does not exist; that is in excess of the actual wheat existing in America at this time of the year.

50,093. This is a case where the speculative buyer has rather beaten the other man?—Yes, he has just now, and the man is suffering, and these men have become nervous.

50,094. The puzzle to outsiders like myself is, how it is that the speculative seller can overcome the other when the other man has money, and is able to demand delivery if the circumstances of supply and demand should establish a better price than what the option

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seller is getting?—When there is real scarcity, that comes in; but as long as there is excess, as there has been in the last few years, it does not.

50,095. Would that excess not have operated in any case, whether you had speculation or not?—Not to the same extent, I think.

50,096. Who would have held the excess?—I think growers and traders would have been content to hold it; the quantity was bearable; the excess was of a compassable quantity.

50,097. But somebody must have held it?—Yes, a good many of us in the trade have been content to hold a great deal of wheat during the last few years.

50,098. Have you not done so?—I have done so myself, but then, of course, these people, over and above what we have held, have put a lot more wheat into circulation which does not exist at all.

50,099. It seems to me, and I speak from some acquaintance with the opinion of the Stock Exchange to the same effect, that all these speculative sales would rather tend to raise the price than to lower it?—You must recollect that stocks are of a much more limited character. They can estimate the exact quantity there is of all the stocks and shares, but wheat rather comes into a different category; it is all the world's production that we have to deal with.

50,100. Still if the surplus is a kind of manageable quantity, apart from the speculation, it would have been held by different people, and prices would not have gone so low?—No.

50,101. Would not the effect of these speculative sales to people who go into the market and buy what they knew did not exist, be to send up the price?—No, because you cannot get to the end; they might sell an unlimited quantity; as long as the bears are willing to sell it is an unlimited quantity.

50,102. If you go into the market and offer money for it and take the wheat and lock up what they pretend to sell, you would put them into a corner at once?—You cannot. The quantities they deal in are for future delivery, and as soon as they are in excess I do not think it is practicable to corner them in any way. It has been tried over and over again, but wheat has always been found too large an article to corner in that way.

50,103. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding this question of options and futures which has been brought very prominently before this Commission, have you any remedies to suggest in order to stop this excess of gambling?—I do not think there is any remedy which would meet it entirely, because if men are disposed to sell what they have not got, you cannot ascertain whether a man has it or not. If I think well to sell 100,000 sacks of flour, no one has a right to ask me whether I have them in my possession or not; it is a matter of my own business. I think you can hardly draw the line between this business which is so purely speculative and that which may be legitimate. It has been going on to an extent for a long time. To a limited extent the Greeks used to do that up to 30 years ago; they used to sell cargoes of wheat, and take their chance of buying them in Russia afterwards; but then of course that was to a limited amount. I do not know how you are to go behind a man's private business and say whether he shall sell so many million bushels of wheat or whether he shall not.

50,104. Mr. Smith brought very prominently before us, that it really damaged the wheat-grower in the agricultural parts of the country by bearing down the price of wheat; and you too say it has a deteriorating effect upon the price of wheat?—I think it has myself.

50,105. Is it legitimate to have that sort of gambling in the trade?—The question is how to prevent it; I do not think you can do so.

50,106. That is the question I am asking you, have you no remedy?—I do not think you can prevent it.

50,107. (*Chairman.*) Is there much of this speculation in England, or is it mainly in America?—In Liverpool it is done largely, but in London it is not done so much, though, of course, London people buy it in American or Liverpool markets. There is an option market, but it has not succeeded very well because they do not know how to adopt any particular standard here, because we have such a varied supply in London as compared with other places. In Liverpool they make it either red winter wheat or Californian wheat; which are the two great articles they import there and they always have a large enough quantity in store, or generally have, to speculate upon, we have not any particular class of wheat here or any particular grade, which we can sell in sufficient quantity to enable people to form a market here with success.

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50,108. In Liverpool is there a large amount of dealing in this kind of purchases and sales with regard to the future?—Yes.

50,109. And not represented by any actual stock?—Yes, but nothing like there is in America. It is very limited in Liverpool.

50,110. Then nothing that could be done by the law in this country would very much affect the matter?—I do not think it is possible at all to do anything in this country with it.

50,111. (*Mr. Clay.*) Mr. Smith said that all the old substantial wheat dealers and wheat agents in Liverpool had been nearly killed out in a sense?—Some of us who have had long experience never thought that such prices as we have had were possible. We were brought up in the idea that 40*s.* was the bottom price of wheat, and we have paid very dearly for our education.

50,112. Gambling in options for wheat has not taken root in the London market, you say?—Not now, they have tried it but it has not been a success here at all; they have not been able to work it, and it is not worth speaking of at all here.

Price of wheat

50,113. You referred to the price of English wheat falling to 17*s.* 8*d.* a quarter, I think?—Yes.

50,114. What month was that in last year?—That was in October of last year.

50,115. That was English wheat then of the crop of 1894?—Yes, one week it was down to 17*s.* 6*d.*; 17*s.* 8*d.* was the monthly average, but, as I say, it touched 17*s.* 6*d.* in one particular week.

50,116. The Chairman put a question to you as to the condition of the wheat and as to its being of a bad quality; had that anything to do with the lowering of the price?—No, last year's crop was not so bad; it was not of a first rate quality, but it was not so bad as to justify us in taking it as accounting for the lowering of price.

50,117. The condition of the English wheat then did not much deteriorate the price?—To a very small extent that would come into account for the low price.

50,118. You say now that the English wheat has gone up 7*s.* a quarter, is there not always a general rise from the back-end of the year to the good spring weather, bringing the wheat into better condition?—I do not think the rise in the quality has so much to do with the rise in the price; that has a very small influence on the rise in the market.

Cause of fall in price of wheat.

50,119. Do you consider that the fine condition of wheat from the Argentine Republic and of No. 1 Dakota has deteriorated or decreased the price of our English wheat?—Yes, it has; because our English wheat has so much more moisture, and roller milling having been introduced the foreign, dryer wheat, shows better results than English wheat does.

50,120. The Argentine Republic wheat and Dakota No. 1 and No. 2 are very superior wheats for flour making and baking purposes, are they not?—In the matter of gluten the Argentine is not a strong wheat, but the American wheats from Dakota and Minnesota are very strong and there is much more gluten in them.

50,121. The Dakota wheat is the finest wheat in the market, is it not?—Yes, the wheat from the north-west States.

50,122. That has had an influence on the English wheats?—Yes, relatively; because it has been worth more to the English miller for mixing with English wheat.

50,123. Have you any idea what proportion of the soft English wheat is now put in with the foreign wheat to make flour, has it not very much decreased?—In places like Liverpool and London the proportion of English wheat that is now being used is infinitesimal.

50,124. Is it not somewhere about 25 per cent. of the English wheat that is used with the foreign wheat?—That is so, taking the whole country through. In ports, such as London and Liverpool, the per-centage is lower; there would not be 5 per cent. of English wheat used in London as compared with the foreign wheat.

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50,125. That is very much against the English farmer in selling his wheat, is it not?—The growth of wheat in the English counties has not been much more than the provinces where it is grown have been able to consume themselves, in the principal towns; and the ports where the foreign wheats come in have been able to do much better by using the foreign wheat largely, rather than having to pay the carriage of English wheat up the country to those points.

50,126. I understand—perhaps you may corrobrate it—from millers and people who are dealing in it, that about 75 per cent. or 80 per cent. of foreign wheat is used to 25 per cent. of our English wheat?—If you take our consumption roughly as 28 millions and recollect that our crop is only 7 millions, you have it at once that it is 25 per cent. only.

50,127. That is very much against the English wheat grower, is it not?—Yes.

Foreign wheat supply.

50,128. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What did you say were our chief sources of supply for foreign wheat?—The United States, of all countries, is the largest source.

50,129. And next?—Russia.

50,130. And then?—Of course, that varies very much according to the year; I should think India would be our next, but India has not given us so much these last two or three years as Argentina has done.

50,131. India is a very great wheat-producing country, is it not?—Yes, it is very great; but not in proportion to its size.

50,132. Where does it rank among the wheat-producing countries of the world, is it third?—No, it would be fourth; France would be third.

50,133. (*Mr. Everett.*) There are supposed to be 32 million acres of wheat in India, or something like that?—The consumption last year was 32 million quarters, and I do not suppose they grow more than 8 or 10 bushels to the acre.

50,134. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Latterly, I understand, that Argentina has come very much to the front as a wheat-producing country?—Yes.

50,135. What proportion of our foreign supply do we get at present from Argentina?—I should think that last year we got nearly 20 per cent.—17 or 18 per cent., perhaps.

Wheat production in Argentina.

50,136. The capacity of Argentina for wheat production is very great, is it not?—It is almost unlimited.

50,137. And it is increasing very rapidly?—Yes.

50,138. (*Chairman.*) Did you say 17 per cent.?—Of our imports I should think it is.

50,139. I think that is an over-statement taking the figures for 1893?—I am speaking of the last year; I have not the figures exactly; in 1893 it would be less.

50,140. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are speaking really of its present position?—Yes.

50,141. And you say that its capacity for production and therefore, I suppose, for export, as regards the future, is practically unlimited?—Yes.

50,142. Do you anticipate from your knowledge of the wheat trade, and from what you have learned about Argentina that that capacity is likely to be developed?—Yes, and would be very much assisted by any rise in price.

Consumption of wheat.

50,143. Now you told Mr. Giffen, I think, in reply to him, what the increase in production of the world's crop was between 1873 and 1893, did you not?—Yes.

50,144. Can you also tell us what was the increase of population during that time?—No, I have not those figures.

50,145. Have you considered them?—I could not speak at all on that. I know that the increased consumption is about 1 per cent. per annum.

50,146. You told us that three million quarters of wheat every year was what you estimated as the increase of consumption?—Yes.

50,147. How do you estimate this if you do not know what the increase of the population of the world is?—I only know that as a figure, but I could not give you the population of the whole of the consuming countries of the world. I think Mr. Giffen would accept that 1 per cent. as being about right.

50,148. (*Mr. Giffen.*) That is for this country, I believe, but is there not a difficulty in getting any statistics of the wheat-consuming population, because many countries include people who do not consume wheat?—Yes; you can only do it in very round approximate figures indeed.

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50,149. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What I want to arrive at is this: You have told us that there is an increase of production over consumption; and I want to ascertain upon what figures or facts you base that statement. I ask you if you are able to tell us what the increase of population has been, and you say that you cannot do it?—I have seen the figures, and I have drawn my conclusion from figures which I have had before me; I have not got the figures here.

Production of wheat.

50,150. What do you estimate the increase of production to be—how many million quarters per annum?—Of course it has varied very much. I will try back from 1894. In 1894 the estimate is 318,000,000; in 1893, 314,000,000; in 1892, 300,000,000; in 1891, 297,000,000; in 1890, 282,000,000; in 1889, 267,000,000; in 1888, 278,000,000; in 1887, 286,000,000; in 1886, 270,000,000; and in 1885, 260,000,000.

50,151. Of course the production according to those figures varies very considerably?—Yes, as the crops are better or worse.

50,152. However, it comes to this: I think that when you tell us the increase of production as estimated by you to exceed the increase of consumption, you do not base that upon any figures as to population which you are able to put before us now?—I am not prepared with them here, but I can tell you that is the conclusion, and I think it is an accepted fact, and Mr. Giffen, who has figures more at his fingers' end than myself would, I think, confirm that.

50,153. (*Mr. Giffen.*) My difficulty is to find the exact figures of the wheat-consuming populations?—Yes, I understand.

Wheat production in Argentina.

50,154. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Now to go back to the question of the Argentine for the moment; capacity in the future for wheat-production will, you think, be very great indeed, and you anticipate that it will be greatly developed?—Of course with a continuance of the low prices it would not go on so rapidly as if we got an increased price. I think this late increase will help it very much.

50,155. The continuance of the low prices will be a discouragement to production everywhere?—Yes.

50,156. What country can sell wheat at the lowest price at the present time with a profit?—Argentina.

59,157. Then Argentina, if the wheat production of the world is very largely developed will practically be in a position to control and rule the market price?—I should think she will have a great influence—a larger influence than any other.

50,158. I think I understood you to say that the price at which Argentina can afford to sell depends really on the premium on gold?—Yes, very much indeed.

50,159. More than on anything?—More than on anything else.

50,160. That is to say, if the premium on gold is high they can afford to take a lower price?—A lower price relatively.

50,161. And if the premium on gold falls, then they require to have a higher price?—Yes.

Depreciated currency in Argentina.

50,162. Can you form any opinion as to the lowest price at which Argentina can afford to sell wheat now?—I should think we have found the lowest level. The wheat growers have been able to pay their way, but I should not think they have done much more than that.

50,163. When you say, "the lowest price" do you mean the 17*s.* 6*d.* a quarter of which you have told us?—It was on the basis of that. I have bought Argentina wheat here myself at 18*s.* a quarter, including freight and all the expenses attaching to it.

50,164. You have not the slightest doubt as to the effect of a depreciated currency in Argentina enabling them to sell wheat at a much lower price than they otherwise would be able to do?—No, none whatever, because the price of wheat fluctuates from day to day to a great extent with the fluctuations in gold.

50,165. If, for instance, the paper currency was at a par with gold what price would they require to get here to enable them to sell at a profit?—It would put them on a level with the United States and other countries where the premium did not operate.

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50,166. If the currency ceased to be depreciated and was brought back to its original par value with gold, it would necessitate a very considerable rise in price?—Yes, to pay them to grow wheat at all.

50,167. Then, if I understand you aright, what is really the cause which lies at the root of the extremely low price of wheat which we have had to contend with recently is the depreciated currency in Argentina?—Yes, I may say so.

50,168. And the future price, then, really depends upon what the premium on gold may or may not be?—Yes, very largely indeed.

Currency in Russia and India.

50,169. Now as to the other countries which you have mentioned; you have mentioned Russia and India as, I think, being the second and third large exporting countries to us?—Yes.

50,170. Does the same thing hold good in a modified degree with regard to their currency?—Yes, because the paper rouble in Russia gives a person there an advantage to that extent in the same way as it does in Argentina, although, of course, not to the same extent.

50,171. It has not depreciated so much as to the other?—No, not at all.

50,172. But so far as it has depreciated —— ?—The operation is the same.

50,173. It enables them to sell more cheaply?—Yes, in proportion.

50,174. The same thing holds good, I presume, in regard to India?—Yes.

50,175. It would hold the same, too, with regard to India and her silver depreciation?—Yes, it has an effect there because India is a long way off and the carriage is very heavy, and but for the depreciation of silver she could not supply us at the price she does.

50,176. Did I understand you to say just now that the extreme depreciation of the currency in Argentina was considerably greater than in India?—Yes.

50,177. And it had injured India in competition with Argentina very much?—Yes, it has.

Currency in India and Argentina compared.

50,178. Is that how you explain the lesser amount of exports from India?—It is due to some extent to the failure of the crops, but then, also, the low prices discouraged the increased production which would have occurred, because India can grow us any amount if we give her price enough for it.

50,179. The capacity of India, you think, is enormous?—Yes, at a price.

50,180. It might be developed immensely?—Immensely at a price.

50,181. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Does that price depend upon the currency?—Of course that is one of the things our price here depends upon. Even she has now almost found her limit, because with all the advantage she has in the low price of the silver exchange she has not increased her production in the last few years.

50,182. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) She is cut out now by Argentina?—Yes.

50,183. Who gains a greater advantage from the exchange even than she does?—Yes.

50,184. Is there a large visible supply of wheat, as it is called, in sight at the present time?—Yes, but not so much as there was last year.

50,185. Is it about the average of what we have had during recent years?—It is not quite so large, but still there is enough in the world for our requirements.

50,186. There is more than is required for consumption?—Yes, I should think there is.

Price of wheat.

50,187. What do you say are the main causes for this recent rise in the price of wheat?—I think the first cause was the bad reports of American crops which gave the bulls a certain justification for buying largely.

Commercial gambling.

50,188. So that really, this rise being so sudden, looks as if it was owing very much indeed to this system of speculation?—Yes, I think that is one reason why it has gone up so much all at once. No doubt the people who have been uncovered have helped to accentuate the rise, because they have become frightened.

50,189. What I mean is this, that the information as to the crops in America, I suppose, has not been received within the last few days?—Within the last few weeks the reports of failures in different districts have been more current.

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50,190. Within the last few weeks?—Yes, they have acquired a certain amount of force ——

50,191. Within the last few weeks?—Yes, within the last week, or I may say, the last two or three weeks.

50,192. That has culminated in that time?—But it is not sufficient to account for the rise of itself, except that people have rather woke up to the fact of the prices being so low, and have followed it up.

50,193. What I am rather trying to elicit from you for the information of the Commission is this, whether in your opinion, the greater part of the sudden rise is due to this system of speculation or not?—I think it has been more due to the consumers also having taken alarm at seeing the rise has been persisted in from day to day, I speak myself as being in touch with consumers and with our consuming public; the consumers, that is, the traders, have come in to buy this last week or two, when they would not look at wheat a little while ago.

50,194. You mean there has been a little panic as to the possibility of the supply falling off?—Yes. Naturally, when there has been a certain excitement, it has affected all people, more or less. These cases and times, such as we have had the last week or two, are very exceptional; we have had nothing of the kind for years before.

Future price of wheat.

50,195. May I ask if you have formed any opinion as to what the general tendency of the price of wheat is likely to be in the future; do you think we must look forward to a gradual fall, or may we look forward to a gradual rise, or is the price likely to be stationary?—It is very hard to forecast. I think we must look forward to a much lower general level, because any rise in price has two effects—it, of course, increases the production of wheat in countries near at hand, and it also brings wheat from districts farther off, which can then pay the carriage, but which were closed at the low price.

50,196. (*Chairman.*) You mean low as compared with what price?—The cost of production.

50,197. I think you stated that you thought we might look forward to a lower range of price?—To a lower average level of price; but not to a lower level than to-day's price. Whereas, I suppose, 50*s.* might have been taken as an average price a generation ago, I think we must look forward, with the lower cost of freights and the increased production of the world, to a lower level.

50,198. (*Mr. Chaplain.*) You mean that if you were to take the average, for instance, of the last five years, you would be of opinion that we must look forward to a level somewhat lower than that in the future?—No, I do not think I would take the last five years, because the Russian prohibition was within those five years, and that took us up to very old prices for the time being. I think the prices for the last three years would be below the average price that we may expect.

50,199. The last three years would be lower?—Yes, I think the prices we have obtained the last three years would be below the average of a long series of years.

50,200. (*Chairman.*) Then you would rather look forward to a rise in prices as compared with the price of the last three years?—I think the tendency is rather to rise. I think production has been very much discouraged in many of the old countries, in India, and in the United States too. A rise in price will take a little time to have the effect of increasing the production again; they cannot do it at short notice.

Depreciated currency Argentina.

50,201. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) If what you tell us is the case about Argentina, as to the unlimited capacity that she has for the production and the export of wheat, would that argument still hold good?—I think so; this price with this gold premium can go on for ever. That is where her advantages come in, and one has to take all causes together in one's mind.

50,202. Do you anticipate, in the course of years, that the premium on gold will be less than it is now?—I should think it naturally would as the country consolidates.

50,203. Assuming it remains at its present average level, then Argentina would continue to sell as low as ever?—I think so. Of course, she had a very large crop last year, and I think she has got down to a point at which, though she has been able to do it, she has not profited much by sending us wheat.

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Dependence of Great Britain on foreign wheat.

50,204. I understand you regard with some apprehension the future of this country, as we are so entirely dependent upon foreign countries for our supply of wheat?—Yes, I think it is a very serious question for statesmen.

50,205. And you have made some proposals as to remedies in order to guard against this?—Yes.

50,206. Do you think, as far as you can judge, that that dependence is likely to increase or to become less?—I think it is likely to increase, because the population here is increasing, and the growth of wheat has a tendency to diminish at the range of prices which have existed lately.

50,207. Do you think that year by year we are likely to become more and more dependent upon foreign countries for the staple of our food?—I think so at the low price which has obtained.

50,208. That is, as far as you can judge from your experience of the trade?—Yes.

Bounties.

50,209. Do you propose as one of the remedies for that that we should have a bounty upon wheat growing?—I am not prepared to recommend it, but I suggest that it is a thing which is worth being entertained, only the difficulty occurs to one as to whether the farmer or the landlord will benefit if the bounty upon the growth of wheat exists—whether the landlord will not get better rents than he has done. I am afraid the landlord has no sympathisers outside his own class.

50,210. Then, although it might be of general advantage to the country, do I understand you to say that you would not be in favour of it because at the same time it might help the landlord?—I do not say that, but I am afraid that is an objection. I do not say it from my own point of view; it is only that I think that is an objection which would be raised by the taxpayers. I should be quite prepared myself to support it.

50,211. It does not prevent you suggesting it?—No, and I should be prepared to support it myself.

National granaries.

50,212. Then you propose national granaries; what is the object of that?—We are really within such a limited distance of starvation if anything happened through the action of privateers. It is just such a question as whether it is worth a man's while to insure his house. A man may say, "If I have a fire I can "bear it and I will pay my loss, but I will not pay the "insurance." Of course insurances in some cases are very heavy, and I should not perhaps take the instance of a man insuring his house, because there the insurance is so ridiculously small. But in businesses like mine, where we pay 4 per cent. on our insurance for our mills, because it is a hazardous risk, the amount then becomes of importance.

50,213. How many days' or weeks' consumption have we in the country at the present time on an average?—I should think six weeks, perhaps.

50,214. As much as six weeks?—Not so much at the end of the harvest year.

50,215. (*Mr. Giffen.*) Have you gone into the question?—Only roughly. I should think we have only four weeks very often at the end of the harvest.

50,216. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What used to be the case?—We used to be able to go on for months; when our growth was our own we could go on for several months.

50,217. What is it that you propose—that there should be national granaries in which to store the wheat?—I suggest that if it is thought worth while to go in for insurance that is the only way in which we can protect ourselves. With the number of ships that we have bringing wheat here it would be impossible to protect them at sea, and a general war would drive them off the seas. The vessels which bring our wheat here can be numbered by hundreds and hundreds.

50,218. What sort of granaries do you suggest—how much wheat should they hold or keep?—I think three or four months' supply might be just the difference between our being quickly doubled up in case of a general war or not.

50,219. And you make this as a practical suggestion on a subject which you regard as serious?—Yes, of course, as long as war does not come, as long as you do not have a fire in your house, you are as well off as the man who does insure.

50,220. (*Mr. Giffen.*) But you have made no calculation, I understand, of what the supply of wheat in this country at a given time is, such as the War Office and the Admiralty have made, and have stated in debate in Parliament?—I have not worked it out closely; I know it is only a question of a very few figures, but I could not tell you now.

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50,221. Have you followed the debates in Parliament?—To some extent, and I have seen the calculations which I know at times have been within four weeks at the end of harvest.

50,222. Are there not very different statements made by the responsible military and naval authorities?—I am not prepared to put any opinion of my own against theirs. I know it is a question of very limited time.

50,223. I think it is rather a pity that we should continue this subject, because you have not studied it?—It is rather outside my business.

50,224. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have had a very great experience, and it is a subject of some interest, and I think your opinion is as good as that of many other people. Suppose the granaries established, would they have an effect on the price of wheat?—Whilst you are filling the granaries, it would have a very large effect. Of, course, it could only be done gradually. I am not prepared to recommend it altogether; it is for those who know what the chances of war are, and how great the risk is, to decide. I know myself that if anything interfered with our imports, our position would be of such a frightful character that I think it is worth considering.

50,225. What I wanted to arrive at now is, what would be the effect if it could be done; would it be to raise the price, or would it be to lower it?—It would raise the price to begin with.

50,226. And after it had been carried out?—I suppose it would find its level again. That would be a sort of dead stock which would always exist.

50,227. It would involve the purchase of a great quantity of wheat for the time being?—Yes, I should not suggest that it should be done all at once; it should be done by very slow degrees.

50,228. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) How long would this continue; it would be a very troublesome matter?—I think not.

50,229. These quantities being thrown upon the market would unsteady the market, would they not?—I suppose you would also be buying, and it could not create an excess in that way in the market. If you only sold out from time to time as you were replacing, the effect on the market would be nil after once the supply was secured.

Wheat production of Argentina.

50,230. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I understand you think that there is practically an unlimited power in Argentina to increase its supply of wheat?—Yes.

50,231. Does not its power to increase its supply almost entirely depend upon the increase of Italian immigration into the country?—It would, of course, but I think if there were a demand for labour a supply would follow.

50,232. Has not the immigration fallen off?—I have no figures before me to enable me to answer such a question.

50,233. Does not the depreciation in the paper currency there tend to cause a falling off in the immigration?—I do not see why it should.

50,234. We have heard that a great deal of the immigration there is temporary—that men go over from Italy and work there during the year and return to Italy—and, of course, as they are paid in paper they take back less as the paper currency depreciates?—I should think that the numbers who return are few compared with those who stay and who bring up their families there.

Bounties.

50,235. What amount of bounty do you think would be necessary to have any appreciable effect on the growth of wheat in this country—anything like 10*s.* a quarter?—No, I should think you would not put on anything to that extent.

50,236. Do you think it would have much effect if you put on much less than that?—A pound an acre——

50,237. An acre?—I suppose the bounty would be paid on the area sown with wheat rather than on the wheat itself.

50,238. What would that amount to a quarter—would it be 5*s.* a quarter?—A pound an acre would be about 5*s.* a quarter.

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50,239. Then if you had 10 million quarters of wheat produced you would have to pay 2½ millions a year in bounties?—Yes.

50,240. That would be a clear charge on the taxation of this country?—Yes.

50,241. And I think Mr. Giffen has pointed out it would have the effect of depreciating the price of wheat?—It would be an annual charge, but our iron-clads are an annual charge.

50,242. I do not mean that; I mean it would have the effect of sending the price of wheat down, because you would be increasing the production?—Yes, but if you consider the production of the world you will see that the per-centage of the world's supply would not be large.

Accumulation of wheat.

50,243. Can you say at all what is the amount of the accumulation of the wheat remaining unconsumed in the world at any time—the visible supply?—Yes.

50,244. Are there any means of ascertaining that?—Yes, the figures are published.

50,245. What are they?—I have not those figures with me.

50,246. Does it amount to anything like half a year's production?—No.

50,247. Not in the whole world?—No, not at the end of the season.

50,248. Does it amount to a quarter of a year's production?—No, I should think not at the end of the season.

50,249. Then there is really a very small accumulation?—There is a very small accumulation. We use up year by year within a very small amount.

50,250. Then there is no considerable over-production?—Not at harvest time; of course there is the general fact that the quantity grown has been in excess in the last few years, but taking the rule that would not be so.

50,251. If you have only got a quarter of a year's production as the result of the accumulated over-production for a good many years you cannot say the over-production has been very large?—On a consumption of 300 million quarters if there is a known excess of 10, 15, or 20 millions, the per-centage is not large on the consumption of the whole world, but it is just large enough to create an excess of supply as compared with the demand. You see the per-centage of excess has been very small, and it would last a very short time.

50,252. Has it varied very much from one year to the other?—Yes; in the last three years the production has been in excess of the requirements.

Duty on flour.

50,253. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Why do you put a duty on foreign flour?—Because that is a duty which would not be paid by the consumer. A duty on wheat as the raw material must come on the consumer, a duty on flour would merely retain the industry here and keep the competition between the home manufacturers. You may think I am speaking in my own personal interest; I do not wish it in my own personal interest. I am quite satisfied to compete with the foreign miller myself. I think the effect here would be that the consumer would have the flour quite as cheaply as he does now and more consistently rather than have it capriciously. When we get an under-supply we get a very good price, and when we get an over-supply we get a bad price. The consumer here would be served rather than damaged by a duty on flour. If I may, I will just read you an extract from an American paper, which bears upon that, and you will see exactly if you look at it from the reverse side, that is from our point of view, what bearing it has upon us. It is an extract from a milling paper, giving an account of enormous flour mills which are being built at Minneapolis, and it runs as follows:—"We are glad to "chronicle the announcement of such an enterprise, "not only because we are proud of the growth and "progress of the manufacturing industries of the "great north-west, but for the still better reason "that we believe that our entire surplus wheat crop" —this is written from an American point of view— "ought to be exported in the shape of manufactured "flour instead of in its raw state, as the greater pro-"portion of it now is. We hope the day is not far "distant when not a bushel of wheat will be exported "from this country. It is the life and the vitality of "the soil that is exported with the wheat, but which is "saved and returned to it in the refuse product of the "mill turned into food for stock. And this, to say "nothing of the labour furnished to the army of "workmen required to carry on the work growing out "of the operations of the great mills required to turn "the hundreds of millions of bushels of wheat into the "manufactured flour." That is the American point view of the milling, and it is for retaining the manufacture in their own country. As it serves them, evidently it is against our interest in the reverse ratio. If we imported wheat instead of flour we should bring the 30 per cent. of offals at a very small cost here, and they would go rather to reduce the price of food for cattle here, and that would be in favour of reducing the price of meat here, besides maintaining the industries here which are growing so largely in America. I think the first effect of this would be that a number of large mills would grow up on the Thames and the Mersey and the other large rivers here, and so I think that the home production, as far as the consumer is concerned, would be quite as great, and the competition would continue to be as severe as it is between us and the American millers. The difference is that whereas now we get gluts from time to time there would then be a competition where we should all be on the same basis all the year round, which would produce an every-day competition as compared with the intermittent competition which we get now.

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50,254. (*Mr. Clay.*) This shows that the flour competition in America has perfectly killed our milling trade, and deprived the farmer here of the 30 per cent. more of feeding stuff for his cattle?—Yes, being a miller you may think I speak in my own interests; it is open to that interpretation. But I quite disclaim that because I do not think it would be in my interest. I prefer to compete with the American market rather than to compete with millers in the same position as myself on the same stream and largely equipped. I speak from a national point of view. I think a duty on flour of say 6*d.* or 9*d.* a cwt. would give a very great impulse to milling here, and would be for the good of those who feed cattle here, inasmuch as the offal would come with the wheat.

50,255. And it would benefit the millers here, and the agriculturists would derive a benefit from the cheaper feed for their stock?—I do not think it would benefit the millers here; it would increase their number and increase the industry, but I do not think we as millers should be profited by it at all; I mean those who are existing here and have large mills.

50,256. The farming interest—that is the landlord and the tenant—would benefit?—I think the public interest would be served by it and the farming interest.

50,257. And the feeding properties of the offal would come with the wheat instead of not coming here at all?—Yes.

Importation of flour.

50,258. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How much flour do you import—have you any idea?—From America we import about a third of the imports in flour; the portion from the other countries is small.

50,259. What number of men would you say are employed in America to grind for our consumption?—That is a question of thousands not of millions—say 10,000.

Accumulation of wheat.

50,260. (*Mr. Everett.*) In regard to the stocks of wheat, you have known the trade many years, I think?—I have.

50,261. Do you suppose that the buyers of wheat, the millers and the merchants, hold more or less stocks of wheat now from year to year than they used to hold according to your early knowledge of the trade?—I think generally that people have been so discouraged that they hold less. I think the farmers also would hold much less. It used to be a mark of a man's position if he had several stacks of wheat in his farm yard, but now it would be almost regarded as an example of lunacy.

50,262. Why I asked the question was because my experience as a farmer exactly tallies with what you say, and no farmer that I know of thinks of keeping the wheat the year round now. You tell me the trade do not keep it and yet you tell us that the stocks of wheat in the world relative to the demand upon them have been excessive of recent years; my wonder is who holds these stocks—what proof is there that there are such stocks?—People produce wheat in different countries, and they simply hold it because the price

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has been so low, and they have not been able to send it forward; the price has discouraged the sending forward of the stocks.

50,263. Is it not a fact with regard to the growers of wheat that the lower the price the less money it brings them, the more urgent is their necessity to sell because they cannot hold it?—There are other people besides; there are the merchants in the countries; and the financiers in this country. The Elevators in America, for instance, hold the wheat very largely. The price here is not good enough; if they sold they would glut our markets and would drive the price down still lower if they did.

Commercial gambling.

50,264. Do you think there is some quantity held by the Elevators?—Yes, I have no doubt there is; and the fact of there being this option market involves a good deal more being held than there would be if it were not made safe to deal in options.

Wheat area in India.

50,265. In regard to India, are you aware that the United States sent out a Commission there a few years ago to inquire into the increase or the decrease of the acreage of wheat, and that they reported there had been no perceptible increase in the acreage of wheat within man's memory?—I should hardly have thought that, at least the figures of the growth that I have, hardly agree with that. We had no Indian wheat here before about 25 years ago; whatever the growth was it did not come here.

50,266. That is quite true; but it is the fact that their Commission reported that there had been in man's memory no appreciable increase in the acreage of wheat grown in India, and that it had been all consumed in India?—Up to 25 years ago we hardly saw Indian wheat, and we hardly knew of it here as an article of consumption.

Importation of wheat from India.

50,267. The importation of wheat from India to Europe has all grown up then since the differences between the two standards the silver and the gold began to change?—Yes, very much so.

50,268. And since the English Government closed the mint of India in 1893, and so lessened the difference between the rupee and the sovereign, the export from India has fallen off?—Yes, but it is due somewhat to the bad crops as well as to the question of the currency.

Wheat production in Argentina.

50,269. Then in regard to Argentina the great increase in the cultivation of wheat there you have given us as showing itself about 1391?—Yes, in 1891 it was 4,000,000.

50,270. And it has increased hand over hand since then?—Yes.

50,271. Is it not the fact that the depreciation of their paper has in that period been progressing on something like the same scale?—Yes.

50,272. (*Chairman.*) It is not a silver currency there?—No, it is a paper currency.

The currency in Argentina.

50,273. (*Mr. Everett.*) It is not what the standard is, but it is the difference between their standard and our standard that makes the severity of the competition. I have figures here showing that the gold premium in the Argentine in 1888 was only 40, in 1889 it was 88, but in 1890 it had got up to 161, are you aware of that?—I have not those figures before me.

50,274. Are you aware of the facts so as to be able to say whether an ounce of silver will purchase about the same quantity of wheat to-day that it used to do?—In India?

50,275. In any country?—No; I am not prepared to say exactly what the fact is.

50,276. I think silver is about thirty pence an ounce now and it was sixty pence, that is it has fallen about one half?—Yes.

50,277. And wheat has fallen about one half what it used to be?—Wheat has fallen much more than that.

50,278. Even more?—Yes.

The currency.

50,279. Have you considered what would happen if we had free coinage of silver?—No, I am not prepared to express an opinion on that.

50,280. You are aware, I daresay, that what we call a shilling we can buy in the open market for fivepence?—Yes, I am quite aware of that.

50,281. And if we had free coinage we could get 2*s.* where we only get one now?—I am sorry to say I have no sympthya with the alteration in the currency.

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Fluctuations in price of wheat.

50,282. Have you paid any attention to the great movements in the price of wheat over long periods of time so as to understand what is the real key to the great movements in prices?—No, except in regard to the excess of production over consumption and that has been accentuated, as I have said, by the large speculation which there has been in the option and speculative markets on the basis and with the knowledge of that excess.

50,283. Would that afford any explanation of why the price of wheat increased fourfold shortly after the opening of the mines of Potosi in America in Queen Elizabeth's time?—I am not able to give any evidence of that now.

50,284. When we buy wheat in England practically we barter gold for it?—Yes.

50,285. And anything that happens to gold to affect its value would probably, would it not, have quite as much effect on price as anything that happens to the wheat world?—No, I do not think so. With regard to that, things fluctuate so. Last year when wheat was in excess maize and other things were in a deficiency. I can show you by a chart that I have here that where wheat has gone down other things have not gone down. Price depends upon the excess of supply or the deficiency of supply not upon that to which you are pointing. Here is the chart which shows that wheat has gone down, but there are other things, barley, for instance, which have hardly gone down at all. [*Handing in chart*].

50,286. I notice that the chart shows that on the whole they have all gone down?—They have all gone down somewhat but not at all relatively. If gold had to do with it in the way you suggest they would all have gone down in the same ratio. There are many things which have gone up as compared with gold.

Wheat production of Canada.

50,287. (*Mr. Elton.*) I noticed that in your list of corn-producing countries you say the United States of America; did you omit Canada by accident?—The proportion from Canada is small compared with that of the United States.

50,288. Would you put Canada in the list anyhow?—Yes.

50,289. There used to be a very large export from Manitoba, and so on, did there not?—The production of Canada is only 6,000,000 as against the 62,000,000 produced in the United States of America.

50,290. Does that figure take in all the Red River?—Yes. The production of Canada last year was 6,000,000.

Sheep farming in Argentina.

50,291. About Argentina, I believe that not only have they gone in for corn growing, but that they also have in the last three or four years gone in for sheep farming; do you know that?—Yes, I know that.

50,292. But they have found the weather to be so very unprosperous, that a great many people are giving it up?—I have not followed that.

50,293. Have you heard of it?—I knew that they were producing wheat, but I have not given attention to it.

50,294. I will put it in another way; there are great droughts in Argentina?—Yes.

50,295. Great changes of weather? Their crop is subject to great vicissitudes, there is no doubt about that.

50,296. That puts it shortly; and that has to be taken into account?—Yes.

50,297. I think you have noticed that the labour rose, as the paper fell?—Naturally it would.

50,298. It does as a matter of fact?—Yes.

The currency in Argentina.

50,299. The phenomenon you call our attention to was, that so long as the labourer was only growing, and eating or selling the balance of what he grew, he would not pay much account to the rise in premium?—Not much, it only affects him if all the home produce goes on the same level, it does affect him if there is anything he wants from abroad.

50,300. It only affects a small class of people?—Yes. I suppose there are some things that are affected by gold.

50,301. For instance, the railway fares change continually as the premium advances; do you know that?—I am not sufficiently acquainted with it to be able to say that.

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50,302. And the price of labour changes?—I should think, naturally, it would.

50,303. And for a time, it may be, the people who sell corn off their own land might not notice these changes?—Not small differences.

Quality of Indian wheat.

50,304. I will not ask you about India, except as to the quality of the Indian wheat. It is of a peculiar quality, is it not—it is hard?—It is harsh and very dry.

50,305. People speak of Indian wheat, but, of course, they ought to speak of the Valley of the Indus; if the United States in their record take the whole of India, the wheat-growing country might be a very small proportion, but if they went to Bengal the wheat-growing country might be of a very large amount?—Yes.

Demand for Indian wheat.

50,306. Is there an unlimited demand for that hard Indian wheat from the Indus?—The demand has been equal to the supply; it is not wheat that we can use entirely by itself.

50,307. The supply has fallen?—Yes.

50,308. Has the demand increased or fallen?—I do not think it has increased. It is wheat that we can do very well without.

50,309. There is no great call for it?—No.

50,310. Except to mix?—Yes, it is in demand for mixing with the soft English wheat in order to dry it.

50,311. But there is not an unlimited demand for the Indian wheat?—No.

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Consumption of wheat.

50,312. There is one other point I am going to ask you about but only by way of correction. You mentioned that some countries eat black bread, and you stated that Norway was one of those countries?—Yes.

50,313. I think you will agree with me that as a matter of fact they eat oat bread, not rye bread to a very great extent?—The table I quoted from only gives the consumption of wheat per head, and no doubt the lessened consumption is compensated for by rye or oats.

50,314. You say that they only eat so many pounds of bread?—I was only giving the consumption of wheat per head.

50,315. But you gave us black bread?—I said that those small figures were accounted for by their eating rye bread somewhat largely, but, as I say, these figures only apply to the consumption of wheat.

50,316. Then you will allow me to add "and oat cakes"?—Or anything, whatever it may be. I am not accountable for whatever else they may eat; this table only gives the consumption of wheat.

50,317. It makes a great difference to them; when you mention the small amount of wheat-bread in the northern countries, and say they make it up with black bread you would also take into account the oat meal?—Yes, it all goes to constitute their food.

The witness withdrew.

Lieut.-Col. H. R. Hughes. — Lieut.-Col. HUGH ROBERT HUGHES called and examined.

50,318. (*Chairman.*) You have for many years been engaged in the management of estates in parts of England and Wales, I believe?—Yes.

50,319. And you manage estates altogether to the extent of 150,000 acres?—Yes.

50,320. Part of that being Sir Watkin Williams Wynn's estates in the counties of Denbighshire, Shropshire, Montgomeryshire, and Merionethshire, and other estates belonging to other landowners?—Yes.

50,321. You have also your own property in the counties of Flintshire and Denbighshire?—Yes.

50,322. How long have you managed Sir Watkin Wynn's property?—Eight years.

Depression in Wales.

50,323. In your district has there been agricultural depression since 1879?—It began in 1879, but in the upland districts it was not really felt until about five years after.

50,324. Not until 1884?—No.

50,325. Then, besides, the upland districts did not suffer from the bad seasons of 1879 as the lower lands did?—They did not.

Fluctuations in prices of stock.

50,326. During the 10 years, ending 1880, was the breeding of stock paying a good price?—We were doing very well with stock up to that time. I think the most notable rise after that was about 1889, when things looked far brighter for a time.

50,327. Since 1880 has there been in the main a decline in the value of cattle and sheep?—Yes, in the main.

50,328. But with temporary recoveries of price in the years 1886, 1889, and 1895?—Yes, in those three years, but notably in 1889.

50,329. How long did those recoveries last?—I think we were in less difficulty once for about two years.

50,330. Has there been any recovery in the present year?—There is a very good recovery this summer.

50,331. Could you give us anything to show what the comparative fall and rise has been?—It is rather hard to do that, because the quality of stock varies so much, but I should certainly say from what I hear this season that there is a rise of 2*l.* a head on store cattle.

Bad seasons.

50,332–3. To what had the price fallen as compared with 1880?—In the autumn of 1892 you could hardly call stock quotable. The extraordinarily bad year was 1893, but stock was most unsaleable in 1892.

50,334. That was due to the difficulties of the English farmers, I suppose?—Yes, they could not take them.

50,335. They would not buy?—No.

50,336. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What was the difficulty in 1892?—1892 was a very bad year, and then that was followed by the bad season of 1893. There seemed to be a general collapse in 1892, and there was no demand for any stock at all. You could hardly get a quotation in the autumn markets in 1892.

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50,337. That was before the drought year?—Yes.

50,338. (*Chairman.*) What was the reason of that?—Bad trade, and a general depression all round. Things were as bad as they could be in 1892.

50,339. Then 1893 was the year of drought in England, and in that year there was little demand for lean stock, I suppose?—Yes.

Prices of stock.

50,340. In 1895 there has been a rise?—Yes, certainly.

50,341. Averaging about 2*l.* a head?—Yes.

50,342. What had been the average fall in price as compared with 1880?—It had gone down, I daresay, from 3*l.* to 3*l.* 10*s.* a head, certainly.

50,343. It went down that much before 1895?—Yes.

50,344. But there has been a recovery to the extent of 2*l.*?—I think about that. At one time farmers could not move their stock at all; there was no demand for it.

Stock breeding in Wales.

50,345. I am now comparing the present year, 1895, with 1880, and, as I understand you, the reduction is about 1*l.* a head; that is, the price went down 3*l.*, but it has recovered to the extent of 2*l.*?—There is no margin, the way stock is selling now between its price and the price of beef; there will be nothing left for the feeder.

50,346. I am now talking about the breeders in Wales?—This year has been the saving of them.

50,347. It is a favourable year for them?—Yes.

50,348. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) They have a very limited stock of store cattle this year, have they not?—There are but few this year. There is no doubt the stock has very much gone down in the country.

50,349. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In numbers, you mean?—Yes.

Abatements of rent.

50,350. (*Chairman.*) Then during the same period, have there been permanent reductions, and also abatements from time to time made by the landlords?—There has been a great deal of rent returned from time to time. I think there was more returned about 1892 than at any other time.

50,351. That was in the form of temporary abatements, I suppose?—Quite so.

Reduction of rent.

50,352. Has there been much in the direction of permanent reductions?—I think there has been a great deal, unquestionably.

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50,353. On Sir Watkin's estate, has there been much permanent reduction?—Yes, especially in Merionethshire, where it was necessary. I made a complete valuation of the whole estate, field by field, in Merionethshire. There was a very large reduction there.

50,354. What has the reduction been?—That, roughly, brought the rental in Merionethshire down from 5,500*l.* to 5,000*l.*

50,355. That was a 10 per cent. reduction; but have the reductions there been more than elsewhere on the estate?—Yes, certainly.

50,356. Then, besides that, have the landlords spent a good deal in the way of buildings, and so forth?—An immense sum, and it is being continually called for. Things are quite different now, the wants are so much greater, and they must be attended to.

Causes of depression.

50,357. What are the causes of the depression in your opinion?—It is very hard for a farmer to realise a sum of money now. Things are so low that a man cannot make up a sum of money. That is really the test; if a man goes to reckon about his rent he finds that what he sells comes to so very little money that he is very much pressed.

50,358. Is the depression mainly due, in your opinion, to foreign competition?—It is certainly due to foreign competition. The farmers in Wales feel the low prices of wool very much.

Effect of depression.

50,359. Now, let us go on to the effects of the depression; do you consider that the landowners have suffered by the diminution there has been of their income, and also by the larger expenditure which they have been compelled to make upon their property?—That is certain.

50,360. Have the small owners suffered more than the larger ones?—The small owners have not the same resources; they have suffered very much.

50,361. The limited owners have felt it, I suppose, because their fixed charges remain the same?—Yes.

50,362. Have the occupying owners lost their capital?—Very much. A great number of them want to sell their little estates, and it is very hard for them to do so. You cannot sell them unless they are so situated as to be an object to a landlord.

50,363. Have the tenant farmers suffered in the reduction of the value of their capital?—Undoubtedly, heavily.

50,364. Then as regards the agricultural labourers, how have they got on?—There are far fewer on a farm; they go away; they require more to live upon in these days than they formerly did.

Wages.

50,365. How have their wages been affected?—Wages are good.

50,366. Have they remained the same?—Fewer men are kept, but the wages are good.

50,367. Have wages been maintained at the same level, or have they risen or fallen?—They have risen considerably in the last 30 years, but not materially since 1880.

Condition of labourers.

50,368. Then you have to take into account what the labourer can get for his money?—Yes. The labourers in our country, as a class, are better off than the average; they are bound to be, because of the slate quarries which the men go to, and the brickworks that are there. The slate quarries take an enormous number of men.

50,369. The main cause, in your opinion, of the depression is the low price of agricultural produce?—Yes, certainly.

Foreign competition.

50,370. And the free importation of foreign and colonial produce?—Yes.

50,371. In your opinion, have unfavourable seasons contributed in part to the depression?—I do not think that they have in the main. Of course, you have a bad time now and then; but I do not think they have as a whole, taking a round of years.

50,372. But in some years they have?—Certainly, at times.

Quality of labour.

50,373. Do you consider that the quality of the labour is worse than it was?—I certainly do think it is.

50,374. Then if the rates of wages have somewhat increased, and the quality has diminished that has an important bearing on the position of the farmer, I take it?—Certainly.

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Rates.

50,375. Now, with regard to local rates, have the rates been increased in your district?—Where there are any works the rates do not increase, but where there are no works they do rather increase. But the point with us is the fresh rates; everything now at once goes on to the rates, we have the sanitary rate, the School Board rate, and all the things which have come very heavy upon the farmers.

50,376. Do you think the actual outgoings in respect of rates are larger than they were or not?—Certainly they are larger as a whole.

50,377. Have you any figures showing in detail what the position has been as compared with 10 years ago? I have not brought those with me here, but I have them at home. (*See* Appendix A. XIX.)

50,378. Perhaps you could add them to your evidence?—Certainly; I have several instances, especially where the rates press very heavily on land where the parties paying them receive no benefit whatever.

50,379. Would you advocate that there should be some relief given in the way of rates?—Most certainly, I think that is the main thing.

50,380. What do you suggest?—As a class they think, and I think too, that all these things that are required now ought to come out of the national purse, because they are for national purposes—especially as regards highways and schools.

50,381. Can you say what the average of the rates in your district is?—The poor rate would be certainly from 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*

50,382. And the other rates?—They vary very much. I could give you the schedule, but I could not give you any average figure, because it would be so different in the very next parish.

Charges on land.

50,383. Then with regard to the charges upon land, do you think there is anything that can be done to relieve the landowner?—I hardly think so; I never expect to see that.

50,384. You do not think anything can be done, is that what you mean?—I confess I do not see how it will be done.

Law of distress.

50,385. Then with respect to the landlord's preferential claim for rent?—Experience makes me very strong on that point, because there is no doubt about it; it enables landlords who know their district and know the men, often to take men who have not got money when it is proved that they are industrious and hard working men; and in that way men have risen from the ranks and have become substantial men.

50,386. Then you think it is not in the interests of the whole of the tenant farmers that the law with regard to distraint for rent should be done away with?—I think it is to the interest of the tenant farmer that that should go on.

50,387. You think the law with regard to distraint for rent should be maintained?—I do; I think it is in the tenants' favour.

Remedies for depression.

50,388. Among your remedies for the depression apparently you advocate that no foreign produce should be sold without having the place of origin clearly indicated upon it?—That is so.

50,389. Secondly, that the Adulteration Acts should be more strictly carried out, so that the British consumer may know what he is purchasing?—Yes.

50,390. Thirdly, you recommend that the taxation and the local burdens on land should be reduced by spreading them over personalty; and fourthly, that agricultural chemistry and other branches of scientific farming should be taught in village and county council schools?—Most certainly. The more they are taught the more they appreciate being taught, the more you can diffuse knowledge among them the more it comes out, it certainly does.

50,391. Then you also suggest the removal of excessive taxation on land?—Most certainly I think that comes first.

Rates.

50,392. Will you give an illustration of what you consider the hardship of the present sytsem of the taxation on land?—For instance, a farm is rented at 500*l.*; the poor's rate, say, at 2*s.* in the £, would amount to 50*l.*, less 10 per cent., and the occupier of the land, with very good management, after his rent, rates, taxes, cake, manure, seeds, and wages, &c., are paid, may have left 300*l.* to pay interest on capital and the expenses of himself and family. Then take a manufacturer, merchant, tradesman, or capitalist occupying a

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house or factory or shop, the rental value of which is 100*l.* per annum and the poor's rate 9*l.*; their net incomes are generally double and treble that of the farmer.

50,393. This comparison apparently is based upon the idea that the rates are paid by the tenant farmer and that they do not ultimately fall upon the landowner?—They are calculated in the letting of the farms.

50,394. If they are calculated in the letting of the farm they ultimately fall upon the landowner and not upon the tenant farmer?—Quite so.

50,395. Therefore, to that extent, the comparison between the tenant farmer and the tradesman is hardly an accurate one?—I think it is in a way if you consider his position; it becomes a matter of greater responsibility to the tenant farmer by far.

50,396. Then do you consider that the education rate, at all events, should be altered, so that the cost of education should be undertaken by the State?—I think so, certainly.

50,397. Also you suggest that personal property should bear its share of the expenditure?—Most certainly.

50,398. In your opinion are these parts of the country within urban districts where the occupiers of land are specially entitled to relief?—You have large boroughs, perhaps, four miles in diameter, and the farmers living outside the town but within the area, pay all the sanitary and lighting rates as if they actually lived in the town, although they derive no benefit whatever from them.

50,399. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Are you speaking of any particular borough in your district?—I happened to quote one then, but there are many of the same sort.

50,400. What is the one you mentioned?—The one I quote is my own.

50,401. Denbigh?—Yes. With the least trouble I could give you a long list. I know it is a very universal complaint.

Small holdings.

50,402. (*Chairman.*) Are you in favour of small holdings?—I think they are the very best thing where they exist or grow naturally, but I confess that I think it will take a long time to get any value out of the new allotments. I think that taking a number of small tenants is the very best thing on a large estate; it strengthens it in every way.

50,403. But you are not in favour of the artificial creation of small holdings?—We do not oppose it in any way, but I confess I have no great faith in its coming out.

50,404. You are not opposed to it in principle?—Certainly not; we shall not oppose it at all, but I confess I have no great faith in it.

Size of Welsh estates.

50,405. (*Lord Rendel.*) Your principal experience is in connection with North Wales, I gather?—It is. I have other work in Shropshire, and I have an estate in Middlesex, too, but I may say the estates in Wales and Shropshire have been my work.

50,406. The estate in Wales which you have had to manage is of a very exceptional size, it is not?—It is, indeed.

50,407. I suppose it is exceptional also in this that it is surrounded by comparatively small estates?—Yes.

50,408. In fact, with the exception of the great and almost historical estate you are connected with, North Wales might be described as a country of relatively small properties?—Quite so. We have an immense tract of very nearly 140,000 acres; out of that there is comparatively speaking very little in Shropshire.

50,409. With that exception you would distinguish Wales from England in its agricultural area as being broken up into small properties?—Undoubtedly they are smaller properties and smaller holdings.

50,410. That may probably be derived from the condition under which land was held in the more remote past?—Probably, and that is the way men have begun, too—they work on very small beginnings.

50,411. Waste land has to a very large extent been brought into cultivation, has it not?—Bit by bit.

Characteristics of farming in Wales.

50,412. Would you also describe that part of North Wales as a country of comparatively small farms?—Certainly. Of course we have in the Vale of Clwyd and Denbighshire some larger farms, and they are much more productive. Formerly, before the depression commenced, the cheese that was made in the Vale of Clwyd was always sold as Cheshire cheese; then that industry seemed to drop, and now apparently it is reviving under the dairy schools.

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50,413. Are a considerable number of those small farms so small as that they can be managed almost entirely by the tenant and his family?—A great many of them are; they hardly pay anything in wages, and if they have a threshing day or anything like that the neighbours around club together; there is a wonderfully good feeling among the Welsh farmers—wonderfully good.

50,414. It is rather exceptional for them to have labour, and then it is, is it not, an annually hired labour?—What they have they pay for at a higher rate now. The strong good labourers get away to the works, and farming is very much now confined to those of the children who stick at home with their fathers; the best men get away very much to the works.

Welsh small farmers.

50,415. Would you regard those small farmers as on the whole a singularly hardworking and thrifty class of people?—Very. I think they go through a great deal. Taking them as a race they are as true as steel and they go through a great deal.

50,416. They have hard living also?—Very.

50,417. They are very temperate?—Very temperate.

50,418. And very loyal?—Thoroughly loyal.

50,419. And thoroughly law-abiding people?—Yes. When riding about I often meet two or three men going home; they do not know I am about, but I see them going home from the fairs early in the afternoon, and it is the exception to see a man who has had the least drop too much. They are determined to live somehow.

50,420. And further, at home they have no alcoholic drink at all?—No, not one out of 20.

50,421. So that the market day is the only occasion when they might take some?—Quite so.

50,422. That might be perhaps more from the custom of sealing some bargain?—Yes; they meet each other and it is the rule to have every bargain settled in that way.

50,423. In fact they are a very hard living as well as a very hard working people?—Yes, very.

50,424. Do they hold generally upon written agreements?—We have written agreements with all our tenants, but really in those districts they are not much good. They are only of value in case you have a bad fellow, but that with us is nothing, because we never change. There is something remarkable about us—we never change. Of course, with all that quality of land the cropping is different, and it does not require to be tied down in the same way.

Changes of tenancy.

50,425. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) What do you mean by "never change"?—It is something marvellous that on Sir Walkin's estate we never have a farm to let, or hardly ever. The continuity of tenancy is something remarkable, often up to 400 years.

50,426. (*Lord Rendel.*) From generation to generation the farmers stay on?—Yes. It is a marvellous thing. It is quite a record.

50,427. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Not on the Wynnstay estate proper?—There are not so many down there, but Sir Watkin's Wynnstay estate proper is a very small estate compared with the others.

Management of estates.

50,428. (*Lord Rendel.*) You have, I suppose, a very considerable staff of sub-agents?—Yes, it is very large. We have five main sub-agents. We have five men who have a fifth each, about as equal as can be; then we have a mineral agent, and the manor bailiff, and the rest are all clerks.

50,429. Relating to an English estate would you say that the cost of the management was somewhat greater?—It is greater unavoidably, because it is so scattered, and you must have a separate staff going. You must do it; so that it is very expensive.

50,430. Then is there not a somewhat peculiar condition that in the upland districts there are the competing industries of slate and lead?—Lead did affect us very much to the late Sir Watkins' advantage at Dylife, but this lead cannot be produced now, and it is a most miserable place to see now. It is dreadful, because the houses are unoccupied. At one time, however, it was a grand industry. Then the slate industry does not affect us in that part, but it does in

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other parts in Merionethshire; but not on the main property in Denbighshire and Montgomeryshire. They get over by the line up to Blaenau Festiniog. Mr. Oakley is the chief owner, and they have enormous quarries there.

50,431. Would you say that in North Wales there was the peculiarity in the agricultural districts that there existed in scattered positions industries of the nature of slate and lead which were of a capricious character and which employed highly paid labour but with some uncertainty; would you say that was a condition of things formerly?—Yes, certainly.

50,432. Until comparatively recent years?—Yes, certainly.

50,433. You spoke of the cost of schools amongst other charges which were put upon the rates?—They are very heavy.

50,434. Are not the conditions in Wales peculiarly unfavourable owing to the scattered character of the population?—In some parishes they cannot get a school subscription if they try beyond one or two, and, therefore, they have had school boards, and thus the rate is very heavy. It is very hard to keep a voluntary school in many parishes.

50,435. Is not the erection of schools relatively more costly in Wales owing to the difficulties of haulage, and the comparatively smaller population within any possible radius of a school?—I never heard that complained of.

Railway communication in Wales.

50,436. How would you regard North Wales from the agricultural point of view as served by railways, in comparison with England?—I think that in part it is very well served, but then when you get to those tremendous wild districts of mountain you cannot have railways up there; it is impossible. If ever the day comes when we see light railways, I look upon them as impossible in the country that I ride over. All along the north coast especially, and up towards the Great Western, all up Bala way, and to the terminus of the London and North-Western, in all that district the service is excellent, and it is six hours from London exactly.

50,437. But further south?—I do not know much about South Wales.

50,438. Further south of that district, I mean, but still within Central Wales?—The service on the Cambrian is not as good. You do arrive at a place in the course of the day, but it is very slow work, whereas in the part where you get the Great Western and the London and North-Western, the service is excellent, and, of course, we have the benefit of all the Irish trains.

50,439. As between North and South Wales how would you regard the service as adequate or otherwise?—It is capable of improvement, certainly. I think we have a great deal to be thankful for myself in the way of railways.

50,440. Were you connected with that country at the time these railways were undertaken?—Not with Sir Watkins' estate, but I quite recollect all the railways being made perfectly well. I remember when I went to school we always had to drive to Chester as there was nothing like a railway at all then. Then I remember perfectly well the Holyhead line being opened.

50,441. With regard to some of these railways, in fact the majority of them of which you have spoken, do you regard Wales as unfortunate in the capital outlay at which those railways stand?—Certainly not; whatever they cost that is grand for the country.

Extent of depression.

50,442. As regards the cost at which they were made, and upon which they expect to be repaid by rates, would you regard Wales as unfortunate or fortunate?—I do not think you can call it unfortunate, because they work it out that the Chester and Holyhead did not pay for a long time; then it became merged in the London and North-Western, and, of course, you do not know what the actual returns are on that branch. It was originally formed as a separate company called the Chester and Holyhead.

50,443. You do not happen to be aware of the circumstances under which the lines now under the Cambrian Railway, for instance, were built, and the capital expended upon them?—I did not go at that time into that district at all, but I fancy it was looked upon as a struggle; they are so short of main traffic.

50,444. Generally with regard to the upland districts, which form a very large portion, as I understand, of the area of the principal estate you speak of, the agricultural depression has not been felt so severely as elsewhere?—No, not so severely.

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50,445. And you see this year even a recovery?—There is undoubtedly a recovery.

Stock breeding.

50,446. And so far as the breeding farms are concerned —?—That is the one thing that we look to, namely, to encourage them in breeding stock. We ought to do all in our power to send good sires amongst them, because the land is fitted for that. If a man can get a good price for a horse, it is the saving of a a man. If you take men who are paying 40*l.* to 60*l.* rent, that would be the very saving of them; you really cannot do too much in the way of sending good sires down.

Relations between landlords and tenant.

50,447. Generally, with reference to Sir Watkin Wynn's Estate, the management has been for many years past extremely satisfactory, has it not?—Certainly; there has been the best feeling always. But, of course, in the present days tenants require so much more than they did formerly, and there has to be a great deal more attention paid to them; their wants are greater.

Management of estates.

50,448. Would you regard the condition of that estate as an indication of the condition of the smaller estates alongside, speaking generally?—I am sorry to say that we have a very great deal of work to do; there is enough work for a life to do if you look at what ought to be done to put everthing right. We are working tremendously hard at it, but there is a great deal to be done, whereas, of course, on some estates one has nothing to wish for.

50,449. You are speaking now of the Wynnstay estates?—Yes, the work there is so tremendous, you cannot get through it. The work and the change of times have come upon us so suddenly that it is impossible to quite compass the work.

50,450. So far as the personal relations of the tenants and the landlord are concerned you are satisfied?—I am perfectly satisfied, and can answer for their being on the very best terms.

50,451. So far as the condition of the installation of the estate is concerned—the repairs and general condition of the estate—you feel that there is a great deal still to be done even on that estate?—I do.

Relations between landlord and tenant.

50,452. I want to ask you whether you would say that the relations between the landlord and the tenants on the Wynnstay Estate, and the energy and liberality shown with regard to the installation of the farms on that estate, are a fair indication of the general condition of the smaller estates alongside it?—Certainly.

50,453. You think they are?—I should never wish for a better feeling to exist than I can answer for does exist between us.

50,454. You are speaking now of the estates within your own management?—Yes, and others that I know of as a rule.

50,455. Would you say that the same thing prevails outside your estates?—Of course, there may be exceptions, but as a rule the Welsh tenants are wonderfully good fellows.

50,456. Are you aware of the many cases where investments have been made in abandoned estates by Liverpool and other men of capital who are non-resident?—I know of several who have purchased, but it is the exception for them to understand what they are doing when they get the estates, quite the exception. On the other hand, I have seen men come who do well and look after their estates. As a rule, they only look for a certain amount of interest on their capital; with many of those men that is the real thing, that they become possessed of those estates, and they do not know what they are doing.

Changes of ownership in North Wales.

50,457. To no inconsiderable extent land is changing hands, I suppose, in North Wales?—Not much; the most notable part is in Anglesey, and there, I believe, about half the island has changed hands within a given period, but I forget what they say is the number of years.

50,458. In some cases to a non-resident owner?—Yes, but in Anglesey the tenants have themselves bought tremendously.

Expenditure on improvement.

50,459. (*Mr. Elton.*) You say that this great rush of business came upon you rather by surprise; when did the great rise take place in the quantity of repairs and things that you had to do?—I pointed it

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out to Sir Watkin and Lady Wynn that it must be done, and it has gone on very heavily during the last six or seven years. I pointed out that it was absolutely necessary to cope with the times, that there must be a great deal done.

50,460. Then it is from about 1888?—Yes.

50,461. That answers to the figures you give us in your brief, showing a rise from 5,600*l.* in estates, buildings, and repairs to over 9,000*l.*?—Yes.

50,462. But then I see, going back again another 10 years' period, that it was equally heavy then or very nearly so. Look at the years 1876 to 1878; it was then 8,825*l.*, 8,248*l.*, and 8,862*l.* respectively, so that it is not very far off what it was in 1888?—There must have been something exceptional; there must have been some purchased property, but I am not reponsible for that. I merely took the figures out of the estate books.

50,463. I am merely quoting these to you, so that you can explain what you are telling us of the sudden and unexpected rush, and I am saying that these figures show there was something just like it 10 years before?—I will answer for the figures, and I merely took them out as a whole. We went up in the '90's to 11,763*l.* and 12,078*l.*

50,464. What you said was, that there was such a sudden and unexpected rush, and it has occurred to me that it was not so very different from what had been the case some 10 years previously?—There seems to have been some special reason, which I could get at with pleasure if I look it up, but I will answer for the figures being correct.

50,465. What you said just now is perfectly correct; that the average even now is distinctly higher than it was, even in the period which I mentioned of 10 years ago?—Yes.

50,466. It is a very high average now?—Very high.

Waste land.

50,467. In reference to these small farms in Montgomeryshire that you spoke about, and wastes there, are there very large tracts of waste there?—Tremendous tracts; we have a quantity of land at 6*d.* an acre.

50,468. Commons?—Yes.

50,469. Sides?—Sheep walks.

50,470. Suppose a farm is 40 or 50 acres, how much common would it have, or sheep walks?—It varies tremendously.

50,471. They have a custom there of holding a given expanse of waste with a given farm, have they not?—Yes, and it is thoroughly understood by the inhabitants. You can hardly believe how they know to the inch almost all those large tracts.

50,472. So that, practically, the farm comprises that tract of waste land as well as the farm itself?—Yes.

50,473. The system is in the local language, called "Lluast," I recollect. You say they add these things to the farms, so that the farm really is much bigger?—What they cultivate is very little.

50,474. But they are able to breed and sell?—Those little patches that they have they do very well. They pay great attention to those small patches in the valleys.

Tenure.

50,475. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Have you many leases on your estate?—Practically none; we are never asked for them.

50,476. There is no demand for them?—None whatever.

50,477. Why is that?—A man does not like to tie himself down. He knows he will never be disturbed if he is anyway going right, and they have confidence in us. I have never been asked for a lease yet.

Changes in tenancy.

50,478. Have changes in tenancy been frequent of late?—I do not think so, except in the natural course. Of course there must be some things happening, but there is nothing more than that. It is a marvellous thing how they stick to their homes in Wales, and what they will do to keep them.

50,479. I suppose about 90 or 95 per cent. of Sir Watkin's Welsh tenants are really Welsh-speaking tenants?—Quite that.

50,480. I think you speak Welsh, do you not?—I do. I speak the Welsh of the country. I am not a scholar. I cannot read or write Welsh, but I know Welsh thoroughly for all practical purposes.

50,481. I suppose you find it very useful in managing these estates?—I never can make out how agents do without it myself.

50,482. There are a great many agents who do not know it?—Yes, there are; but then they have to take an interpreter with them. If you can talk with a man it puts you in a different position directly. I am not speaking for a moment egotistically, but I find it the greatest blessing to be able to talk Welsh when you go into a house.

50,483. And the farmers always consider it a grievance when they cannot speak to the agent in their own language?—They do not like it.

50,484. Are your agreements in English or Welsh?—They are all in English.

50,485. Are they explained to the farmers?—Thoroughly. I never allow a man to sign an agreement till he has taken it home and shown it to his friends, and so on. I would never allow a man to come into a room and sign an agreement straight off.

50,486. Do you give him a copy of the agreement?—Always.

50,487. Does he pay for it?—Never; he pays nothing.

Rents.

50,488. Are rents considered fair and moderate in your district, I do not speak of your estate, but take the counties of Flint and Denbighshire, for instance?—Yes, I think they are as a rule. Of course, as I have explained before, the tenants have to live so hard to make up a sum of money. I think there is a great deal one has to do in adjusting rents, because they are very unfair for many places compared with others.

50,489. How are they fixed?—Many of them I am sure from what I have seen myself, and comparing farm with farm—some that we happen to touch—are bargains; then we come to another farm, and we know that is too dear. Of course we cannot raise those which are under the standard. You have to wait for some opportunity.

Commons.

50,490. Is there much common land attached to these farms?—A great deal.

50,491. If so the right of pasturage is taken into consideration when the rent is fixed?—Always. We generally value what the moorland will hold per head of sheep.

Rents.

50,492. Were rents raised pretty generally in the district about 30 years ago?—They were altered in Merionethshire, but I do not think they were at all altered in Montgomeryshire. I know they were in Merionethshire and it was prophesied when they were done that they would all have to be undone.

50,493. They have been permanently reduced?—Yes, but I do not think the others as a rule have been touched.

Reduction in rent.

50,494. How much have these rents been reduced?—On that estate that I spoke of it came down from 5,500*l.* to 5,000*l.*, which was a loss of 500*l.* a year out of 5,500*l.*

50,495. I suppose it was really more of a sheep walk?—Yes. There are a good many of what they call farms which are improving even now. They do try to get the farm better. We do a deal of draining and all that and they are striving very hard to improve.

50,496. Are the farmers pretty generally satisfied with the rents they are paying, or do they think the rents ought to be reduced further?—I have not been asked to reduce them further. I think in Merionethshire I have only one case that we have not settled in the whole lot. They took my valuation through and through, and we have not had a word upon it, but I have got one now that I have not settled out of the lot. I think we valued 105 farms or something of that sort—I know it was less than 120. It is a very long work, because of the climate, and you cannot do it without time.

50,497. Were you asked to re-value them by the tenants?—I was. Two years ago last June they applied for a reduction. Sir Watkin said he did not wish for a moment that they should pay more than was right, and that he would get me to go over it all. I did as well as I could without neglecting other work.

50,498. Do these tenants generally accept your valuation?—They have done so with hardly a question, and they are now satisfied.

50,499. What is the average size of farms in that part of the country?—They vary tremendously.

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50,500. Have they been consolidated lately?—No, it is very much against the good of the estate to do so.

50,501. Have any of the farms been divided?—No.

Size of farms.

50,502. Are there many small freeholders in your district?—Yes, there are certainly a good many; but then many of them let their own freeholds and prefer being tenants.

Large and small tenants compared.

50,503. Are there many small tenants?—Yes, there are, scattered about.

50,504. What is their position as compared with that of large holders; is it better or worse?—Are you talking now of small owners?

50,505. I mean the small tenant farmers?—I think they are better, because their risk is not so great, and they are content to live as they do. That is the point—that their risk is so very small compared with that of the big men.

50,506. Are the rents of the small farms higher per acre than those of the larger farms, as a rule?—Rather, but not very much.

54,507. Do the small holders produce more or less pe acre?—More, on the small patches.

50,508. Why?—It is within their own power to cultivate it. Then so many of the large men are under the delusion of putting the land, what they call, down to grass; but it is not half done, and it is the ruin of the farm, because it will not keep stock.

50,509. Is there a better demand for these small farms than for the large ones?—Certainly.

50,510. A much better demand would you say?—Oh! dear, yes. The demand for small farms is now very great. I had last week the case of a man who died—he was a widower with no family. I have nine applications for his farm now—the men in that country almost fight for a small farm. That farm has a rent of about 45*l.*, I think.

50,511. Do you know of any instances where labourers have saved money, and been able to go on to the land?—I do.

50,512. Do you say that they are doing better as farmers than as labourers?—So much depends on the individual, and it is a very hard thing to answer that. Sixpence is as much to one man as 5*s.* to another; so you cannot give a regular opinion about it.

Rural depopulation.

50,513. How is it that so many farmers' sons and daughters drift away from Wales into the large towns?—I cannot accounnt for it, but I think their ideas are altered. They are not, all of them, content with their way of living at home. They hear of this, that, and the other, and they want to get away.

Small holdings.

50,514. You say you do not agree with or approve of the creation of these small holdings. How is it you are opposed to them?—I am in favour of them, but I have no great faith in them. We are going with the law, but my faith is in them where they have grown up according to the circumstances, naturally. As regards the actual creation of these small owners, I may be wrong, but I do not look forward to them doing much good. We shall never oppose it at all, though.

50,515. Is there any prospect of a natural growth in the future?—I doubt it very much.

50,516. Would it be, in your opinion, an advantage to have a larger resident population in these rural districts than there is at present?—Certainly; the thicker they are on the ground the better.

50,517. Would not the creation of these small holdings help to do that?—I doubt very much; who will go to them? It will be a work of time. I may be wrong, but I confess I doubt it.

50,518. How many acres of land do you think would be sufficient for a man to support his family and himself on in an ordinary mixed kind of farm, such as they have in your part of the country?—He certainly ought to have over 30 acres of average land.

Condition of freeholders.

50,519. Are there many freeholders in Flintshire and Denbighshire?—There are a great many, undoubtedly.

50,520. Are they large or small farms, mostly?—There are not many large; they are mostly small.

50,521. Are their holdings mortgaged?—I am afraid they are.

50,522. They pay a high interest, I expect?—No doubt they do, but, of course, that is a secret. However, it comes to light sometimes, and it is very much to be deplored.

50,523. Did these men buy their holdings?—They bought them and mortgaged them up to 1876, or up to 1878, and then they got frightened. Men bought when they probably could not do more than pay the deposit. There was an immense deal bought then by men who, to my knowledge, had not the means of paying more than the deposit.

50,524. Why did they buy?—Everyone in those days thought that farming was going ahead, and promised to be this, that, and the other. Then down came the drop. Land was sold then dreadfully high. There is no doubt that one of the things affecting us now is that land was sold too high up to 1876. There was a fictitious value—an inflated value—put upon land then. However good the times might have been there is no question about it.

50,525. A great many of these men were obliged to buy, were they not, or else leave their farms?—That I could not answer, I suppose they were afraid of having to leave. It depended entirely upon the individual buyers whether they would get into the hands of a good landlord, or whether they would get into the hands of a stranger and a mercantile man who would merely look to his own interest. But it is a notorious fact that they did all buy very dear.

50,526. What is the position of those freeholders as compared with the tenant farmers; do you think they are better off in some sense?—They are not so well off, I am certain of it.

50,527. I suppose it would be a great advantage to them if money could be lent to them at a cheap rate of interest?—No doubt, if it could be lent at a low rate. But then a freeholder does not get anything done for him like an estate does for a tenant.

Changes in cultivation.

50,528. What kind of farming is mostly pursued in Denbighshire and Flintshire?—In Denbighshire it is mixed farming, but there is a great deal of very good meadow land.

50,529. Has there been any change of late in the system of farming?—No; only that landlords are not nearly so particular about allowing farmers to sell off some of their crop. They do sell it off a great deal.

50,530. Has any arable land been laid down?—Very little has been laid down properly, very little indeed. I consider that is quite a landlord's question; it is not a tenant's question, because when land is laid down there must always be a certain amount of outgoings for from five to seven years; you cannot call it old pasture until then, and unless it is fed up it will be made worse than anything.

Ground game.

50,531. Are rabbits and hares ever preserved in that part of the country?—No, the men nearly all kill the ground game.

50,532. I am not speaking of your estate but I am speaking of the district generally?—I do not think there is much; there is one man certainly who does preserve enormously, but then he pays damages all round. He is a Warrington man and he rents an enormous tract of shooting, and he always pays compensation.

50,533. Is he a shooting tenant, or does he own the property?—He is a shooting tenant over a great many estates. I do not think you will find in our country that the tenants do complain at all about game—it is the exception if they do.

50,534. They are generally bitter against shooting tenants, are they not?—They do not look upon them in the same light as a landlord, and they never will.

Technical instruction.

50,535. Is there much attention paid to agricultural education in Denbighshire?—It is in a very incipient state at present, but I do think it is developing.

50,536. In which way?—Especially as regards dairying now.

Dairying.

50,537. You take a great interest in dairying, do you not?—I do, a great deal.

50,538. How many cows do you milk?—I have over 200.

50,539. Do you supply milk?—Yes; it was an idea of my own entirely. The land at the slate quarries will not produce good milk, and my own idea was to send the milk from my own farm up to a thickly-populated district which could not produce milk. It all goes by rail up to the quarries, and they are mainly dependent on it; it is the main supply to the North Wales slate quarries.

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50,540. What breed of cattle do you keep?—My cattle are all purchased; they are what are called colouny shorthorns. I do not buy myself now; I used to do so formerly, and to sell them, but now I have a regular salesman who undertakes the whole thing for me. My cattle all go away fat. I sell on an average about four a week; we milk them out.

50,541. Are they suitable to the locality?—Certainly, but we never turn a cow out. Mine are all model shippons, and we never turn one out; the milk is cooled properly and goes off every day.

50,542. Have you tried the Welsh breed?—We have a few.

50,543. Do they milk fairly well?—Yes, very well; but not so long.

50,544. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What price do you get for your milk?—We have two prices; one in the summer and one in the winter. Then I retail it all; I have my own salesman at every depôt; my milk never goes into anybody else's hands. I have established the thing, and I have my own salesman at each quarry; it is sent out with my own horse and trap, and he pays the money into the bank, and has to account for it in that way.

50,545. You sell it at retail prices?—I do; that is what creates the confidence in it; the men know that it never goes through another person's hands, and that it is pure milk.

Rates.

50,546. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I see you speak of the constantly increasing rates; do you feel sure that in Denbyshire and Flintshire the rural rates have increased at all of late years?—They have, there is no doubt about it; we have some parishes where they have not at all. The actual poor rate has not increased; it is the other rates that come on them now, that they feel so much.

50,547. I have a return here published a year or two ago—Mr. Fowler's return—in which the average rural rate for the county of Denbigh in 1868 is given at 3*s.* 4*d.*, and in 1891 at 2*s.* 4½*d.*, which was a fall of a 1*s.*?—That must be from the better management of the authorities—from the decreasing of the salaries, and so on.

50,548. What I wish to point out is that instead of a constantly increasing rate there was a very heavy fall indeed there of from 3*s.* 4*d.* to 2*s.* 4½*d.*; then in Flint the fall was from 3*s.* 10*d.* to 2*s.* 6*d.*, which is a still greater fall?—That comes from better management, I believe.

50,549. That is partly apparently due to the fall in the poor rate, and partly to the fact that you in those counties had a very low highway rate; is that still so?—The highway rate is low. I do not know how that will be now, but it is all going under the county council, and there will be no local township rates. As it will go under the county council it must be done better, because there will be fewer overlookers.

50,550. You do not have all your roads under the county council—only the main roads?—Yes, the main roads.

50,551. You have other roads left on the highway rate—the roads which are not main roads, have you not?—Very few now.

50,552. Looking at the county council returns I find that the rate in the £ of the county rate does not seem to have increased since the cost of these main roads has been thrown upon the county?—I believe that is so; I have been told so.

50,553. Owing mainly presumably to the Government subventions?—I believe that is so, but I have never really had time to go into the county council work. I have never been able to give the time to it.

50,554. The result appears to be that instead of the rates having increased as a whole they have diminished. I am quite aware that the purposes have increased; you have had school board rates and rural sanitary rates added, but the total rate in the £ seems to have fallen very heavily in both counties?—Yes, it has in one way.

50,555. The rate in the £, I mean?—Yes.

50,556. And that seems also partly due to the fact that railways in both counties contribute very heavily to the rates?—Yes, and also in parishes where there are works, that has taken them down very much. In Ruabon the brickworks have saved us very much.

50,557. In Denbigh the value of the railways seems to have gone up from 8,500*l.* in 1870 to 42,200*l.* in 1894?—Yes.

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50,558. And in Flint from 7,000*l.* to 41,000*l.*?—Yes.

Increased assessment of railways.

50,559. That is a considerable assistance to the rates, I suppose?—It is so.

50,560. And that is a contribution of personalty which you are advocating, I think?—To a certain extent.

50,561. These are contributions from the railway shareholders?—Forgive me, but I understand a witness whom you are going to examine—Mr. Pennant—would be far better up in those details than I am. I never had time to work out those sort of things, and he knows them, and has them all at his fingers' ends for the last 40 years; his whole time is given to it, and he will give you far better evidence upon them than I can.

Rates.

50,562. (*Chairman.*) Yes, but you have stated in your evidence that the rates have considerably increased, whereas the facts now brought to your notice would tend to show that there has been a considerable reduction of the rates?—I think, as a whole, the total amount paid by the farmers is heavier; that is what I believe.

50,563. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If the rate in the £ is lower, and the rents have gone down—and the rateable value evidently has gone down on lands—the amount paid must be considerably less?—I think you will find that on the whole it is more.

Land out of cultivation.

50,564. I think you say that if the burdens of those rates are not considerably decreased, the land will go out of cultivation?—There is a great deal of it now not half so well cultivated in parts as it was. I am not talking of small plots.

50,565. Has any of it gone out of cultivation?—Yes, it has been laid down badly.

50,566. But not owing to the rates, I suppose?—Not exactly; it is due to all sorts of causes.

50,567. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand from your experience of Wales that the part of the country which you are acquainted with is suffering distinctly from agricultural depression?—It is suffering.

Extent of depression.

50,568. Are you acquainted at all with the condition of affairs in England, or any part of it?—I have to do with it considerably in Shropshire; my chief work with it is in Shropshire.

50,569. From your general knowledge of agriculture in England, should you say that depression was as severe in Wales, or not so severe as it is in some parts of this country?—It is not so severe.

50,570. (*Viscount Cobham.*) As in Shropshire do you say?—Shropshire feels it heavily, but I do not think Shropshire feels it like the Eastern Counties.

50,571. As between Wales and Shropshire?—I should say Wales less, because so much depends on what the man's take is—what his capital is, and what his risk is, they are a different class of people.

Cause of depression.

50,572. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do I understand that you attribute it, if not mostly, at all events, very largely, to the fall in the price of cattle?—That affects us, and also the demand for cattle. Our farmers cannot move them to the markets like they used to do; there is not the same demand for the Welsh cattle.

50,573. And consequently the price has fallen?—Yes.

50,574. What is the reason of the demand for Welsh cattle having fallen off?—We think that they are not wanted; they used to go for fabulous prices up to Northamptonshire and those counties compared with what they fetch now.

50,575. Your chief market for them was for the grazing counties in England as store stock, was it not?—Yes, and then they were moved on to London after grazing those counties.

50,576. That demand appears to have fallen off?—It is not nearly so great.

50,577. Since when has that occurred?—Within the last 10 years.

50,578. There is an improved demand this year, is there not?—Very much so just now.

50,579. But within the last 10 years, there has been a very marked falling off in the demand?—Yes; the

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same men do not come in the eager way that they used to come to the fairs.

50,580. Have you tried to ascertain what is the reason of that?—They tell you that they have not got the money to buy them. Of course, you do not know whether it is so, but you are always told that they do not want them.

50,581. Had it anything to do with the imports of Canadian cattle, do you think?—Of course, they cannot make the same money of them, and therefore they are more shy of grazing them. They have to meet in the market the foreign production of meat.

Abatements of rent.

50,582. 1892 and 1893 you say were the very worst years of all; what was done to meet that by the owners of the land?—There was a larger return of rent. I think Lord Penrhyn gave up to 25 per cent. in that year.

50,583. What would the reductions average in your part of Wales?—They varied very much, from 5 to 10 and 15 per cent. with us.

50,584. Yes; to what is the maximum?—The maximum is what I quoted.

50,585. 25 per cent.?—Yes, I think Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Ashton Smith gave 25 per cent., but we never gave more than 15 per cent.

50,586. (*Chairman.*) What you are speaking of are temporary abatements?—Yes, returns.

Reductions in rent.

50,587. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Not permanent reductions of rent?—No.

50,588. Have permanent reductions been made?—Not all round; only in individual cases, and undoubtedly on the re-letting of farms. I have had to do it myself, several permanent reductions.

Rent.

50,589. On page 2 of your brief, I observe you call attention to the fact that rent forms but a mere practical proportion of a tenant's outlay?—It is so; there is no doubt about it. The outgoings for everything, if it is a big sized farm especially, including the labour bill, the cake bill, the seeds, and everything, are tremendous.

50,590. What proportion of his whole outlay in the cultivation of the farm would the rent represent, taking the rent at the average in your district?—I should think a man would certainly expend two rents at least.

50,591. Not more than two rents?—I am talking of the ordinary class of farmer. Certainly I should say so.

50,592. Has anything else been done to meet them, and help the tenants in the depression?—We are continually considering cases, and give them time, and so forth. Whenever we think a man is working hard, we always try to meet him in that way as much as we can within reason.

50,593. You help him in other ways, in fact?—Yes; but you always must find out whether a man really is trying himself; that is my system.

50,594. Where you find that to be the case, you help the man with other things, as well as abatements of rent?—Certainly; always.

Expenditure on improvements.

50,595. Have you been called upon to make much greater outlay in buildings or improvements of that kind?—Certainly, they must have larger buildings. You cannot for a moment shut your eyes to the fact that they must have better buildings and more room.

50,596. And those you have been in the habit of making?—We are doing that as fast as ever we can.

50,597. As a general rule in the parts of Wales with which you are acquainted, who makes the improvement?—The landlords entirely; you will not get a tenant now to do anything, it is not expected.

50,598. Has that always been the case?—No; formerly the tenants did a great deal, but they cannot now, and they are not asked to do so on good estates.

50,599. Since when is it that the landlords have always made the improvements?—It has grown very much, and especially it has become so during the last 15 to 20 years.

50,600. At all events, as a matter of fact, now the landlords invariably make them, and the tenants hardly ever do?—They do not do a thing now; we do as much as we can, the gates and all.

50,601. You give some account, I think, of the outlay that has been made on the estate that you manage?—I know in the case of Canon Haygarth's property that he has spent enormously for his rental.

50,602. In your brief you give particulars of certain estates that have been bought adjoining the Wynnstay estates, or that have been added to the Wynnstay estates during the last 22 years—what is the amount that has been spent upon those?—A great deal, but at the same rate as the other part of the estate. I could not keep all that separate. I could give you the amount on the estate, only I should have to take it out of the books to give you that. It has gone in with the general expense.

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50,603. The return shown in the way of interest is something very small, is it not?—Yes.

50,604. What does that amount to?—It is about 2½ per cent. not more.

Effects of depression.

50,605. Now with regard to the effects of the depression. I understand that the losses of the owners have been very large?—Undoubtedly.

50,606. Is that entirely owing to the reductions that they have been called upon to make?—Yes, and to their having to spend more on the property.

50,607. Which has been the most costly to them—the reductions or the additional outlay upon the property?—That is rather a broad question; so much depends upon the state you find your property in.

50,608. I ask because the reductions do not appear in some cases to have been so very heavy, or not nearly so heavy as they have been in many parts of England?—I think that, certainly, the actual expenditure is far greater than the reductions of rent. In my own case I have had my own small property about 14 years, and the rental is 2,500*l.*, and I know I have spent 12,000*l.* in buildings in that time out of the income.

50,609. So that the abatements in rent do not by any means altogether represent the drain that has been made upon the landlords?—No, and after all it is a bad policy altogether. Giving back so much is merely tiding over the difficulty, and I do not believe in it a bit. It just keeps them quiet and makes them try; but I have really very little faith in it; it does not help them very much.

50,610. You are now speaking of temporary reductions?—Yes, I am.

Reductions in rent.

50,611. What do you advocate?—You must endeavour to get at the value of the farm if you can; even then sometimes you may be wrong, because you are made so by the press of circumstances.

50,612. And reduce the rent permanently to that mark?—I always try to, if I am allowed to, always.

50,613. Are you not allowed a free hand in all these matters?—Certainly, but then one naturally feels all the more sensitive about it. Sir Watkin leaves it to me entirely, and so does my friend Canon Haygarth, in fact, he does not know himself what his rents are.

50,614. I understand that one of your difficulties is this that although you may have had a large reduction at one time there is a further fall of prices and again you are in difficulties?—I am afraid so, very often; you cannot shut your eyes to it.

Position of small owners.

50,615. You have told us so far with regard to the large landowners; what is the case with regard to the small owners?—They are a different class and they have so much less capital and money involved that they are quite a class to themselves. They live in a marvellous way and are content to go on; their losses are not so great.

50,616. Why are their losses less?—They have a small stock, and they can attend to what they have in their own way at home themselves.

50,617. I am speaking of the small owners?—I beg your pardon; I thought you meant the small farmers. It is supposed that they are so over-burdened in every way that they do not thrive. Probably they have borrowed money to help their family out, and so on, and then little places are charged quite hopelessly. They get low and broken-hearted, many of them. On the other hand, others are exactly the reverse.

50,618. Are they in a position to help their tenants by reductions?—Very little.

50,619. Then in the case of the small owners reductions have not been made on so large a scale?—Oh, dear no.

50,620. Do you hear complaints on that point?—Very often.

50,621. And those complaints, within your knowledge, are well founded?—Yes; but of course you never interfere in another man's business. I know of lots of cases where it comes very hard.

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50,622. Where they have been obliged to press their tenants for rent?—Yes.

50,623. The occupying owners have been, to a large extent, obliged to get rid of their properties, have they not?—Very often indeed.

Position of occupying owners.

50,624. What is the case with regard to tenant farmers?—In what way?

50,625. What is their condition in consequence of this depression; have they suffered severely?—They are much poorer as a class; they have not the power of spending; you can see that from their way of going on. They have to be very particular. For instance, if you ask medical men and so on, they will tell you this very often, they find out the difficulty these men are in.

50,626. Ask whom?—The medical men, and so on, who go about; they will tell you how hard it is to get their bills paid now. It is very hard for the poor fellows to find the money now.

Large and small farmers compared.

50,627. You state in your paper that the tenant farmers, large, medium, and small, have lost capital in proportion; what do you mean by that?—I know that when men have had money they have had to draw upon their capital; I know of heaps of cases of these men, where they have got a little put by, and they have had to draw upon it. I know that from personal knowledge.

50,628. What do you mean by saying that they have lost heart in their industry? Are they anxious to give up their farms?—When they get a crop home what is it compared with what it used to be? I have myself seen wheat sold at 78*s.*, and now you hear to-day that it has been down to 17*s.* 8*d.* I have actually sold wheat myself at 78*s.*, and now it is down to that. I have none to sell now because it is all ground up. Then I sold wool in 1864 at 2*s.* 6*d.*, the whole clip, and it is now 10½*d.* You cannot face these things.

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50,629. When you say that they have lost heart in their industry altogether, do you mean that if they saw their way to it, they would get out of the business and give up farming?—Many would. Many would say that they are so fond of their places, that they would stick to them, but many would be glad to get out of them.

50,630. If they could see their way to selling their stock and getting out without a heavy loss they would give up their industry?—I know they would. Many would be glad to give up. On the other hand, many, if they can exist, will stick there.

Expenditure on improvements.

50,631. In your paper you ask permission of the Commission to state your views with regard to fixity of tenure; I do not propose to ask you that question myself, but I want to ask you this: I understand that the improvements are all made by the landlords?—Yes.

50,632. That the tenant farmers as a rule are not in a position to make them?—They are certainly not.

50,633. (*Chairman.*) Are you speaking of your own estates now, or generally of the district?—On all good estates it is a recognised thing now that they must be done by the estate.

50,634. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I am speaking now of the part of Wales with which you are thoroughly well aquainted. From your experience, I understand you to tell the Commissioners, that, as a general rule, the tenant farmers could not make their improvements?—Certainly not.

50,635. It would be impossible?—About all they will do is that they will drain pieces if you give them pipes, because these men have time and they will do that; otherwise there is nothing done.

50,636. I am speaking now of buildings?—We do not think of it.

50,637. They could not do it?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

(*For Col. Hughes' further evidence see page* 270.)

Ninety-seventh Day.

Edinburgh, Tuesday, 4th June 1895.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
John Clay, Esq.
Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq., C.B.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
George Lambert, Esq., M.P.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

Rev. J. Gillespie. — 4 June 1895.

The Rev. John Gillespie called and examined.

50,638. (*Chairman.*) You have been for many years a director of the Highland and Agricultural Society, and are much interested in all questions relating to farming?—Yes.

50,639. You come here, in the first case, to give your evidence on the subject of agricultural education?—Yes.

Agricultural education.

50,640. You consider that the means of agricultural education in Scotland are very inadequate and very much inferior to what exists in other countries?—Very much inferior. The provision is very inadequate at present.

50,641. What do you consider ought to be provided?—My idea is that agricultural education ought to be provided, like ordinary education, in three grades: in parishes or localities, where elementary education should be given; in centres representing wider districts, where a more advanced education should be given than the purely elementary form—say, at secondary or selected schools; and at large centres, such as Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen, where advanced education should be given. My idea is that the third, or highest, grade is at present very inadequately provided for. The first and second grades are so far provided for by the county council technical instruction grants. Each county council gets a grant, and although that may not be entirely satisfactory either in amount or in the mode of administration, yet, speaking generally, there is less reason to complain as regards local provision for the first and second grades of agricultural education than for the highest grade.

Rev. J. Gillespie. — 4 June 1895.

School of rural economy.

50,642. Are you a member of the administrative board of the School of Rural Economy in Edinburgh?—Yes. That board is composed of representatives of the University Court, the Highland and Agricultural Society of Scotland, and the Edinburgh Town Council. The only certain and permanent provision made for agricultural education in Scotland until a very recent date was the Chair of Agriculture in Edinburgh University which was endowed at the end of last century by a Scotsman, and lectures have been given there since that time. The endowment was supplemented for a considerable number of years by a grant of 150*l.* a year from the Highland and Agricultural Society, and this led the Government to give an equal

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Rev. J. Gillespie. 4 June 1895.

grant. It was felt that that was a very inadequate provision with one Chair for Agriculture and Rural Economy strictly so called, but no Chair for the allied sciences. An effort was, therefore, made to set up a School of Rural Economy, and the three bodies I have mentioned administer it through their representatives.

50,643. That is under the third grade?—Yes.

Distribution of grants.

50,644. With regard to the first two heads, is there a uniform system observed by the Scottish county councils in distributing the grants given in aid of agricultural education?—There is almost as much variety as there are counties.

50,645. What is the most general system adopted?—Lectures have been given in some counties; and itinerant dairy instruction has also been very extensively given in some counties.

50,646. Is any portion of the grants given to purely elementary schools?—Yes, in some counties. In Dumfriesshire there are grants given in supplement of the grants under the Code for passes in agriculture.

50,647. And also grants to secondary schools of a higher character?—Yes, in some counties. I am a member both of the technical instruction committee, and of the committee administering the secondary grant in that county, and we are endeavouring to work the two things under the same organisation—that is to say, in the same schools.

50,648. Would you take the county of Dumfries to be an ideal one?—No, but I am speaking of it because I know it well.

50,649. At all events, you consider the county of Dumfries is doing the best they can for the money?—I think so.

50,650. What is the total amount they have to dispose of?—About 1,000*l.* for technical education, which embraces everything.

50,651. And how much of that goes towards agricultural education?—I have not the figures with me.

50,652. Perhaps you could supplement your evidence by supplying us with that information?—Yes, I shall be glad to do so. *The witness subsequently wrote:*—"In "Dumfrieshire, during the year ending 15 May 1894, "there were expended on agriculture and chemistry, "17*l.* 0*s.* 9*d.*; on dairying, 303*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.* For passes in "agriculture and kindred branches in the elementary "schools, 173*l.*

"During 1893–94 the total grants for technical instruc- "tion to county councils in Scotland amounted to "17,822*l.* 16*s.* 4*d*, of which there were expended on "agriculture and chemistry, 1,681*l.* 2*s.* 5*d.*: on dairying, "2,275*l.* 19*s.* 2*d.*; on universities, colleges, and schools, "6,662*l.* 12*s.* 9*d.*; and for lectures in the counties on "veterinary subjects, about 150*l.*"

50,653. In many counties, I suppose, they do not make any grants to elementary schools, but spend the whole of the money in lectures?—I suppose that is so.

50,654. At all events, there is great variety?—Yes, and there are great varieties of industries to be provided for.

50,655. In your opinion, whatever is done in that respect ought to be supplemented under the third head through grants from the Agricultural Department?—Yes, very liberally supplemented. At present only 8,000*l.* is distributed by the Board of Agriculture for the whole of Great Britain.

50,656. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Can you say how much of that is given to Scotland just now?—No, I cannot.

50,657. Is the grant to Scotland still continued?—Yes. The main grants are given to four bodies: the School of Rural Economy in Edinburgh, the Technical College in Glasgow, and a body in Aberdeen, where efforts are being made by the Marquis of Huntly, Lord Rector of the University of Aberdeen, to set up a system of agricultural education, and the fourth body is the Kilmarnock Dairy School, which is the only dairy school in Scotland. I think 450*l.* comes to Edinburgh.

Kilmarnock Dairy School.

50,658. (*Chairman.*) How long has the Kilmarnock Dairy School been in existence?—I think for six or seven years.

50,659. What number of students does it provide for?—I could not state the number in regular attendance, but I will supplement my evidence in that respect. *The witness subsequently wrote:*—"During the session of six months "ending 30 October 1895, the number of attendances by "students at Kilmarnock Dairy School was 2,602, making "an average of 18 pupils daily. During these six months, "300 individuals from all parts of Great Britain attended "for a longer or shorter period.

"An abstract of the accounts of Kilmarnock Dairy "School of 1894–95 is lodged herewith." (*See* Appendix A. VI.) The school has done extremely good work. It is estimated by practical people that it has so much improved the quality of the cheese made in the county of Ayr that the value has increased from 4*s.* to 6*s.* per cwt.

Rev. J. Gillespie. 4 June 1895.

50,660. Does the school give diplomas?—It does, but they are on an unsatisfactory footing. It is very desirable that there should be uniform dairy diplomas over Great Britain, and I believe the Board of Agriculture have called a conference just now to consider that subject.

50,661. Do you think other schools of the same kind should be established in Scotland?—I think one dairy school is quite sufficient.

50,662. But you think it should be more liberally supported?—Yes. It is supported just now largely by subscriptions from individual proprietors, such as the Duke of Portland, the Duke of Buccleuch, the Earl of Eglinton, and various other noblemen and gentlemen.

50,663. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What method do they adopt?—They send an instructor through to Dumfriesshire and Galloway to give instruction in cheesemaking. One drawback to the school is the uncertainty of the funds they have. The grant may stop at any moment. It ought to be put on a permanent basis, so that the managers could set up a good system of instruction to be depended on from year to year. Public funds are therefore necessary for that purpose.

Board of Agriculture grant.

50,664. (*Chairman.*) Do you know what funds it has in the way of subscriptions just now?—No. The same remark as to uncertainty applies to the Rural School in Edinburgh as regards the third grade. When we get a grant from the Board of Agriculture, if it is not stated in exact terms, you can read between the lines that there is a warning that it may not be repeated, and you have no confidence to set up a scheme with any resonable guarantee that it will be continued in future years.

50,665. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) At the same time, I think you will agree that the Board of Agriculture should have some reasonable guarantee that the work will be well done?—I think they should have every guarantee. But, in my opinion, there should be a small advising board in Scotland, which should be empowered to give grants to local organisations, provided satisfactory approved work is done. I would give them no further power than that.

50,666. (*Chairman.*) I suppose it comes very much to this, that the Board of Agriculture makes its grant, not in a permanent form, so as to give an absolute certainty that it will be continued, but that it will be dependent on the work done?—Yes, but it is also dependent on the will of Parliament.

50,667. Of course, every grant is in that position; but, subject to that the grant will be continued to this school so long as it does good work?—Their communication to us rather amounted to a warning that they might not be continued. We have a feeling of uncertainty and a want of confidence in proceeding without any guarantee.

50,668. But when there is a vote of this kind from Parliament, it very seldom gets off again, and all persons may feel confident that it will be continued year by year when good work is done. Could you have any greater assurance than that with regard to the future?—Well, I do not know. I am not acquainted with parliamentary promises.

50,669. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you find some practical inconvenience from the uncertainty now?—I know the board does.

State subsidies to dairy schools.

50,670. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You have one of those dairy schools for Scotland. Would you treat the rest of Great Britain in the same way, and have the Government to subsidise dairy schools in England and Ireland?—Yes.

50,671. It would, therefore, become a considerable charge on the State?—I do not think it would be very much.

50,672. You do not think it might be left to local organisations, such as county councils?—The county councils are not willing to spend much money out of their own jurisdiction. The dairy districts of Scotland, strictly so-called, are confined to the south-west; and this dairy school is located in the very best centre of these dairy districts.

50,673. Your remarks only apply to dairy education?—Yes. I think three large centres for the higher grade would be sufficient—in Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Aberdeen.

50,674. For teaching farming generally—the cultivation of soil and all pertaining to it?—Yes. For the elementary and the stage above the elementary you must take the education to the people. They will not go to these centres, and you must take the education down to them.

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50,675. Are they to get it gratis?—There should be fees, but they should be small.

50,676. Then that, again, would want subsidising by the Board of Agriculture or the State?—The local provision is, so far, found in the county technical grants, which I think meets it largely.

Agricultural colleges.

50,677. (*Mr. Clay.*) What is your opinion with regard to an agricultural college?—Personally, I am very strongly in favour of an agricultural college on the lines of the Ontario College at Guelph. I gave evidence on this subject before the Duke of Richmond's Commission; but it would be difficult to find the money to carry it out, as it requires much capital.

50,678. I think you gave very valuable evidence with regard to that college, and you found it to work well?—The pupils get their education, both theoretical and practical, and also their board for a very small sum. The Provincial Government of Ontario subsidises the College liberally, and this enables the managers to give an all-round education at a sum within the reach of the pupils.

50,679. And are the young men paid for any extra work on the farm?—Yes; they work on the farm, and are allowed time payment per hour. That goes considerably to reduce their board, and it also gives them valuable practical knowledge.

Method of agricultural education.

50,680. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Taking for granted that we have to rely for money for agricultural education upon the technical grant, what is your opinion as to how the most benefit can be got for the money we have to spend in the advancement of agriculture?—I think the principles of agriculture should be taught in the elementary schools and in the secondary and selected schools, and especially that dairy instruction should be given by itinerant instructors. I am very strongly in favour of experiments being carried on largely in each county, as well as in some centres where original research could be carried on. The experiments in each county are not only valuable as experiments to show what kind of manures and treatment are suitable for particular soils and climate, but they have also a high educational value. They draw the attention of farmers to such things, and I know from observation and mingling freely with farmers that they do a great deal of good.

Board of Agriculture grant.

50,681. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The grant at present given by the Board of Agriculture is 8,000*l.* for the whole of Great Britain, and you consider that inadequate?—Very inadequate.

50,682. Have you considered what would be sufficient as regards Scotland alone?—No; I have not.

50,683. Have you formed no opinion on the subject at all?—I would rather not say, off hand, but I will supplement my evidence on the point. *The witness subsequently wrote:*—"I think an annual grant of 10,000*l.* "would be required at first to be increased to from 15,000*l.* "to 20,000*l.* when the scheme has been fully developed."

50,684. When you have got a sum that is considered adequate and sufficient, how do you propose to dispense it?—I think it should be almost entirely given to the advanced schools in the three centres I have mentioned, and to the Kilmarnock Dairy School.

Objects of agricultural schools.

50,685. Their object would be principally to supply teachers of agriculture?—Yes; and to teach young farmers who want an advanced education. Before the agricultural depression set in, a large number of the sons of the larger farmers came to Edinburgh and got an agricultural education; and I think they would still be disposed to do that, if their means permitted and they could get education on reasonable terms.

50,686. The main object of this advanced education, I take it, would be to give this advanced education to young men and supply teachers to go about the country?—Yes.

50,687. With regard to the second class, what is to be their special teaching?—The principles of agriculture, and chemistry, botany, and the allied sciences.

50,688. And is it by these schools that the experiments you contemplate are to be made?—No. I do not think they are capable of it.

50,689. These experiments would be carried out by the higher schools?—Yes.

Higher schools.

50,690. Then, the higher schools would have to be provided with land and opportunities for making research?—As regards research, one must distinguish between original research and ordinary farm experiments. The research part should be under these central boards, and the experiments should be conducted near these schools or in the different localities, as might be thought desirable; but the ordinary experiments, strictly so called, would be conducted on ordinary farms.

50,691. But would they be carried out by the advanced schools or the secondary schools?—The advanced schools.

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50,692. Then, what is to be the work of the secondary schools?—To give teaching in the principles of agriculture proper and the allied sciences up to a certain grade.

Secondary schools.

50,693. With regard to the parishes and the localities, you do not mean separate schools?—No.

50,694. But that in the existing schools there are to be means afforded for agricultural education?—Yes.

50,695. With regard to dairy education, I suppose there is a greater opening for that than in any other direction?—There is a large opening, but I would not say a greater.

Kilmarnock Dairy School.

50,696. How do you propose to carry it out?—By subsidising the Kilmarnock Dairy School.

50,697. And allow them to undertake arrangements for itinerant teaching all over Scotland?—Yes, that has been done already, with very good results.

50,698. And you will be good enough to let us know what sum will be necessary to carry out this scheme of education in Scotland?—I will. (*See* Question 50,683.)

50,699. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you consider that you have sufficient funds for the first two grades of this instruction?—I would not go so far as that, but I do not think we have much reason to complain.

Grants supplemented by rates.

50,700. Are these funds supplemented by rates?—No.

50,701. Is there in Scotland, as in England, power to raise money for that purpose by rates?—Under the Technical Schools Act there is, but it is a voluntary Act, and I think only three parishes have adopted it.

50,702. Is there any necessity for altering the law in regard to that?—I do not think so. I am in favour of a Bill now before Parliament to administer the technical instruction grant by the same body that administers the secondary education grant.

50,703. May county councils do it?—Yes, they may do so. Most of these bodies in the south-west of Scotland give grants to the Kilmarnock Dairy School. One of them—Midlothian—gives a grant to the School of Rural Economy, but that is a school in its own district. The Town Council of Edinburgh give that school a liberal grant, and they have four representatives on the administrative board. I think they give us 500*l.* or 600*l.*

50,704. Then, on the whole, you might get from these sources larger grants than from the Board of Agriculture?—No, I do not think so. There is an indisposition on the part of county councils to give grants outside their own area, because they seem to think that the money has been given for administration within their own jurisdiction.

50,705. But there is no legal objection to their giving it?—There was one, I believe, but it was avoided by a supplementary Act.

Kilmarnock Dairy School.

50,706. (*Captain Thomas.*) What is the size of the dairy school at Kilmarnock?—It was started on a farm belonging to Lady Ossington, near Kilmarnock. She gave the use of the farm buildings, and entirely remodelled them at her own expense. An arrangement was made with the agricultural tenant for the use of the milk from his dairy, and the work is carried on at the very lowest cost.

50,707. What do the pupils pay?—A merely nominal fee, they have to board in the town of Kilmarnock.

Income tax.

50,708. (*Chairman.*) Coming to the question of the income tax, you have studied the question in all its bearings?—For a quarter of a century I have had considerable experience in assisting farmers to get redress for overcharges, and I am the author of a pamphlet on the subject. During that period I have been instrumental in getting thousands of pounds backs to farmers.

50,709. What is complained of?—Many farmers are over-charged for income tax, many people pay who ought to be exempted, and others do not get the benefit of the abatement who are entitled to it. That proceeds almost entirely from the mode of assessing farmers for income tax.

Mode of assessing farmers.

50,710. What is the mode?—The principle embodied in various Acts of Parliament is that one-third of the rent is assumed to be the profit of the farmer. That proportion is now the law for the whole of the three divisions of the kingdom, since the Budget of a year ago. But although that is the principle, the assessment is not laid on in that way. Instead of one-third of the rent being taken as the basis of assessment, and that charged under the usual rate under Schedules A., D., and E., the whole rent is taken and charged at a rate under Schedule B., which is a smal

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fraction over the usual income-tax rate for the year. It is because of that that the confusion arises.

50,711. (*Mr. Everett.*) When the income tax was at 6*d.*, the farmers were charged 2*d.*?—No, 2¼*d.* In England just now the rate is 3*d.*, but one-eighth is taken off before it is levied.

50,712. (*Chairman.*) Assuming the rent is 300*l.* a year, I understand that, instead of being assessed at 100*l.* a year and income tax charged on that sum, the farmer is assessed upon 300*l.* and the income tax is charged at one-third rate upon that amount?—Rather over one-third.

50,713. One does not at first sight see the difference between the two?—They are the same, except that it confuses the farmer, and he does not see that he should be exempted. He is charged, say, upon 300*l.* He does not understand the principle upon which the income tax is levied, and he does not distinguish between the 300*l.* of his rent and the 300*l.* of income.

50,714. Are you now speaking of his right to get exemption if his income does not exceed 160*l.*?—Yes.

50,715. So that if his assessment is maintained at 300*l.*, he does not get the exemption for being under 160*l.*?—Unless he understands the principle. I think that farmers, on the merits of the income tax, have no reason to complain, because they are charged in principle on one-third of their rent. The farmer can never be charged more than that. If within two months of the end of the financial year he presents a balance-sheet, showing that he made less profit, or no profit at all, he gets back the difference on what he has paid. But I submit that, according to the mode in which the income tax is levied, in practice it leads to over-charges, and not only to financial over-charge, but to great irritation in the minds of farmers.

50,716. If a farmer has no other source of income than his farm, his rent must be 480*l.* before he pays income tax?—Yes, before he is liable to pay, but many of them do pay notwithstanding.

50,717. But if they make application they will get it back?—Yes, if they are guided in making the application, but they do not understand it.

Suggested alteration in mode of assessment.

50,718. You recommend that, instead of being assessed on the full rent, and income tax levied at one-third of the rate, the assessment should be at the full rate on one-third of the rent, and that would *ipso facto* carry exemption?—Yes; it would lead to the same result and simplify the procedure. It is more striking in the abatement than the exemption. If the rent is, say, 600*l.*, 480*l.* is taken off, and that confuses the farmer. Within the last few weeks cases have passed through my hands in a friendly way, in one of which 43*l.* had been repaid, and in another case 23*l.* had been recovered. In very many instances since 1st January I have passed through my hands papers for repayment for four years.

Importation of foreign milk.

50,719. As to the importation of foreign milk, what is your opinion?—I have a strong opinion that it ought to be entirely prohibited. It is the only kind of foreign produce regarding which I have that opinion.

50,720. On what grounds would you prohibit its importation?—First, in consideration of the public health. We have no knowledge or control of the conditions under which milk is produced abroad. Although it is frozen, the process of freezing does not destroy the germs or make them innocuous. I therefore think there is the greatest possible danger that infectious diseases may be brought with the milk to this country. Producers of milk here are placed under the local authority's regulations, and quite fairly so. They feel the regulations very exacting, but they submit to them, at considerable inconvenience and expense.

Inspection of dairies

50,721. Is there a local inspection of the dairies?—Yes, a very careful inspection, and yet fever has been conveyed to the towns.

50,722. To what district are you referring?—To Dumfriesshire, where I am chairman of the District Committee.

50,723. Does the sanitary inspector visit the dairies?—Yes, regularly, and gives periodical reports. The cowsheds have to fulfil certain very exacting conditions. The utensils have to be treated in a particular way. If an infectious disease breaks out among the farmer's or dairyman's children, the sale of milk is stopped. If all that is necessary in this country in the interests of public health, it is most unfair to the home producer, as well as to the consumer, that foreign milk, which is not subjected to any such precautions, should be admitted.

50,724. In the case of condensed milk, I understand that is subjected to the process of boiling?—I understand so.

50,725. And that would destroy the germs?—I understand it does.

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The Agricultural Holdings Act.

Private contracts.

50,726. Coming to the Agricultural Holdings Act, have you acted as arbiter under that measure?—Yes, and I have taken a considerable interest in it.

50,727. What amendments do you consider desirable?—One point on which I wish to express my views is that no discouragement ought to be given to private contracts between landlord and tenant in substitution of the compensation provided for in the Act so long as these private contracts are equitable.

50,728. So far as they give advantages equal to those conferred by the Act?—I think they give better advantages.

50,729. Is there any alteration of the law you would suggest?—No, but I have observed in the Sub-Commissioners' reports and in various other ways that private contracts have been pretty strongly condemned. I do not agree with that view. I think private contracts keep down expense in settling claims. When private contracts are made it is a mere matter of accounting at the end of a tenancy what compensation is due, and no doubt the very heavy expenses of arbitrations have gone far to nullify the benefits of the Act.

Custom as between outgoing and incoming tenant.

50,730. What is the general rule in Scotland—are the settlements for improvements under the Act generally between the outgoing and the incoming tenant, or between landlord and tenant?—Between landlord and tenant at the end of the lease. It is very seldom between the outgoing and incoming tenants.

50,731. (*Mr. Everett.*) Who is the compensation paid to?—It is paid by the landlord to the outgoing tenant. I have heard of isolated cases where the landlord has bound the incoming tenant to repay him, but they are very few. The landlord pays the compensation out of his own pocket, and expects to get it back in rent.

50,732. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are the farms sometimes let on a yearly tenure with six months' notice to quit?—They are but very seldom.

50,733. Is there any distinction then between landlord and tenant or outgoing and incoming tenant?—Not that I am aware of. As far as I have observed the matter is always between landlord and tenant. Five years' tenancies are getting common, especially in the south-west of Scotland, but I do not think they are growing in favour. Some people take advantage of them to reduce the condition of the farm, and they are rather going out of favour.

50,734. (*Chairman.*) But where the landlord has to pay the outgoing tenant for unexhausted manures, he must get it from the incoming tenant?—The theory is that he gets it from the rent.

50,735. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the usual period of entry?—There is an entry at Candlemas in February. In these circumstances the incoming tenant has the next year's crop. Then there is the Whit-Sunday entry in which the outgoing tenant has the grain crop of that year. Then there are Martinmas entries where the incoming tenant enters upon everything, including the houses, with the exception perhaps of the turnips or green crop.

50,736. (*Chairman.*) From your experience what would you say the landlord has to pay on the average to an outgoing tenant at the end of a lease?—I could not say.

Private contracts.

50,737. But it must often be a considerable sum?—No, the claims have not been numerous. The number of claims, in proportion to the number of farms in the country, or changes of tenancy, have not been numerous. That has been largely due to a want of confidence on the part of tenants that they would not get much when they went out, and therefore they did not farm so liberally. If a man makes a private contract he can make an approximate estimate of what he has to get at the end of a lease and he farms accordingly. I submit, therefore, that private contracts, if liberally constructed in the interest of the tenants, will give them confidence to go on and farm liberally.

50,738. (*Mr. Everett.*) There will be more certainty and less expense?—Yes, these are the two elements.

50,739. (*Chairman.*) If the tenant renews his lease there is nothing payable between him and the landlord—he farms with that object?—Not always.

50,740. But if he does not intend to take the farm on again he farms towards the end of his lease with that intention?—He could do it, but it is very undesirable that he should.

50,741. What do you recommend in the way of keeping down the cost of arbitration?—I do not know anything, except private contracts.

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Method of arbitration in Scotland.

50,742. What is the usual method of arbitration in Scotland?—The landlord and tenant each name an arbiter, and then an umpire is selected between them.

50,743. So that practically three people are engaged?—Yes.

50,744. Which means three fees?—Yes.

50,745. Could that not be reduced to one?—I am in favour of single arbiters.

50,746. You have generally acted as an umpire?—I have acted in both ways.

50,747. Could you suggest any method of converting the three arbiters into one?—Under the Act of 1889 either party can, by applying to the sheriff of the county, compel the appointment of a single arbiter to dispose of the reference.

50,748. But they do not do it?—In some instances, but not in the majority of cases.

50,749. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it not the case that by a trades union arrangement among valuers if you have a single valuator he charges a double fee?—Not in Scotland. A good many of the valuations are given gratuitously. I do not think we have anything to complain of.

50,750. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If there is no cause of complaint against the valuations, why complain of the expense?—I do not complain of the expense, because you cannot compel a farmer to take a single arbiter.

Appointment of arbiters.

50,751. (*Chairman.*) Would you approve of arbiters being selected by an official body, and the parties being compelled to accept the names?—That would be a very strong step, but it is the only way I can see to keep down the expense. I think the present plan meets the case very fairly.

State loans.

50,752. You have an opinion on the subject of Government loans?—I think it would be very advantageous if Government money could be got at a small rate of interest for buildings and drainage.

50,753. Do the tenants under leases in Scotland spend much money on permanent improvements?—Yes, a good deal.

50,754. In the way of cottages or buildings?—Not much in that way.

50,755. Speaking generally, they do not?—No.

50,756. Do they in drainage?—Yes, some of them. But in Scotland the maxim generally acted upon is that drainage is a landlord's operation.

50,757. Do you say that, generally speaking, the landlord effects the permanent improvements in Scotland?—Yes; but there are a good many cases in which the tenants do it.

50,758. Should the State loans you suggest be advanced to the landlord or the tenant?—I think to the landlord. I do not think that in the case of the tenant you could get a sufficient tangible security.

Depression in Scotland.

50,759. (*Mr. Everett.*) How long has the depression in agriculture existed in Scotland?—I think about 15 years. It existed very acutely in the dairy districts about 1882 and 1883, when the price of dairy produce fell to a very low point. Then the dairy districts recovered, but the prices of grain and meat affected many farms where mixed farming is followed.

50,760. And it is this fall in prices which is the main cause of the depression?—Yes.

50,761. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is there much depression now in Scotland?—Yes.

50,762. Is it getting worse?—No, not in the general farming, because both sheep and cattle are bringing a better price than for years past, especially lean cattle.

Length of leases.

50,763. If the depression has been getting worse, how is it that the tenants are anxious to have these long leases?—I cannot explain that. It seems very mysterious that they should, in the face of the present condition of matters, offer large sums for land; but they do.

50,764. Is it a matter of fact that farmers do not like the annual tenancy, but prefer a long lease?—They do; but in point of fact the lease is very largely a one-sided bargain. That is to say, the tenant in practice can and does keep the landlord to his bargain, but if the tenant throws up the lease it is very difficult for the landlord to insist upon his continuing his tenancy on the old terms.

50,765. Have many of these leases been thrown up?—Yes, a good many.

50,766. And notwithstanding these leases, the reductions of rent have been given?—Yes; they were largely given after the depression first set in.

Income tax.

50,767. With respect to your objections regarding the income tax, is any alteration of the law necessary to do away with them?—I suppose it would be necessary in each year's finance Act to say that the mode of levying would be a literal carrying out of the principle, and I think that is absolutely necessary to prevent farmers being overcharged.

50,768. There is no explanation given in the demand note of the cases in which the farmer should claim exemption or abatement?—No.

50,769. Is there any reason why that explanation should not be given?—There is no reason why it should not be given, but it would be most difficult to explain it to the farmer.

50,770. You think that some explanation should be given?—Yes, if the mode is not entirely changed.

Cost of arbitration.

50,771. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you not think that if there was a fixed scale of fees and official valuators appointed, the cost of arbitration would be materially reduced?—It might be so, but it is not so much the charges of the valuators as the leading of evidence. Where you have two valuers and an oversman, one or other of the parties proposes to lead evidence, and with three men it is more difficult to repress that evidence than if you had only one arbiter.

50,772. Could you not bring the leading of unnecessary evidence within bounds by arranging it in the cost?—That is done.

50,773. And it is not sufficient?—No. I think it should be inserted in the Act that the arbiter or arbiters have it in their discretion to refuse evidence if they think it unnecessary.

50,774. As to placing compensation cases in the hands of one man, could that not be done by making it the law, unless the two parties agreed to have two arbiters and an oversman?—There could be no objection to that.

50,775. It would put the pressure upon the parties to elect one man, unless they were agreed?—That would be very desirable.

Length of leases.

50,776. As to the leases—the tendency is rather to take the long lease again?—Yes, I think it is. People are getting dissatified with the five years' lease.

50,777. The five years' break is not so popular?—Not so much as it was five years ago.

50,778. On the side of the landlord or of the tenant?—I think on the landlord's side.

50,779. Of course it would be less to his advantage to have a five years' break?—Yes.

Private contracts.

50,780. About the contracts for substituted compensation—in the Act the words are "fair and reasonable compensation"—how is that interpreted in Scotland?—It is a legal question, and the determining of it does not commonly come under arbiters at all. Where there is a private accounting, it is generally a matter of adjusting.

50,781. What is the practice of gentlemen like yourself in regard to the interpretation?—I have not known it gone into in my experience.

50,782. It is not desirable that the words "fair and reasonable compensation" should be interpreted in the case of contracts entered into which might not be fair and reasonable?—I think so.

50,782*a*. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is there much competition for farms?—Very much in my district.

50,783. What is the usual size of farms?—Mixed arable farms vary from 100 to 300 imperial acres.

50,784. How much rent do they command?—From 100*l*. to 450*l*.

50,785. How many applicants would you expect to get for a farm of 200*l*. rent?—I should expect from six to ten offerers.

50,786. How are the farms let—in what way are the rents fixed?—The landlord or his agent fixes it by determining who is to be accepted.

50,787. Are farms let by tender?—Yes, written offers are almost the invariable practice.

50,788. Would a farmer in that position be a free agent in bargaining with his landlord, with six or ten men offering for a single farm?—I think he would.

59,789. Is not his anxiety to get into the farm so great that he would not be quite so free as bargaining with an

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outside person?—Just the same as in any other business where there is keen competition.

50,790. Keen competition naturally tends to force up prices arbitrarily?—It does.

Length of leases.

50,791. Do tenants prefer long leases?—Yes, they seem to do.

50,792. For what reason?—The reason used to be that they had security for their improvements. They could go on farming liberally and getting the benefit of their own expenditure, and I think it is the reason still.

50,793. You think they have not sufficient security under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—In some respects they have not. There are features which could be amended with advantage.

Reduction of rents.

50,794. How much have rents been reduced in your part of the country?—The Chairman of the Finance Committee of Dumfriesshire made a most elaborate calculation for a period of 15 years of the rents of the agricultural subjects in the whole county, comprising 42 parishes, with a valuation of from 500,000*l.* to 600,000*l.*, and the conclusion he came to was that rents have fallen 16 per cent.

50,795. (*Mr. Everett.*) Would there be abatements outside that?—Oh, yes; because abatements are given privately.

50,796. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was that for arable or pastoral land?—For both classes.

50,797. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you hear many complaints as to the insufficient reductions of rent in the case of sitting tenants?—Yes, I hear more or less complaints and there will be as long as agricultural depression is as severe as it is.

Security of tenure.

50,798. Do you imagine security of tenure is conducive to good farming?—Oh, yes, it is.

Importation of milk.

50,799. What amount of milk is imported from abroad?—I am not aware, but one learns from the usual sources of information that very elaborate preparations are being made to increase it.

50,800. Have you any evidence to offer as to any disease that has occurred through the importation of foreign milk?—No; but we prevent the importation of foreign cattle lest disease should be conveyed to our cattle, and there is stronger reason for preventing the importation of foreign milk lest it conveys disease to human beings.

50,801. But you only prevent the importation of foreign cattle when there is disease in the country from which they come?—I suppose there is disease in Norway and Holland which might be conveyed to human beings.

50,802. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you propose to prohibit milk only from Norway and Holland, or from all countries?—From all countries which do not take means to destroy the germs by boiling, or some such process.

50,803. Is it a danger to public health when nearly all the countries on the Continent have animals suffering from disease?—That is certainly an aggravation.

50,804. What is the special danger arising from fever?—Scarlet-fever, for example. We had an instance in the local authority of which I am chairman. Scarlet-fever broke out in a dairyman's family. The milk was being taken to the county town of Dumfries, and 10 or a dozen cases of scarlet-fever broke out, five of which proved fatal. And we thought we were administering the Act with as much care as could be exercised.

50,805. And I understand you are not satisfied that sufficient precautions are being taken to guard against a similar danger in foreign countries?—That is so.

Reduction of rents.

50,806. With regard to the 16 per cent. reduction of rent you were speaking of, is that a dairy district?—Partly dairy, but more mixed farming.

50,807. Would that represent the average reduction throughout the whole of that county?—I think it would be larger than 16, because it does not take into account the voluntary reductions made by landlords, and which do not appear in the valuation roll.

Private contracts.

50,808. I understood you to say there is nothing, in your opinion, now to prevent farmers making private contracts on equitable terms as regards the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I know of nothing to prevent it. And I know a good many large estates in the county I live in where such contracts exist, and they work very satisfactorily.

Letting by tender.

50,809. Are farms in Scotland let by tender?—Yes generally.

50,810. To the highest bidder?—I do not know that I am not a landlord or factor,

50,811. Is it commonly the case or not that a rent is taken much less than the highest rent offered?—Yes, I suppose that is so.

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Private contracts.

50,812. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You approve very highly of these private contracts, such as exist on the Richmond and Dalhousie estates. These are based entirely on certain proportions of the manures supplied within the last years?—They are based on scales as regards lime, manures, and feeding stuffs.

50,813. Although they may not have perhaps increased the fertility of the soil to any great extent? It is presumed that they must have increased the fertility of the soil since they have been applied.

50,814. But there is a possibility of applying such things without increasing the fertility of the soil?—I do not know that there is. The fertility of the soil must be increased compared to what it would have been if these things had not been applied.

50,815. When you spoke of the lease being a one-sided arrangement, you meant that in bad times the bargain was broken by the landlord having to give deductions in rent, which is a breaking of the bargain?—That is so.

Rates

50,816. Is there much complaint made in your part of the country as to the mode in which agricultural subjects are rated?—Yes, a good deal.

50,817. And have you looked into that question closely?—Not very closely. I have a general idea of it. There is a very strong feeling that land pays an undue proportion of rates as compared with other sources of income.

50,818. Have you considered any scheme whereby that can be made more fair to the agriculturist?—No, I am not prepared to submit anything

Custom between outgoing and incoming tenant.

50,819. In reference to the question which has been dealt with, in regard to the person who has to pay the compensation for improvements, you hold that it must be the landlord, under the first section of the Act?—I suppose it could be either the landlord or the incoming tenant. I was testifying to what I knew of the practice. The difficulty as to the tenant being legally bound to pay compensation is that he is not in a good position to know what has been expended. When he examines the farm he sees the condition it is in, but he is not in a position to know what portion of the expenditure that brought it into that condition would come under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

50,820. In practice of late, where rents have been falling, is it the case that the landlord has been paying considerable sums to the out-going tenant and accepting lower rents?—Such cases have occurred; but there have been very few cases of compensation in my part of the country.

50,821. (*Mr. Clay.*) You hold that the landlord and the out-going tenant are the only two contracting parties?—I do not see how the incoming tenant is in a position to judge.

50,822. The incoming tenant bids a rent according to the look of the farm?—I presume so.

50,823. And he is perhaps paying a few shillings per acre more because there has been a liberal use of cakes and manures on that farm?—I presume so.

50,824. And, therefore, the landlord is reaping the benefit, and is entitled to pay the out-going tenant for that improvement?—Yes.

Private contracts.

50,825. Regarding these private arrangements, have you seen many of them?—Yes.

50,826. Are they fair?—Yes, I think they are fair and equitable. I am not at liberty to give names, but on several large estates in the south-west of Scotland my opinion and assistance were asked in framing them, and I think them quite equitable as far as they go, but if there is anything over and above the improvements particularised that would come under the Act.

50,827. These improvements only deal with cakes, lime, &c. within the last few years of the lease?—Yes.

50,828. But if a farmer has been going ahead right through the lease he would get no compensation except for the last few years?—That is in his own hands in making the private contract.

50,829. Is there any increased fertility in cakes and manures?—Cakes and manures do not go very far back—perhaps four years.

50,830. Is there not a great deal of fertility not covered by these private contracts?—I think there might be a case where providing compensation for only three years or so would not give adequate compensation.

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50,831. Is not the Act weak in that point?—I think the Act gives ample power to the arbiter to take into account fertility so long as the farm has been occupied.

50,832. Do arbiters usually act on that principle?—As a rule, they have not gone very far back.

50,833. Who is to be the judge of the term "fair and reasonable" in private contracts?—At present I suppose the court would be the judge.

50,834. It would be pretty expensive?—No doubt; but it would be a very good plan to insert in the Act words giving power to the arbiter to say whether it was fair and reasonable.

Competition for farms and high rents.

50,835. Is the tenant, where there is so much competition, a free agent?—I have no further answer than that which I have already given, that he is as much a free agent as in any other keenly competed trade.

50,836. But if he gets into a factor's office he may be screwed up to make disadvantageous arrangements?—As far as my knowledge goes in the case of vacant farms the arrangements are made, not by screwing people in factors' offices, but by written offers.

50,837. Are they bound to take the highest offers?—I do not know about that.

50,838. Perhaps people with deeply-mortgaged estates, getting into the hands of Edinburgh lawyers, would take the highest offer?—I do not know, and I would not like to give an opinion on what I do not know from personal knowledge. In a friendly way, and not for payment, I have acted as factor on one or two small estates, and I had one instance where 30 per cent. more was offered for a farm. I never looked at the offer, because I thought it was far too much.

50,839. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What makes a man offer 30 per cent. more than the value of a farm?—I think ignorance.

50,840. Are many farmers ignorant in that respect in Scotland?—If a man goes 50 miles from his own country, as in our district many have done, I do not think he is a good judge of the value of that land. Their experience has been drawn from an individual farm, say, in Ayrshire, and unless they are well advised they do not know the value of the land in Dumfriesshire.

50,841. Do you imagine there are many such cases of farmers offering so much more than the value of the farms?—I think there are.

50,842. They would not be all ignorant men?—They are ignorant of the value of that particular subject, but they may not be ignorant in their own sphere.

50,843. Do you imagine that there might be some landlords who would accept these very high rents?—I think there are.

50,844. They are not all animated by the spirit of philanthropy of some landlords?—You must bear in mind that a landlord is not always a judge of what his subject is worth. He gets it valued by the public, and he presumes that these practical men know their business, and he takes their offer.

50,845. (*Mr. Channing.*) We have had evidence regarding the Duke of Richmond's and Lord Aberdeen's estates that they are only desirous of letting their land at its fair value, and that these excessive offers are not accepted. Do not you think that system should be adopted?—I believe it is largely adopted.

50,846. (*Mr. Everett.*) And is inquiry made usually as to the means of the tenant?—Yes.

50,847. Have you the law of distress in Scotland?—Not now. Landlords and other creditors are on the same footing.

50,848. Has that led to rents being asked for in advance?—In some instances, but not many.

50,849. (*Mr. Clay.*) In the report of Mr. Speir on your county he gives a table showing that out of 172 farms let in Nithsdale only 90 were let to *bonâ fide* farmers, 82 being let to agricultural students, bankers, merchants, and others entirely unconnected with agriculture. That may account for these men not having sufficient knowledge of the farms to guide them when offering these high rents?—That may be. I noticed that statement in the Sub-Commissioner's report, and I was astonished at it. But there has been a great change in my district. I live further south than Nithsdale. It used to be a very common thing before the agricultural depression set in for men who had not spent the previous part of their lives in farming to offer for farms, but that has been very much reduced. Men went to England to what was called the "Scotch trade," and on their return offered high rents for farms, but they got their fingers burned.

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50,850. Do you think it wise in landlords to take these high rents from men of inexperience?—It is not what I would do.

50,851. Do you think the sitting tenant has ever been rented on his improvements?—I have no doubt he has.

50,852. Could you devise any means to have a certain per-centage deducted from the rents of these men?—It may be desirable, but I think it is impracticable, so far as I can see.

Reported prices of live stock.

50,853. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You suggest that the reports of prices given for live stock throughout the country are very unreliable?—Very unreliable. The most of the live stock at present is sold in auction marts, and the material for the reports in a great many cases is supplied by auctioneers, and it is very often coloured.

50,854. Who would you have to supply the official report?—I think that under the Intelligence Department of the Board of Agriculture a man might be got in each district to give a reliable report of the principal markets, say one for each county. I think that could be done at comparatively little expense.

Prices of grain.

50,855. Would you apply that to grain also?—No, I think the reports of the prices of grain are more reliable. In Edinburgh I think they are perfectly reliable.

50,856. Why should not live stock or dead meat be treated in the same way by an official reporter?—I think they should be, and that there should be a speedy publication of whatever is given.

Selling by live weight.

50,857. Are you an advocate of selling by weight?—I am in favour of selling by live weight, but I do not know that I would go in for compulsory live weight.

50,858. But you think every auction mart should have a weighbridge?—Oh, yes.

Income tax.

50,859. To enable farmers to get back their income tax they would be compelled to keep accounts?—Yes, if under Schedule D., and I do not think it would work. If put on the same footing as other tradespeople in the country I think it would lead to endless friction. I think they would rather go on their old way and pay income tax than be compelled to keep accounts.

Demand for farms.

50,860. (*Chairman.*) Can farms be let easily in your district?—Oh, yes.

50,861. Are there many applications for vacant farms?—There seem to be a good many.

50,862. Within the last year or so has there been a tendency for rents to rise?—I would not say that, but they have not fallen as compared with the previous years.

50,863. The fall has been arrested?—I think it has.

50,864. And still there is a demand for farms?—Yes.

Length of leases.

50,865. You say that the leases are still maintained with a break of five years?—The leases used to be for 19 years, but they are now for 15 years, with a break at five years. When I say the fall of rent is stopped, I mean as compared with a few years ago, but not with the period at the commencement of the lease.

Prices of dairy produce.

50,866. You say the prices of dairy produce fell very low in 1882?—Yes.

50,867. And then rose?—Yes.

50,868. How do they stand now?—The price of cheese is lower than ever. Last week in Glasgow it was only bringing about 32*s.* per cwt.

50,869. Taking an average of the last few years, what would the reduction in prices be?—They were 12 per cent. less than in the good years, when prices were 60*s.* to 65*s.* per cwt.

50,870. And butter?—Butter has been rather low.

50,871. Taking the last few years?—I have not the same knowledge of butter as of cheese.

Length of leases.

50,872. You would consider it rather a misfortune if the old system of long leases should be superseded by these breaks of five years?—If I were taking land I would prefer to take it on a yearly tenancy, with two years' notice. I do not think any injury could arise to either party. I do not approve of 15 years' leases, for I think whatever bargain is made it should be fulfilled. I think non-fulfilment of bargains has had the effect of keeping up rents, for no doubt many tenants offer rents in the expectation of getting an abatement afterwards.

50,873. In the time of depression landlords were compelled to make large abatements in spite of the fact that tenants were bound under these long leases?—Yes.

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50,874. Then the practice began of tenants contracting for higher rents, believing they would get abatements?—Some of them did.

50,875. In other words, the tendency has been not to hold men to their bargains, and the leases have been to a great extent broken?—Yes, in many instances.

50,876. (*Mr. Everett.*) I think 1893 was a season above the average with you?—It varied a good deal in different districts.

50,877. And 1894 was a very good season?—Yes.

50,878. (*Chairman.*) Have you been called in as an arbiter by tenants as well as by landlords?—Yes, sometimes by one and sometimes by another. Very often I was the sole arbiter in a friendly way.

50,879. Have you been nominated under the Act of 1889?—No.

50,880. Do you consider the cost of arbitration has been less where you have acted singly?—Yes.

Judicial rents.

50,881. From your experience, has there been any demand in your district for a judicial determination of rent?—Not much.

50,882. There is some?—Very seldom.

50,883. Would the tenants desire to have their rents fixed for five or seven years by an independent arbitrator?—I have not met with that demand.

50,884. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you met with any demand?—In conversation I have heard of it.

50,885. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it the general opinion that two years' notice would be sufficient?—I do not think so. It is my own opinion.

Management of estates.

50,886. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are estates well managed in Scotland?—Yes.

50,887. Are there not a good many lawyer factors?—Yes.

50,888. Have they any practical experience?—As a rule, no.

50,889. How are those estates managed?—In some instances they have a sub-factor, who resides on the estate and administers the practical working of it.

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50,890. (*Mr. Everett.*) Have you formed any opinion as to the cause of this depression?—It is largely due to the large production and cheap conveyance of foreign produce.

Length of leases.

50,891. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you think these short tenancies would be to the advantage of the landlord as well as of the tenant?—I think so. If I were a tenant I think I could farm as well under a short lease as a long one.

Wages.

50,892. (*Chairman.*) Have labourers' wages been maintained in your district?—Yes.

50,893. There has been no reduction?—Well, there has been a slight reduction from the highest figure at which they stood, but it is very small.

50,894. At what period were they highest?—About 1880. Throughout Dumfriesshire generally and the south of Scotland labour is rather scarce in the rural districts. It is difficult to get occasional persons to work on farms. Migration into the towns is taking place pretty extensively.

50,895. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And that accounts for the wages being maintained?—Yes.

50,896. (*Chairman.*) What is the average rate of wages in Dumfriesshire?—For a ploughman engaged for the year, from 39*l.* to 42*l.*, with free house and garden.

50,897. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your view is that this great migration into towns has caused less labour to be available in the country?—There is less labour, owing to machinery being more largely employed and there being few permanent improvements executed.

50,898. (*Mr. Clay.*) What do they get in wages besides the house?—As a rule, with us it is all a money wage, except the house and coals and peat led.

50,899. Do they get sufficient time to cut the peats?—Yes, where it is available.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. B. Kinnear.

Mr. John Boyd Kinnear called in and examined.

Mr. J. B. Kinnear.

50,900. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the Scottish Bar, a landowner in Scotland, and were formerly a member of Parliament for East Fife?—Yes; I may add that I am also a member of the English bar, and have lived in England a great part of my life.

50,901. And you have given a great deal of attention to agricultural matters?—Yes, in both countries.

Low prices.

50,902. To what do you attribute the recent depression?—Undoubtedly to the fall in prices.

Agricultural education.

50,903. What do you consider should be done to improve the state of things?—I agree very much with what I gathered are Mr. Gillespie's views in regard to education. That is very important. Without going further into these points I should like to add that I think it would be of

Research stations.

very great importance if in this country we had research stations such as exist in Germany, the United States, and Canada.

50,904. You think that much might be done by giving greater inducements for agricultural education?—Undoubtedly; not merely in aiding the higher schools in which farmers should be taught, but by giving instruction in the elementary schools, in which the labourers could be taught.

50,905. And also by assisting scientific research?—I feel that very strongly. We are placed at a very considerable disadvantage in competing with America in that respect.

State loans.

50,906. As regards loans by the State, do you agree with Mr. Gillespie?—Yes, as to loans to landlords; and I should further advocate loans to tenants. I may point out with regard to the landlords that one difficulty in the way of their increasing the number of small holdings is their want of capital to erect the necessary buildings.

50,907. You think if money was lent by the State at a low rate of interest many landlords would be induced to break up large farms into small ones?—I am confident they would in frequent instances.

Small farms.

50,908. Have the small farms gone through the depression better than the large ones?—As a rule they have.

50,909. What do you consider a small farm?—Those cultivated by the tenant and his family.

50,910. Are they dairy farms?—In my county of Fife there is little or no dairy farming.

50,911. What is the size of the small farms there?—They vary exceedingly. Very often a farmer with a very small farm has some other vocation, such as employing his horses in carting, so that a small farm might be anything between 5 and 50 acres, or up to 100 acres.

50,912. You are speaking then of encouragement being given to persons who have some other vocation than farming?—I would begin with these.

50,913. Are there many such farms in Fife?—A good many.

50,914. And you consider they ought to be increased in number?—They are most useful as stepping stones for the rise of the labourer to the position of a comfortable farmer.

50,915. You would make these farms steps by which the labourer should rise gradually in the social scale?—Yes, and I think it would be attended with profit to both landlord and tenant.

50,916. And you think the number of these farms should be increased by the State advancing money at a low rate of interest?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

50,917. What has been the average reduction of rent in your district?—Speaking roughly, I should say about 33 per cent., and considerably more on some of the largest farms, but less than that on the smaller.

Demand for farms.

50,918. Is there any difficulty in getting tenants when farms are vacant?—No; there are always a large number of applicants.

50,919. Then at the present reduction of 33 per cent. there is a demand for farms?—Undoubtedly, a good demand.

50,920. More demand for the smaller than the larger farms?—No, unless you come to the very large farms of say 500*l.* and upwards of rental, when the number of applicants is smaller.

50,921. But up to that there is a fair number of applicants?—Yes.

50,922. Of men with sufficient capital to farm the land?—Yes.

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50,923. How do you account for the fact that there are men ready to embark in a business that has been unprofitable of late years?—My impression is that since the reduction in rents the business has not been a bad one. I think farmers have made a very comfortable rate of interest on their capital, both in the case of small farmers and in the case of larger ones where they have had ample capital.

50,924. What is the ample capital in your district?—Not less than 10*l.* an acre.

50,925. Where he has that capital, at the present reduction of rent, he can make a good return?—I think with skill, intelligence, and prudence he can make about 10 per cent. on his capital on an average.

State loans.

50,926. In the case of the smaller farmer, if he works himself as well as his family, that conduces to a good return?—That is so, it is putting capital into the farm in a different shape. I should now like to say that, in addition to what Mr. Gillespie proposes in the way of loans to landlords, advances might be made with great advantage by the State to the farmers. There are many very excellent farmers, who lost so much capital when the depression began, and before rents were adequately reduced, that they have not now the means to farm as well as they could, nor to set up their sons in farms. An advance by the State on moderate terms would be very valuable to such men, and to the country, in enabling them to farm more highly.

50,927. How would you do that?—My proposal would be that a tenant desiring such an advance should make application to a Government inspector, stating the amount and the purposes to which it would be devoted. The inspector would then examine the farm and consider the proposal, and if he considered it in all the circumstances safe and reasonable and proper, the State should make the advance to the tenant in the same way as to the landlord, and by making it a prior charge to all other charges, including rent, on the year's crop, the security would be equally good, and the rate of interest might be equally low.

50,928. For what improvements would you make such advances?—Not for permanent improvements, but for higher farming in the shape of the use of artificial manures and feeding stuffs and labour.

50,929. Do you think it would be a safe thing for the State to advance money to tenants for the application of artificial manures to the farm?—I have no doubt it would, if the farm were first inspected by a competent man, just as for permanent improvements. The loan should only be made after the inspector had reported that it was reasonable and likely to be applied with advantage, and that it would return the outlay, with interest, within the year.

50,930. Over how many years would you spread the repayment?—I would make the advance repayable each year, but of course with liberty to the tenant after repayment of each year's advance to apply for another on similar conditions.

50,931. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What army of inspectors would you set up for this purpose?—An excellent proposal was made by Mr. Hope, one of the Assistant Commissioners, that there should be official arbiters in connection with compensation for improvements. Those gentlemen would form a sufficient army for the purpose I indicate.

50,932. (*Chairman.*) Do I understand that the loan is only to be for one year?—Yes.

50,933. What advantage would the tenant get by that?—He would gain the profit of the increased crop. As a rule, these forms of expenditure are paid by crop or stock during the year.

50,934. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But supposing there is a bad season, what is it to be paid out of?—I never knew a season so bad that there was no crop.

50,935. Have you never known a case in Scotland when there was no profit on the year's farming?—The repayment would be antecedent to profits. It would be a prior charge on the crop.

50,936. And would take precedence of the rent?—Yes.

50,937. And of every debt which the farmer owed?—Yes, except the wages, which are paid currently.

50,938. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Would this not affect the position of the tenants with the banks, who assist at present?—It would obviate the necessity of their applying to the banks. The banks charge very high—5 or 6 per cent.—and they require additional names. I therefore propose that the Government should make the grant at a low rate of interest, which would obviate the necessity of applying to the banks.

50,939. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would you take a bill for artificial manures and feeding stuffs?—There would be no bill, because the loan would be spent in paying for these in ready money, which would effect a very great saving to the tenants.

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50,940. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would you contemplate the advisibility of making loans to every class who are short of money?—I am suggesting the making of loans only to a specific class which has good security to offer.

50,941. Would you apply it to every class with good security to offer?—I am not capable of answering speculative questions, unless the class is specified and the particular circumstances stated.

50,942. Would you extend the same privileges to other classes, such as merchants and manufacturers?—I should like the nature of the proposal put before me in a definite shape before I can give a definite answer.

Research stations.

50,943. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are of opinion that Canada, Germany, and the United States have a great advantage over us by their scientific research?—Yes.

50,944. But is it not the fact that they are suffering from depression, notwithstanding this advantage?—They are suffering from the fall in prices, but they are with that aid making a stronger fight against it, and we should meet their competition on more equal terms if we had the same advantages.

50,945. Have they ever been successful in growing as much an acre as we have?—In America and our colonies, where labour is dear and land is cheap, it would not be profitable for them to do so. It is more profitable to raise a moderate crop with little labour.

Depression in Scotland.

50,946. Is there considerable depression in Scotland?—There has been.

50,947. Is it still continuing?—Yes.

50,947*a*. And is due to the fall in prices?—Yes.

Farming to a profit.

50,948. How do you reconcile the fact of continued depression with the fact that tenants make, and expect to make, 10 per cent. interest on their capital?—The depression fell, in the first instance, upon the tenants. Undoubtedly, until rents were reduced, they lost very heavily. But as leases have gradually fallen in, the rents have been reduced, and it is the landlords who now suffer from the depression, and the tenants at these reduced rents are able to make a fair living.

Wages.

50,949. (*Chairman.*) Have wages been maintained in your district?—Yes; if anything, they have rather risen.

50,950. The tenants have got no advantage by the fall in the price of labour?—Not the slightest. Wages have risen rather within the last 10 years.

50,951. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you any figures to put before the Commission as to the reduction of 33 per cent. on rents?—No, I have no figures, but it is my estimate as an average; I know several cases in which rents have fallen a half.

Farming to a profit.

50,952. Have you anything more than an estimate as to the 10 per cent. the tenants are now making on their capital?—No; my estimate is founded on my own observation and knowledge, and on information I have obtained, partly from the tenants themselves.

50,953. Have you found many tenants willing to admit that?—I have never had occasion to put the question. I speak merely of matters discussed in conversation.

50,954. Do the tenants in Scotland usually go about saying they are making 10 per cent. on their capital, without being asked?—I have not said they do. I have stated the grounds on which my own opinion is formed.

50,955. (*Mr. Channing.*) Since what date do you suppose tenants have been making a profit on their farms—when did these reductions come into operation?—They began 10 years ago or more and they have gradually become extended from year to year. At first the reduction was a small amount, because the fall in prices was believed to be a temporary matter. The remissions so given were very inadequate, and undoubtedly tenants then lost heavily, but as farms fell out the rents offered were reduced.

State loans.

50,956. As to loans, you advocate the extension of the Scottish banking system, with State aid?—And subject to State inspection, and with this difference, that the State would have a priority which bankers do not enjoy, and the absence of which compels them to demand a higher rate of interest.

Average rents.

50,957. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have the reductions on small farms been as great as on the larger farms?—Not in the same proportion.

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50,958. Can you give any estimate of the average rent per acre of the large and small farms?—It is scarcely possible; the variation in the quality of land and other circumstances is so great.

50,959. What does it vary from?—From a few shillings to 2*l.* or 3*l.* In my own district from perhaps 15*s.* to 30*s.*

50,960. Is it higher per acre for the small farm than for the large one?—Rather higher for the small farm.

Farming to a profit.

50,961. (*Captain Thomas.*) Do you farm yourself?—Yes.

50,962. What size is your farm?—Above 500 acres.

50,963. Do you keep accounts?—Yes.

50,964. Have you made profits during the last few years?—Yes.

50,965. 10 per cent.?—I have made more than 10 per cent.

50,966. And paying yourself rent?—Yes, the current rent.

50,967-8. How much does it amount to per acre?—I have several small farms, and I cannot exactly say, but I think from 10*s.* to 30*s.* Some of my land is very poor indeed.

50,969. And on your capital you have made something more than 10 per cent. for the last two or three years?—Yes.

50,970. Is it an arable or mixed farm?—It was a mixed farm, but I have been gradually converting it into a dairy farm.

50,971. You are of opinion that farmers with the reduction of 33 per cent. are making a profit?—They are making a fair living, where they have adequate capital. Where they have inadequate capital they are in difficulties. They pay heavy interest either to banks or to manure merchants, or to dealers in stock, or being unable to obtain capital, their crops are not so good.

Fall in prices and reduction in rents.

50,972. What would be the average fall in prices of farm produce, as compared with 15 years ago?—If you limit the question to grain, one might give an average, but stock may be bought very cheaply one year and meet a good market when sold fat, while another year potatoes may be selling high, as compared with other times; so that it is extremely difficult to give any idea of the general price of produce.

50,973. Would 33 per cent. be far wrong as the general average of the fall?—I estimate rents as having fallen to that extent, and perhaps that would be a reasonable figure to set the general fall of produce at. You must remember that one advantage farmers have had in recent years has been the great fall in expenses for manures and feeding stuffs, which have decreased from 30 to 50 per cent.

50,974. What proportion would you say that rent bears to the farmer's liability; has a farmer to make three times his rent, or more or less, to clear everything?—That used to be a very common estimate, that the rent is one-third of his gross receipts, his outlays another third, his profits the remaining third.

50,975. Then he has had a reduction of 33 per cent. on one-third of his liability?—Yes, but that is including his profits in his liabilities.

50,976. What about the other two-thirds?—Labour and rates have not gone down at all, but manures and feeding stuffs have.

50,977. (*Chairman.*) Has there been any displacement of labour?—A little land has been laid down to grass, but I think there has been scarcely any displacement of labour by machinery, except during harvest.

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50,978. (*Capt. Thomas.*) Are the farmers satisfied with the reduction they have obtained?—I think they are. In most of the existing tenancies the rent has been fixed by the farmer himself.

50,979. (*Chairman.*) You mean that the leases have been entered into since the depression began?—Yes.

50,980. And that therefore the farmer entered into the contract knowing the position of affairs?—Yes; and while some things have fallen, others have risen. I have not heard of any complaints of too high rents of late years.

The seasons.

50,981. (*Mr. Everett.*) And the last two years in Scotland have been years of plenty rather than trying seasons?—They have been favourable on the whole—not large crops, but good crops.

50,982. You had a fine harvest in 1894?—Fairly good.

50,983. You were able to sell your corn uninjured and in a sound condition?—Reasonably sound. It was not an excellent harvest, but a fairly good one.

50,984. Do you grow barley?—Yes.

Prices of corn.

50,985. What price per quarter did you make?—Very little. Last year it was not of very good quality, and at the best it was only 26*s.*, and it has now fallen to 20*s.* and 22*s.*

50,986. And oats?—They are also low—from 16*s.* to 17*s.* and 18*s.*

50,987. Do you grow wheat?—A little, but a large portion of it is consumed by stock.

Price of potatoes.

50,988. Are potatoes a considerable item in your district?—Yes, very considerable, and this last year has been remarkably favourable. The prices have been high, and many farmers must have paid their rent out of potatoes alone.

50,989. Potatoes and live stock would enable you to be paid 10 per cent. during the last few years?—Yes, but potatoes vary very much, and the year before last they were scarcely saleable at all.

Assessment to rates.

50,990. Have assessments on land been reduced in proportion to rent?—Yes, the rating is based on the rent.

50,991. Does the rate per 1*l.* remain about the same?—Yes, there has been no great change.

50,992. Then the tenants have had the advantage of the reduction of the assessment?—Yes.

50,993. So that it is not quite accurate to say that the assessment has not been reduced?—No, the assessment is redueed, although the rate may remain the same, but on the other hand there are new rates in addition, for sanitary purposes, roads, and so on.

Farming capital.

50,994. Smaller capital is required now than it was a few years ago?—Yes, less is employed, but it would be much better if it were larger.

50,995. Looking at the reduction in price, would 7*l.* now go as far as 10*l.* of capital would a few years ago?—I am afraid you must look at labour in connection with that, and I do not think it would. If you have regard only to feeding stuffs and manures it might go as far, but labour has risen, and stock is dearer to buy.

50,996-7. What would you say is an equivalent in capital compared with a few years ago, would 8*l.* go as far as 10*l.*?—Yes, perhaps it might, but it is to be remembered that to make up for the drop in price a farmer must endeavour to produce larger crops, and that demands more capital.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. I. Davidson.

Mr. James Inglis Davidson called in and examined.

Mr. J. I. Davidson.

50,998. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer and land valuator and an Inspector of Estate Improvements under the Board of Agriculture?—I am.

50,999. What part of Scotland do you live in?—Saughton Mains, about two miles from Edinburgh.

51,000. Is your business mainly in that district?—No, it extends over the whole of Scotland, but is mainly in the southern and middle districts.

51,001. You have had considerable experience in different parts of the country?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,002. You wish to give evidence mainly as to the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I was desired to do so.

51,003. Have you been engaged in a good many arbitrations arising under the Act?—Yes.

51,004. And have you advised in settlements effected without the necessity of arbitration?—Yes.

51,005. Have you acted for tenants as well as owners?—Roughly speaking, I have acted about equally often for each, but in recent years I have been oftener sole arbiter.

51,006. You have been personally interested in claims under the Act?—Yes, in two claims.

51,007. Is it within your knowledge that there has been a good deal of dissatisfaction with the working out of the details of the Act?—Yes, there has been. I speak from what one sees in the public prints and also from what one hears.

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Measure of compensation.

51,008. The principle of the Act is that the value of the improvement to an incoming tenant ought to be the measure of the compensation?—So far as my experience goes, that is generally admitted to be a sound principle.

51,009. Then the difficulty is mainly one of detail in working out that principle?—That is so.

51,010. Has that been largely due to the exaggerated claims and counter-claims lodged under the Act?—That is one reason. The expenses have been very large in proportion to the awards. In the earlier cases under the Act these were to a large extent experimental, and both parties stated their claims very fully, and fought them very keenly often at unnecessary expense.

Method of arbitration.

51,011. What has been the course adopted of late years—three arbiters or a single arbiter?—Since 1889 I think there have been more frequently sole arbiters.

51,012. Mr. Gillespie says that under the Act of 1889 either party can require the sheriff of the county to appoint a single arbiter—is that the case?—That is so, and it has been done; but I think in most cases the parties have agreed to a single arbiter without applying to the sheriff.

51,013. In cases where they have agreed to a single arbiter, has that course resulted in the expenditure being considerably less?—There is only one arbiter to pay, instead of three; but I think it right to point out that as a general rule the arbiters' fees are a comparatively small proportion of the whole expenses in those cases in which there has been complaint as to the great amount of expense. In one instance I know of, where an award of 200*l.* was given, it cost 150*l.* for the expenses incident to the arbitration. I was an arbiter in that case, and as far as my memory serves me I received 15 guineas. Recently I determined a case as sole arbiter, and received about the same amount; so that it does not make much difference to the arbiters. The parties in the case referred to agreed to make it an informal arbitration, and they appointed me sole arbiter. I acted without agents and with my own clerk, and the whole expenses incurred were my own fees and outlays, and any trouble which my clerk took. In the other case there were agents on both sides, a clerk to the reference, and skilled witnesses on each side, and I think at the end we were as wise as at the beginning. I may say that in that case the landlord was a corporation, and it was their agents who insisted on a proof.

51,014. Is it common in cases of this kind to employ counsel?—In a few of the more important cases I have been connected with counsel have been employed, and in one or two cases legitimately employed, where new principles, which had not previously been settled, were discussed. In two cases I know of I would say the proofs were justifiable.

51,015. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) They were test cases?—Yes, to settle questions of principle.

51,016. (*Chairman.*) And since then the costs have not been so great?—No.

Custom as between landlord and outgoing tenant.

51,017. Do you agree with Mr. Gillespie that in all these cases the dispute is between the landlord and the outgoing tenant?—I think that has been invariably the case in those arbitrations with which I have been connected. I have known a bargain in which the incoming tenant had to make good the compensation to the landlord, but offerers knew of that condition when tendering for the farm.

51,018. Would not the landlord pay the value of the unexhausted improvements?—The valuation of unexhausted improvements under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and of growing crops, is always a separate matter. The two things are never mixed up together.

51,019. They are made separate claims?—Yes. If at the expiry of a lease an outgoing tenant is entitled to have his crop taken over at valuation, that is expressed in the lease, and it is a matter between the tenants. A claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act, however, is a matter between the outgoing tenant and the proprietor.

51,020. Where the landlord is under an award to pay to the outgoing tenant a considerable amount for unexhausted manures, does he not, as a rule, make an arrangement with the incoming tenant to pay for it?—I have had no such cases, but I have heard of them where there was a stipulation in the letting.

51,021. Have you known many cases in which considerable sums have been recovered under counter-claims by the landlords?—I know of one case where a very large sum was recovered—where the landlord put in a claim for loss on re-letting a farm. He made that an element of his counter-claim against the tenant, who had got into difficulties, and appointed a trustee on his estate. The trustee declined to carry on the farm, and made a claim against the landlord. The landlord would not relieve him, but said he would let the farm and charge him with any loss. It turned out that he was sound in law in that arrangement. As arbiter, I consulted the Professor of Scotch law, who said the landlord was right, and I was bound to give effect to it, with the result that the landlord received a considerable sum as the difference between the rent received from the new tenant and the rent which the old tenant was bound to pay. But that is an exceptional case in my experience. I remember a case where a landlord claimed 1,200*l.* as a counter-claim. I ventured to suggest 25*l.* as a proper sum, and I think 30*l.* was the award.

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51,022. Does it often happen that counter-claims are put forward as not being *bonâ fide* but exaggerated?—In the earlier working of the Act there was a good deal of that, but the salutary lessons of expenses have modified that practice, because the arbiter has power to modify expenses, and where excessive claims have been put in and not sustained, the party making them has much the largest proportion of the expenses to pay, and the tendency has been to modify the claims on both sides.

Restrictions in leases.

51,023. Has there been a tendency to relax the conditions of tenancy?—Yes; in regard to freedom of sale and rotation of cropping. The old stereotyped conditions have been modified; but restrictions as to cropping still exist, and, I think, quite properly; but with regard to freedom of sale I have a different view, and I think that privilege might be extended.

51,024. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What do you mean by freedom of sale?—Free sale of produce. In old leases straw and turnips had to be consumed on the holding, but they frequently rose in price far above their consuming value. Under these circumstances it is absolute folly to bind a man to consume them on the farm if he can sell them and bring back an equivalent which will do the land an equal amount of good. I am a strong advocate of that.

51,025. (*Chairman.*) Is it your opinion that these restrictions should be made illegal?—My opinion is, that landlords and tenants have come to see for themselves that these privileges are of mutual benefit; and I would certainly go the length of saying, that if landlords are so foolish as not to agree to freedom of sale under fair conditions, I do not think it would do harm to make it statutory.

51,026. As regards freedom of cropping, do you not think it would be an advantage to the tenant to be free?—I have rather a strong opinion that it would do positive harm, from the point of view of both the landlord and the good tenant. If freedom of cropping were introduced to-morrow, I think it would not appreciably alter or affect the course of cropping followed at present by our best tenant farmers. From the landlord's point of view, assume that he gets an indifferent tenant, or that friction arises, the farm could be very soon absolutely spoiled. From the point of view of the good farmer, I thing the disadvantage would come in this way: at present, under new leases with breaks of five years, there are a number of men who offer for farms in good condition on the chance of leaving them at the end of five years and taking all they can out of them. These men compete with good farmers, and offer rents which the latter cannot pay. If you remove the restrictions on cropping you increase the number of these men and increase the competition which these men bring to men who wish to farm well and honestly.

51,027. It would tend to raise the rent?—Yes; unfairly. No doubt, if a landlord knew that a man was offering for his farm with the intention of leaving it at the end of five years he would probably not take him; but in all cases he does not know it.

Length of leases.

51,028. Is it your experience that there is a tendency of late years to introduce this break at the end of five years?—Yes; it has become much more common of late years.

51,029. Is it generally the case?—It is very common now.

51,030. I suppose that has been brought about by the uncertainty as to the future?—That is so. I quite assent to what Mr. Gillespie stated, that landlords discovered, prior to the recent readjustment of rents, that leases in the case of bad times proved very one-sided bargains. If a farmer wanted the landlord had simply to let him go or alter his conditions.

51,031. Where there was a reduction of 30 per cent., it was impossible for the landlord to do otherwise?—It was a matter of prudence to accept a considerably reduced rent rather than throw the farm on the market at the time.

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51,032. Is it your experience that through the depression landlords, where leases existed, felt themselves bound to make great reductions?—Yes; both permanent and temporary reductions.

51,033. They practically make their leases?—Yes. I was employed for a good many years in saying what reduction should be given.

51,034. For the same reason they have been unwilling to bind themselves again for so long as 19 years?—I think it was a mutual arrangement. Both parties agreed to make the experiment.

51,035. But there is an inducement for tenants to come in and work out the farm in five years and then leave it?—One finds, when a good farm comes into the market, there is an element, though not a large element, of that kind that enters into the competition; and I think that element would be increased with freedom of cropping.

Restrictions in leases.

51,036. Therefore you think it is undesirable to relax any of those conditions about cropping?—Yes, and also because I do not think it would appreciably affect our best farmers.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

51,037. Coming to the second ground of dissatisfaction, the absence of compensation for cumulative fertility, what is your opinion of that?—It is perfectly true that the best farmers have been relatively less fairly compensated that the moderately good farmers in most of the decisions that have been given, but I am not altogether sure that the Act is to blame for that. After the Act was passed most farmers' clubs framed scales of compensation, and I rather think there has been a too general tendency to accept these scales in a cast-iron, stereotyped fashion, rather than to consider the whole circumstances of the particular cases. For instance, I see nothing in the Act to prevent an arbiter, in considering that a farm has been well farmed through a sequence of years, from applying an appropriate scale to the circumstances. It is obvious if a farm is in high condition, and receives in the last years of the lease the same fertilisers in the shape of feeding stuffs, there must be a larger residue, because, presumably, the crops would draw on the old reserves and what had since been applied, whereas if the farm is in low condition and you only apply sufficient to grow the crops you desire to grow in the last years of the lease, less compensation should be given than in the other case. If a claimant comes before me and says, "During the last five years of "the lease I have spent 500*l.* a year in cakes and 500*l.* a "a year in manures, but I will also prove that I have "done that during the previous 10 years," then there is nothing in the Act to prevent me awarding him considerably more compensation than if he had only begun five years from the end of his lease and spent his 1,000*l.* a year.

51,038. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is that done in practice?—It has been done by me.

51,039. (*Chairman.*) Is it the case that tenants make claims of that kind?—I think in recent years an indication has been given of previous treatment without exactly founding on the particular years.

51,040. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And in those cases where you say you have adopted this practice yourself, have your valuations been accepted without demur?—There has been no appeal against any award I have given.

51,041. (*Chairman.*) Could there be an appeal?—In every case where the award has been carried out on the strictly statutory lines there could be an appeal if any decision was contrary to the letter of the Act.

51,042. If, in this case you speak of, you had clearly stated in your award that you had taken into account the fact that manure had been expended on this land for a stated time?—If I had gone over 10 years and given a proportion for 10 years that award could not have been overturned; but what I said was "in respect of the im-"provement made on the holding by the consumption on "the farm of certain feeding stuffs," I awarded a certain sum, and in respect of the manures I awarded a certain sum.

51,043. Does the Act give sufficient power?—Mr. Drennan, in connexion with the recent Corsehope case, allowed 300*l.* for cumulative fertility, and the award was maintained on appeal by the sheriff. I have my doubts as to whether the sheriff was right. But I do not think Mr. Drennan should have made the award in that way. If, however, it is thought that the statute as it stands does not give sufficient latitude to valuators in this matter I think it should be amended, as the case of a high farmer is one which ought to be fairly met and encouraged.

51,044. Would you take reasonable safeguards in such a case to prevent undue awards being given?—There would need to be most careful safeguards, because if you award compensation for cumulative fertility on general grounds three might be grave abuses. There should be specific outlays, or you will have a class of expert witnesses arising who would no doubt differ very widely as to the value of the cumulative fertility or general improvement. That should be discouraged.

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51,045. Do you think the fact of leaving the land clean should form matter for compensation?—Not of itself, because I think it is only in accordance with the ordinary rules of good husbandry that this should be done. The amount of compensation awarded in respect of manures and feeding stuffs ought, however, to vary according to the cleanness or otherwise of the land to which these have been applied.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

51,046. Should there be compensation for grain grown and consumed on the holding?—Yes. I think it is an anomaly that a man can purchase his neighbour's grain and obtain compensation, but if he consumes his own he gets nothing. But there is a difficulty there also, as many farmers are very indifferent book-keepers. They ought to measure and keep a record of what quantity they do consume, and not simply say they have consumed the whole crop on the holding. There should be exact and conclusive evidence of the consumption.

51,047. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That would be rather difficult?—If a tenant wishes to make a claim for it, he should be in a position to prove it. But probably it should be made clear in the statute that such proof is absolutely necessary.

51,048. (*Chairman.*) Another matter which has given rise to controversy is the manurial value of the feeding stuffs consumed on the holding after the last crop has been sown?—As a general rule the manure made on the holding after the sowing of the last green crop passes to the incoming tenant by valuation under the lease. I refer to the manure made in the steading, and presumably the incoming tenant pays the full value of the manure. In the case of "steelbow" manure, which passes to the proprietor without payment, it is quite equitable that the landlord should pay for the cake in the "steelbow" straw.

Notice of claims and counter-claims.

51,049. It has been further suggested that the claims and counter-claims should be lodged by both parties at the same time?—I cannot see how that could be done, because as matters stand at present there cannot be a counter-claim until there is a claim.

51,050. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would you not give the landlord the right to make a claim?—He has it if there is any breach of the stipulations in his lease.

51,051. If there is no lease and the landlord had a right to make a claim for the deterioration of the holding, would he be able to make his claim at the same time as the tenant?—There is one practical difficulty if notice is given. The landlord cannot tell four months before the end of the lease in what state the fences and buildings will be. I had an instance of that in Caithnesshire where a claim of 500*l.* was put in for disrepair and deterioration. In the interval the tenant applied himself assiduously to put things right, and when I went there as the landlord's arbiter I could not find more than 15*l.* damage.

51,052. Could you not have a shorter term than four months, and then insert a proviso that any deterioration after the date of the claim should be taken into account by the arbiter?—That could be done, but I see no hardship in the notice that is to be given. I do not see that it would cause much harm to ask the tenant to give six months' notice. The landlord has to pay out value to the incoming tenant. Farms are generally let six months prior to the ish of the lease, and if the landlord had the claim of the outgoing tenant he could say to the new offerers:—"Here is a claim upon me for what has been done to "improve the farm, and you can judge for yourselves." At present the landlord is not in a fair position. He receives the claim four months before the end of his lease, and presumably he has let the farm two months earlier at the public value.

51,053. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would not make the overrent the measure of compensation?—Certainly not. The landlord says:—"I am bound to pay the value of the "improvement to the outgoing tenant. If this is a sound "principle of valuation, I should get it back in the shape "of increased rental. How am I to do so unless the "incoming tenant, who has to pay me the additional rent, "knows what I am paying to the outgoing tenant."?

51,054. (*Mr. Lambert.*) But you could not award the compensation six or four months before the end of the lease?—That is clear.

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51,055. Well, it would be impossible to take a claim as being the amount of a reasonable award?—That is true, but you could have notice of the claim, and every offerer could exercise his own judgment as to what the improvements were worth to him.

51,056. But would the incoming tenant not have to make an estimate and the landlord to make his?—It would be a safer guide to an incoming tenant that a claim should be lodged.

51,057. What about the outgoing tenant?—I see no hardship to him. If it is an honest claim it can stand investigation.

51,058. Would you put the landlord in the same position as that?—Certainly.

51,059. That he should give six months' notice of any claim?—That he should give sufficient notice in order that his claim might be fairly investigated. The landlord should give six months' notice of his claim for miscropping or deterioration, subject to this, that if in the interval anything of a remedial nature was adopted, the claim should be modified.

51,060. You would put them in exactly the same position?—I would.

Breaches of lease and receipts for rent.

51,061. (*Chairman.*) Is it your opinion that technical breaches of the lease have been put forward merely to raise counter-claims?—No doubt that is so.

51,062. Breaches that have been practically acquiesced in?—Yes.

51,063. By giving a receipt?—Yes; but I think more recently landlords have come to the conclusion that the rent receipt bars these claims for breaches of the lease. It has been held, and I have held it also, that a rent receipt, without reservation, is a bar to going back.

51,064. As a matter of law or of practice?—As a matter of law.

51,065. Is that the state of the law now?—I have given two or three decisions to that effect, and they have not been contested.

51,066. You think that ought to be made clear in any amendment of the Act?—I think so. If a landlord objects to a particular course being pursued he ought to state so at the time. Of course, there should be reasonable latitude, for on large estates the landlord is not a detective; but I do not believe in bottling up these claims for three or four years and then springing them on the tenant if he has a fair claim under the Act.

Claims and counter-claims.

51,067. In cases where there are claims and counter-claims, and the counter-claim results in a larger amount being found due to the landlord than to the tenant, can the arbiter award it?—I believe he cannot by law do so; but it is not common sense. It involves the landlord, if he wants effect given to the judgment, in taking up other legal proceedings. I think the arbiter should have the power to decern in favour of either party, as the case may be.

51,068. You admit it is the law that the excess of the counter-claim over the tenant's claim cannot be recovered?—That is my understanding. The reason is that it is stated a counter-claim cannot arise under this Act unless there is a claim, and that the effect of that is that you can wipe out a claim by a counter-claim, but you cannot have a balance emerging in favour of the counter-claim.

Official valuators.

51,069. With regard to the appointment of official valuators, are you in favour of that?—I would rather have an official valuator than a casual appointment by a sheriff or sheriff clerk, provided the official valuators are thoroughly good men. But I think the parties should have the option of agreeing upon a man before necessarily going to an official valuator.

51,070. What is the case at present under the Act of 1889—does the sheriff appoint any person he thinks fit?—Yes, and, presumably, he tries to make an impartial appointment.

51,071. Do you think there should be an official list of persons who might be appointed by the sheriff?—My impression is that there is generally a list of professional gentlemen who act in these capacities, and a man is selected from them.

51,072. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you not think such a list should be sanctioned by a public department, such as the Board of Agriculture?—There could be no harm in that.

51,073. And published, so that all might know it?—When one has occasion to employ men in that capacity they know who are on the list, but I see no objection to such a regulation.

51,074. Although there was a class of official valuators you would not prevent parties selecting another person?—Certainly not.

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51,075. But in applying to the sheriff the selection should be limited to the official list?—I think that would be a proper thing.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,076. In your experience, have you had any claims for compensation under Part I. of the Schedule?—I have had none.

51,077. Or under Part II.?—I have had none.

51,078. Do you consider, then, that tenants have not availed themselves of Part II. to drain their land?—So far as my memory serves me, I have not had a single case of arbitration for drainage.

Tenants' improvements.

51,079. Do you think it desirable to extend the procedure under Part II. of the Act, and to include in it other works than drainage—for instance, the erection of buildings?—Well, in the districts with which I am best acquainted I think these things are generally carried out by agreement without any practical difficulty.

51,080. Although there may have been no case to claim for compensation, it may be that the existence of that power has strengthened the hands of the tenant as against his landlord?—There may be something in that.

51,081. And, therefore, it may be desirable to extend the provision to other things?—There is, no doubt, something to be said for that. Another thing is that by the existing provision the farmers get their drainage done for 5 per cent. interest, which is a great and just boon to tenants, who had formerly to pay the whole rentcharge of 6*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* That is a very considerable relief, and an encouragement to drain. I understand that in the north of Scotland the condition of matters is different, and if the burden of these improvements falls upon the tenant in any of these districts, he should receive compensation under reasonable safeguards. But I would not allow the tenant to build at his own sweet will.

51,082. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How would you get over the difficulty?—At present under the Drainage and Improvement Company's Acts the Board of Agriculture do not sanction the cost of permanent improvements as a first charge upon property unless under the certificate of an inspector that the proposed improvement outlay will increase the letting value of the holding by more than the rentcharge thereon, and some such similar precaution would be necessary in any amendment of the Act in this direction.

51,083. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would it not hold good if there was no increase of rent?—It might. But the inspector goes there, and considers the whole improvement and reports whether it is a legitimate charge. But after it is erected the effect will be to increase the letting value by more than the rentcharge.

Cost of drainage.

51,084. (*Chairman.*) Do you think that, looking to the general form of the rate of interest, the charge of 5 per cent. for drainage might not be further reduced?—I think it might, as there has been a material fall in interest.

51,085. It might be reduced to 4 per cent.?—I think so; because the landlord can now borrow on a first mortgage at 3 per cent.

State loans.

51,086. Are you in favour of the Government advancing money for agricultural improvements?—I think the Government might very well do so, at moderate rates of interest.

51,087. (*Mr. Everett.*) What was the ordinary rate of interest on mortgages on land in Scotland till 10 years ago?—3½ per cent. was common.

51,088. Not up to 4 per cent.?—Yes, as high as 4.

51,089. And if the security is good, it can now be had at 3 per cent.?—Yes, 3 and 3½.

Law of hypothec.

51,090. In regard to the abolition of the law of hypothec, have you noticed any difference in the handling of estates since then—are rents asked for more peremptorily?—In a good many cases the contract to pay them is put forward six months earlier than it used to be.

51,091. When the rents fall due, is three months' grace usually given?—Some people pay on the term day, but as a general rule rents are paid within a month.

51,092. There has not been much change in that respect then?—Not very much, but that is a matter of estate mangement.

51,093. Would it commend itself to you that there should be a full description of the state of the farm at the beginning of the lease, to be kept for comparison at the

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close, and compensation to be paid accordingly when the tenant goes out?—That would be instructive, but I think it might be better to keep a record of the award and its grounds. When a tenant goes out he makes a claim, which is adjudicated upon. That could be kept, and would be a far more accurate record of the state of the farm than any skilled reporter could give on the general aspect.

51,094. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would it not be a good thing that the award should contain an inventory such as Mr. Everett suggests?—That is so.

51,095. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it not more frequently the case that the landlord receives his farm back deteriorated rather than improved?—Well, in recent years, where times have been bad and capital short, there has been very little general improvement in condition.

Fall in prices.

51,096. Have you formed any opinion as to the cause of the great fall in prices?—Just the general opinion that it is due to over-production, cheap carriage, and large imports.

51,097. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you agree generally with Mr. Gillespie's evidence as to the depression in Scotland?—I do.

Length of leases.

51,098. Do you believe that it would be desirable to have short tenancies, with two years' notice?—I do not think that is the prevalent opinion in Scotland. I have just taken a new lease myself for 17 years, without any breaks at all; although, no doubt, five years' breaks are more in favour.

51,099. In the striking illustration of a counter-claim which you gave, what were the principal items?—Alleged miscropping, poverty of manuring, and disrepair of houses and fences.

51,100. They were not larger claims under penal clauses?—I forget whether any of the claims for miscropping came under the penal clauses.

Breaches of lease and receipts for rent.

51,101. With regard to your proposal that the receipt for rent should be a bar to the landlord's claim for breach of contract, would that not be rather hard on him, and force him to make an inquisitorial investigation over the farm every year?—It is open to that objection, and there certainly ought to be safeguards. But towards the end of a lease, where it is known there is going to be a change, I do not think it is asking too much that the landlord should have a reasonable regard to what is being done.

51,102. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If any clause of that nature were put into an Act of Parliament, do not you think there would be a stereotyped rent receipt?—That did not occur to me.

51,103. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Your object is to prevent stale claims?—Yes, to prevent claims where a landlord has acquiesced in a state of cropping or otherwise that might not technically be quite within the four corners of the lease.

51,104. (*Mr. Channing.*) How do you reconcile the receipt for rent with the Act of Parliament, which limits to four years the power of the landlord to claim for deterioration?—One cannot reconcile it with that. But my view is that if a landlord, four years before the end of the lease, acquiesced in the state of cropping which then exists, I do not think it is right to bring it up at the end of a lease against any claim by the tenant.

51,105. Your suggestion is to see the land thoroughly cultivated by the landlord as well as the tenant?—Certainly.

Restrictions in leases.

51,106. Would you limit the penalty in respect to restrictive covenants?—It is generally the amount of damage and not the penal clauses that influence the arbiter.

51,107. If a man knew that by law his payment to the landlord would be limited to the actual loss sustained, he would be in a stronger position?—That is so, but I have known a case where the penal clause was so stated that it would actually pay a tenant to miscrop. You must therefore be careful not to encourage that.

51,108. But if the Legislature gave the right to exact the full measure of deterioration caused, but no more, that would be fair to both sides?—I am not quite sure of that. If a man in the last year of his lease took two white crops, instead of a white and a green crop, it would be very difficult to decide.

51,109. Could not the valuer decide whether the outgoing tenant was really running his farm out of all fertility?—No doubt, if he got all the facts put before him, he would be in a position to say so.

51,110. But as to the restrictions on cropping and so on, does it not practically come to mean this, the allowing of two or three years of temporary pasture instead of rotation?—I do not think any reasonable landlord would stand in the way of that. But if you had freedom of cropping you could miscrop as you liked.

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Compensation for cumulative fertility.

51,111. About the question of cumulative fertility. Any compensation for this must bear a direct relation to the specified outlay. Do you not think that evidence as to the carrying power and the productive power of a farm should be quite as valuable as the bills produced by the tenant?—No doubt; but these things vary very much, from different causes, one season with another. The actual and judicious outlays should settle the whole thing.

51,112. But if the tenant has exceptional skill and makes successful experiments, would you not give him the full result of that?—I would give him compensation for what he leaves, I do not think there would be anything left further than residual value.

51,113. But you admit, as to the cleanliness of the land, that you would classify the improvements and give higher compensation for good husbandry than for the same outlay with slovenly husbandry?—I would give more for residual products left on clean land than on dirty land.

51,114. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is to say, you would penalise the man who left the land dirty?—Quite so; and I have given an order against a man for that.

51,115. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would have regard not merely to the sum expended, but to the whole effect on the condition of the holding?—I do not think that in so far as the cleanliness of the earlier years is concerned, one would be justified in giving much or anything of a cumulative nature at the end of the lease.

51,116. If the same outlay on one farm ten or twelve years back had produced a much better condition than on another farm, owing to greater skill having been brought to bear, would you not take that into account?—It is just a little vague and general to allow compensation for a thing of that kind. If the outgoing tenant had farmed well throughout and was able to show me definitely what he had laid out, and if the land was clean at the end, I would allow him higher compensation than if he had merely farmed well during the last few years of his lease.

Notice claims and counter-claims.

51,117. Do you think it would be practicable that notice should be given by both parties twenty-eight days before the end of a tenancy?—It might be done if you amend the Act. But I think my period of six months would be more suitable.

51,118. But that gives the landlord this advantage, that he can look round and see what rent he is likely to get for his land, and there would be no impediment to him whittling down the tenant's claim to meet the incoming tenant?—Both claims would be lodged six months before, and there would be a proviso that if anything was done in the interval, the landlord's claim would be modified.

51,119. Would it not be better to have it nearer the termination of the tenancy, when the landlord could see exactly the amount of damage done to him?—No doubt. But the principle of the Act is that the landlord has to pay to the outgoing tenant the value of the improvement to the incoming tenant. The presumption is that the landlord in respect of making such a payment, receives a slightly increased rent, because of the improved condition of the land, and I say it is fair to the proprietor to let him know about that time what the outgoing tenant is going to claim, and he can then say to the incoming tenant:—"There it is; you can judge for yourself what it is worth."

51,120. Take the case in which you say 1,200*l.* was claimed, and only 25*l.* awarded?—That was an exceptional case, advised by a most exceptional man. I do not think any honest claim will suffer from investigation, and if a tenant has a just and sound claim against his proprietor, I do not see any hardship in giving notice of it, so that it may be investigated, and, where practicable, I would have the same notice from the landlord.

Tenant's improvements.

51,121. Would you give the tenant a right to make improvements, subject to their being pronounced suitable to the holding and likely to add to its value?—As far as my experience goes, these things appear to be settled between landlord and tenant without apparent intervention, but if there are districts where the burden of these matters rests with the tenant, it is fair that he should have some remedy.

51,122. As long as the matter is within the scope of the tenancy?—Yes. But any improvement clearly contemplated in the contract of tenancy would be an improvement that the landlord had assented to, and compensation for it would be recoverable under the Act as it stands.

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51,123. Not under the first part?—Yes; if you state that the tenant undertakes to construct certain improvements, I take it that the landlord has given his consent.

51,124. But I am speaking of a general agricultural tenancy, where you would give the tenant the right to carry out improvements useful for the holding against the will of the landlord?—I think you would require to be extremely careful in that matter. You would have to be perfectly sure the improvements were absolutely useful.

51,125. Would you give the tenant power of reference as to whether they were useful and consistent with the purposes of his holding?—I think that would be reasonable; but I would prefer that landlord and tenant should agree upon these things. Possibly the effect of a clause of that kind would be that they would agree the more readily rather than risk the expense.

Interest charged on improvements.

51,126. In Scotland interest is charged for improvements?—That is a matter for agreement. It is generally stipulated that a certain sum is to be expended without interest, and that above a certain sum interest is to be charged.

51,127. I suppose that since the depression all improvements have had interest charged on them?—Not on those executed under agreement at the beginning of the tenancy. If in the course of the lease the necessity or desirability for improvements arose, these were generally matters for interest.

51,128. But where the tenant has been paying interest in some form of sinking fund on the improvements, he has really been carrying out the improvements himself with the use of the landlord's capital?—Yes, as regards drainage. In some cases there was drainage outlay made without interest, but in most cases the rentcharge was made to the tenant.

51,129. Do you think that allowance has been sufficiently made in the renewal of a lease in respect that the payments have practically paid off the drainage?—Well, in the old days I think the interest on drainage was regarded as so much rent when you came to renew your lease, but since the depression the state of affairs has been very different, and large reductions have been made.

Basis of compensation.

51,130. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How would you value the compensation upon the money outlay?—I do not go the length of saying that it should be exactly put upon the money outlay, but it ought to be the basis. If you make this general compensation for cumulative fertility, you will get the vaguest and widest testimony in regard to it.

51,131. But suppose a man laid out 100*l.* skilfully and it was worth 150*l.* to the farm, and another laid out 100*l.* unskilfully and it was worth only 50*l.* to the farm, would you not award the skilful man 150*l.* and the unskilful 50*l.*?—I would give them compensation, as far as possible, according to the cleanliness of the land held to be improved, but it is extremely difficult to see how a man could spend 100*l.* which would be worth 150*l.* to the incoming tenant.

Freedom of cropping.

51,132. You do not favour freedom of cropping?—No.

51,133. What is the present system as regards restrictions on cropping?—There is no absolutely stereotyped system. It depends on the locality and character of the farm, situation, and many other things, but as a general rule the kind of rotation stipulated is that most suitable for the district.

51,134. Why should the tenant not be allowed freedom of cropping, provided he does not deteriorate the fertility of the holding?—I do not say he should not be allowed, but I say it would be no benefit to the good farmer.

51,135. Is it not the case that the tenant is precluded from taking two white crops from the farm?—In many cases.

51,136. Well, if there was a drought and the corn crop failed, would you prevent him sowing a second straw crop?—No, in circumstances of that kind we do not adhere to the letter of the law. The freedom of cropping to which I object would be to give a man the farm and a blank lease and tell him to farm as he likes. But I do not believe it would affect the good farmer.

51,137. Have you ever put in two crops in opposition to the covenants in your lease?—I have.

51,138. And you have not been penalised?—No.

51,139. Would you have thought it a hardship?—If I had thought I was to be penalised, I would not have done it, but there were circumstances which justified it, viz., a failure of grass seeds owing to excessive condition of the land.

51,140. And would circumstances not justify every man in having that same freedom you can enjoy?—No sane landlord would object to it.

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51,141. But supposing you have an insane landlord?—All I can say is that if he took a case of that kind into court he would not succeed.

51,142. Would the court uphold a man in breaking his agreement?—I think it would.

Valuation of growing crops.

51,143. That would be a rather strange course, would it not?—The man could do nothing else. But I have no objection to putting in a clause that if, from causes over which the tenant has no control—such as drought or frost as you suggest—the crop fails, he is at liberty to take a second crop off the land. That is very different, however, from allowing a man to scourge the land.

51,144. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With regard to the growing crops, which I understand you to say are always matters of arrangement between the outgoing and the incoming tenants, how are they valued?—By cost of production or their value on the ground.

51,145. Take the case of a barley crop and a Lady-day (6th April) entry, the barley might just have been sown before the tenant entered—how would you value that?—We would value it in the month of August.

51,146. You would wait till it had grown?—Yes.

51,147. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If there is no incoming tenant?—The landlord takes his place.

51,148. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you anything to guide you as to the system of breaks in leases, which have lately become the fashion, tending to the good of agriculture or otherwise?—It is so comparatively recent that I could not say.

Notice of claims.

51,149. In regard to sending in the claim six months before, there would be a reservation as to the buildings?—Yes.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

51,150. In regard to compensation for the consumption of home-grown produce, how do you propose to deal with the corn consumed by the work horses?—That would be excluded. In any future amendment of the Act the reference to horses should be made more specific, because some arbiters take the view that by an old Act of Parliament horses are included under the term cattle, and in one case compensation was actually awarded for corn consumed by horses. I think it was a bad judgment, but the proprietor did not appeal.

51,151. Would you treat young horse stock in the same way?—With reference to stud farms, where horses take the place of cattle and really consume the fodder, it would be a hardship to exclude from compensation all feeding stuffs consumed by them.

51,152. You would exclude the work horse because it is part of the machinery of the farm?—Yes, horses used for agricultural purposes.

51,153. And you hold that cleanliness really means good husbandry?—That is so.

51,154. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you agree generally with the recommendations contained in Mr. Hope's report?—I think so.

51,155. About this six months' notice, neither tenant nor landlord can make up a claim sufficiently until near the expiry of the lease?—Not absolutely.

Custom as between landlord and incoming tenant.

51,156. And the landlord's property might be deteriorated?—I would like to explain my position. I merely stated as a general proposition that if the principle of the Act is sound, the value to be paid by the proprietor is the value to an incoming tenant, and that it would not be inequitable that the landlord should be in a position to say, when letting his farm, to the incoming tenant, "There is "what I am charged; make up your mind what you think "the farm is worth."

51,157. What has the incoming tenant to do with that? It is the landlord who is the party to pay, and he has to deal with the incoming tenant?—If the landlord is paying a sound compensation, the incoming tenant is presumably paying a little more rent. Otherwise the principle is wrong altogether.

51,158. But all these cases are settled after the outgoing tenant is away and the incoming tenant has come in?—That is so, and I do not say the case could be adjudicated on till after the outgoing tenant was away, but the claim of the outgoing tenant could be shown to the incoming tenant and the landlord, who could judge what it was worth.

Cost of procedure.

51,159. As to the expenses?—No doubt the expenses incident to the working of the Act are far too great.

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51,160. You know that a rich landlord can drag a tenant a long distance?—I have known both rich tenants and rich landlords engaged in these cases.

51,161. You want to simplify the procedure and save expense in carrying out the Act?—That is most desirable, so long as you have just adjudication.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

51,162. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Should there be compensation for corn grown on the farm and consumed by cattle and sheep?—I think so.

51,163. Would there be no difficulty in taking account of it?—The outgoing tenant would need to preserve specific evidence to show what he had done.

Particulars of witness' farm.

51,164. (*Chairman.*) What is the extent of your farm?—330 acres.

51,165. How long have you taken it for?—Eighteen years.

51,166. What is the rent?—About 4*l.* 10*s.* an acre; but it is partly payable in wheat, which at the present low price brings the rent down to 4*l.* 5*s.* an acre, but if wheat rises the rent may go up to 4*l.* 15*s.*

51,167. Is it valuable land?—Yes, being near Edinburgh. The local advantages we have arise mainly from the selling of grass, green crops, and straw. Everything is sold off the farm, and manure is purchased in the town and driven back. The fact is that for the price of the straw one is able to drive back twice as much manure as if the straw was consumed on the farm.

51,168. How is your rent compared with a few years ago?—It is slightly higher.

51,169. (*Mr. Lambert.*) There is no depression, then, in your case?—No doubt we have not in our district been suffering so much as elsewhere, but the margin of profit is not so great as it was.

51,170. (*Chairman.*) Is it an average rent?—Yes, about an average rent for land so near Edinburgh.

51,171. Is it similar to land in the neighbourhood of other large towns in Scotland?—It is not the same in Glasgow. The milk for Edinburgh is largely supplied by cow-keepers, who have premises in the outskirts of the city, and not farms, and they purchase our produce. In Glasgow, on the other hand, the milk comes from dairy farmers.

Demand for farms.

51,172. Do you agree with the last two witnesses that there is a demand for farms in Scotland?—Yes, especially for the better class of farms.

51,173. When did the improved demand begin?—About four years ago.

51,174. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is that for arable or sheep farms?—Both.

51,175. (*Chairman.*) Since then have rents been maintained?—Yes.

51,176. And there is still a demand for farms?—Yes; there was one let in East Lothian the other day, and I understand the rent is 200*l.* a year higher than before.

51,177. What is the size of the farm?—Between 500 and 600 acres.

51,178. How do you account for the fact of so many people with capital coming forward to take these farms?—I think in this particular case the landlord had dealt very kindly with the previous tenant, who was unfortunate and died recently, and I think he gave him the farm at less than he would have got for it in the market. I doubt if he has even yet taken the highest offerer.

51,179. But apart from this case, how do you account for this demand in the south of Scotland?—It is very difficult to account for it. No doubt land is a limited commodity, and that may be one reason. But after the recent depression set in a good many farmers got very dispirited about farming, and a number went out of the business, and have been idle for some years. They now find that their neighbours who remained in were doing fairly well, and they are coming back to farming.

Demand for farms.

51,180. Are the bulk of these offerers farmers?—Oh, yes; but there are a few from other avocations. I agree with Mr. Gillespie that 20 years ago there was a large class of other offerers, but they disappeared with the depression. Of late years they have been coming in again. I think the difficulty of investing money is also another reason for the demand for farms. Take the case of a man who may have gone out of a farm with a capital of 2,000*l.* He cannot make certain of getting more than 3½ per cent. In farming he gets the house to live in, food for his family, who also find employment on the farm, and with that moderate return for his money he is better off than by investing it at 3½ per cent.

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51,181. Then, they can make a higher rate of interest in farming than in some other businesses?—Well, better than in doing nothing.

Wages.

51,182. Have the wages of labourers been fully maintained?—Yes, I think so.

51,183. I suppose the result of your views is that rents have been reduced, manures and feeding stuffs have been reduced, and the assessment has been reduced according to the rental?—Yes, but the tendency of the county councils has been to raise the rates.

51,184. Taking it altogether, there has been a good deal of adjustment?—Yes.

51,185. And taking that into account and the lower rate of profit in all trade, there is a demand for farms?—There is no doubt as to existence of the demand. The reasons I have given are speculative, but possibly they account for part of the demand.

Rent on a sliding scale.

51,186. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You have your rent fixed upon a sliding scale as regards the price of wheat?—Of wheat, barley, and oats.

51,187. Can you give us an idea how it is arranged?—What is done is this. A slump money rent is fixed as representing what is thought to be the fair value of the farm. The average fairs' prices of the previous three or five years are taken, and half the money rent is converted into grain. At the average of these rates so much wheat, barley, and oats bring out half of the rent. The lease starts on that ground. If these prices drop the rent falls, and if the prices rise the rent also increases.

51,188. You think that is a very fair system?—I do.

51,189. And that it should be extended?—I think so. The difficulty is that it only extends to half of the rent and to grain crops.

51,189*a*. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You could not extend it to other produce?—It might be found applicable, but it would be difficult to get the fixed prices of potatoes, meat, and other produce.

51,190. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) As a general rule, the system was given up all over Scotland?—Yes, and at the instigation of the farmers.

Italian rye-grass.

51,191. What produce per acre do you get from that Italian rye-grass which you grow for the cow-feeders?—It is sown in autumn after early potatoes and germinates in a few weeks, and in an average season it is ready to cut about the 20th April by dint of a liberal application of nitrate of soda. On my farm part of it is ready to be cut a second time. It realised about 22*l.* an acre this year.

51,192. For how many crops?—They cut as many as they can. I have known them take five, but three is the average.

51,193. (*Mr. Everett.*) You sell it by the acre?—Yes, and the purchasers cut it and top dress the land. Of course, that only applies to about 10 acres. Last year I had 12 acres, and this year I have 9.

Freedom of sale.

51,194. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you object to freedom of sale where you have an agreement to return an equivalent?—No, I rather approve of that.

51,195. Is there any objection to putting it in the statute?—No, but the custom is so general that I do not think it is necessary. I do not think the landlord will suffer from freedom of sale if there is a fair equivalent stated in the contract.

Witness then withdrew.

Adjourned.

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Ninety-eighth Day.

Edinburgh, Wednesday, 5th June 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. J. M. Hannah.
5 June 1895.

Mr. J. M. HANNAH called in and examined.

Mr. J. M. Hannah.
5 June 1895.

51,196. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer residing at Girvan Mains?—I am.

51,197. You have come here to speak mainly on the subject of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883?—I have.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,198. Has that Act, in your opinion, been rendered nugatory by the insertion in leases of clauses in many cases binding the tenants to observe impossible conditions for the purpose of annulling the benefits conferred by the Act?—It has.

Evasive clauses in leases.

51,199. Have the tenants, in your opinion, in their anxiety to secure farms, not sufficiently studied these clauses to realise the consequences of them?—Yes, that is so.

51,200. Do they often show great indifference to the terms of their leases, trusting rather to the verbal terms in which these agreements have been arrived at?—Very frequently.

51,201. Can you give us any specimens of evasive clauses of this kind in leases?—Yes, I can give you some. Here is one: "the said tenant and his foresaids shall not "be entitled without consent of the proprietrix in writing, "to apply any chemical or other artificial manures to said "lands."

51,202. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is that all?—No. Here is another, "declaring that notwithstanding the provisions "of the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883, "section 30, the tenant shall not on quitting the holding, "or during the currency of his tenancy, without the con- "sent in writing of the proprietrix remove any engine, "machinery, fencing, or other fixture affixed by him to "the holding or any building erected by him thereon, and "in the event of such compensation being refused the "tenant shall have no claim to compensation other than "what the proprietrix may agree to pay in respect of the "same."

51,203. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Surely that is a contravention of the Act, about manures?

51,204. (*Mr. Clay.*) What is the clause regarding the manures?—That no chemical manure whatever shall be allowed to be applied to the farm.

51,205. When you talk of chemical manures, do you mean manures containing sulphuric acid?—All kinds of artificial manure, dissolved bones, sulphate of ammonia, nitrate of potash.

51,206. Anything that has been in contact with sulphuric acid, say dissolved bones?—I think the phrase would hold good even as regards ground bones.

51,207. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are there other clauses of this kind?—A common clause is to this effect:—"And the "lessee shall in each year, thoroughly work and clear the "whole fallow and green crop lands, and shall manure "the same with solid, good, and well-prepared farmyard "or town's dung, at the following rates per Imperial acre, "viz., land for potato crop with at least 70 cubic yards," &c.

51,208. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose it would be nearly impossible to give such a quantity?—It is impossible in every case.

51,209. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is the object of their insisting upon something that it is impossible to do?—To nullify the Act, by enabling them to raise a counter-claim for not fulfilling the terms of the lease.

51,210. What is the use of making the tenant enter into such an agreement?—The conditions have never been enforced.

51,211. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) This is dealing with some particular quality of soil, I take it? Are you referring to the early ground down in the Girvan district especially?—Not specially. These apply to the whole of Ayrshire.

51,212. (*Mr. Clay.*) To all kinds of land in Ayrshire?—Yes.

51,213. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you mean to say that they are common?—Yes.

Contracting out of the Act.

51,214. (*Chairman.*) I see you say in your brief that a gentleman, an advocate in Edinburgh, has devoted considerable attention to framing clauses "to exclude certain provisions of the Act," and that these are largely taken advantage of in drafting current leases, and that a copy of this work can be produced. Is that a published book?—Yes.

51,215. Can you give us an illustration of the kind of clauses you refer to?—I have the book here, and here is a quotation which may answer:—"Of course the landlord "cannot compel the tenant to enter into an agreement, "but in the course of leases of ordinary duration, it seldom "happens but that on some occasion during its currency, "the tenant has a favour to ask of his landlord. That "will be the landlord's opportunity to insist upon some "understanding that shall be arrived at as to the amount "or the scale of compensation to be allowed."

51,216. Is it your experience that tenants have practically made agreements in many cases inconsistent with the Act, under the advice of this book, or otherwise?—That is so.

51,217. What remedy do you suggest to meet that?—Unless it be penal to contract out of the Act, I do not see any other remedy.

51,218. That is already the case. The 36th clause of the Act says, "Any contract or agreement made by a "tenant by virtue of which he is deprived of his right to "claim compensation under this Act in respect of im- "provement specified in the schedule thereto (except an "agreement providing such compensation as is by this "Act permitted to be substituted for compensation under "this Act), shall, so far as it deprives him of such right, "be void." Cannot you suggest any stronger clause than that for the protection of the tenant?—As I understand that, any agreement can supersede the Act.

51,219. Provided it be fair and reasonable?—Well, fair and reasonable.

51,220. And provided it gives compensation at least as much as provided under the Act. Can you suggest any mode of strengthening the Act in the interests of the tenant?—I do not think I can make any suggestion.

51,221. Possibly it may come to this, that a certain number of tenants are not aware altogether of the provisions of the Act in their interest, and are induced by

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Mr. J. M. Hannah. 5 June 1895.

their landlords to enter into agreements which endeavour to set aside the benefits of the Act, and are, I suppose, damaged to some extent thereby, and that they do not avail themselves of the provisions of the Act to make such agreements void and illegal?—Yes, that is so. Of course, Scotch leases, so far as I have seen them, have always been one-sided documents.

51,222. One would like to know what you suggest by way of remedy, to give greater security to the tenants, that advantage shall not be taken of their weakness by landlords inclined to do so?—It could be done by framing a schedule firm and fast for compensation, which would be binding on all tenants.

51,223. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say those clauses have never been enforced?—No.

51,224. But they are made use of for the purpose of counter-claims?—The opportunity has never arisen. These leases run for 19 years, and if at the end of that time the tenant sought to establish a claim for unexhausted manures, he would at once be met by a counter-claim to nullify it.

51,225. Has that counter-claim ever been tried at law?—I do not know that any claim has been established by a tenant.

Claims and counter-claims.

51,226. For anything you know to the contrary, those counter-claims and those clauses would be held to be perfectly invalid under the existing law?—Some of them would.

51,227. (*Chairman.*) In your immediate district are great quantities of imported manure annually used in the growth of potatoes?—That is so.

51,228. Costing in some cases 10*l.* an acre?—Yes.

51,229. Does the liberal treatment, continued year after year for in some cases ten years, very much increase the fertility of the soil?—Certainly.

51,230. In spite of this, are tenant farmers unable to obtain any compensation on quitting their farms on account of counter-claims which may be made by the landlord for deviation from the terms of their leases?—Yes, that is my case.

51,231. The only recourse that tenants have in such cases is to exhaust their land during the latter years of their lease, in order to recoup themselves for their outlay?—That is so.

51,232. I presume you would consider it very desirable to give every encouragement to tenants to farm well up to the very end of their leases?—Yes.

51,233. What suggestions have you to make with the view of meeting the case?—If they could get compensation for the amount of manure that had been applied to the end of the lease, it would be all in their favour to farm well up to the very last day of their tenancy.

Contracting out of the Act.

51,234. One wishes to know what practical recommendations you have to make for meeting the cases you have named?—If we had such an Agricultural Holdings Act that it would not be possible to contract out of it.

51,235. That is the case already under the Act, that it cannot be contracted out of, except for the purpose of securing to the tenant compensation at least as good as that provided under the Act. Can you suggest any other way of meeting the case?—That is just a matter of opinion as to the possibility of contracting out of the Act. If I may be allowed to quote Mr. Johnston again, he has quite a different opinion.

51,236. Will you quote what he says on that point?—He says:—"The fact should not be lost sight of, that it is "in the power of parties to contract themselves out of all or "any one of the provisions of the Act other than that which "provides compensation for unexhausted improvements."

51,237. Yes, but that is only possible if they provide for the tenant compensation at least as good as that which the Act gives him. It cannot be contracted out of, unless more favourable terms can be contracted for to the tenant?—I do not understand it in that light.

Evasive clauses in leases.

51,238. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have read from two leases. Have you come across other leases where the landlords and their factors are trying to evade the Act?—I can give you one or two more if you wish them.

51,239. Let us have them?—Here is one:—"Further, "in respect of the outlays agreed to be made by the first "party as above mentioned, and that the second party "shall not be charged, at his entry to the farm, for the "value of unexhausted manures, in consideration whereof, "and of the terms of this lease, the said second party "hereby renounces and discharges any claims for compensation that may otherwise be competent under the "Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883."

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51,240. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is that a 19 years' lease that you have read?—Yes.

51,241. (*Mr. Clay.*) Can you give us other clauses?—"And it is hereby further declared that notices in terms "of section 4 of the said Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) "Act, 1883, are hereby expressly dispensed with, and "declared to be of no force or effect as between the parties hereto throughout the currency of this lease; and "in lieu of the provisions of said Act and section, it is "hereby agreed that no drainage except what is hereby "specially stipulated to be executed, shall, throughout "the currency of this lease, be undertaken by the tenant "or his foresaids, without the consent in writing of the "proprietor, and upon such terms as may be agreed to "between the parties when such consent is given."

51,242-3. You consider that goes dead against the spirit of the Act?—Yes. Here is another extract:—"And it is "hereby expressly, and without prejudice to the foresaid "obligation to remove without notice or warning, declared, that notices under section 28 of the said Agri"cultural Holdings Act, 1883, are hereby dispensed "with under this lease, and neither party hereto shall be "entitled to found to any effect upon the failure of the "other party to give the notice required by the said Act "and section. These clauses occur in agreements made in the county of Ayr.

51,244. So it must be a general plan or scheme laid by land agents and factors, or by land lawyers like Mr. Johnston, laying their heads together to burke or damage the working of the Act?—I do not say that it is adopted in every case, but it is very generally adopted.

51,245. Regarding what you say about the removal of buildings which the tenant puts up, is the law of Scotland not very clear on that point, that the tenant shall take away any buildings that he has put up himself and that do not damage the landlord's property?—The Agricultural Holdings Act gives the tenant that right. I am not of opinion that that clause would have any effect whatever. The tenant could remove any building or machinery independent of that clause. I read these to show what a tenant will actually sign.

51,246. And what the landlord will actually put before him?—Yes.

51,247. In regard to what you say about manure which has gone through a scientific process, do you consider that that is dead against the spirit of the Act?—Certainly.

51,248. And so landlords have no right to put that into their leases?—No.

Estate rules.

51,249. I think you have said that a number of leases which you have seen in Ayrshire are considerably one-sided?—Almost entirely.

51,250. That means that large properties have their estate rules and regulations laid down, and when tenants come to make arrangements about a lease, they are told that if they do not sign the rules of the estate, they may give up the idea of occupying the farm?—That is so. Most of the regulations are printed and submitted to a tenant, or offerer for a farm. If he does not subscribe, he is set aside in place of some other one.

51,251. Those treated in that way when offering for farms, are not free agents in making a bargain?—No, they are not.

Claims and counter-claims.

51,252. As far as the facts of the case go, the tenants, you say, are unable to obtain compensation on quitting their farms?—Yes, through the possibility of counter-claims arising.

51,253. These counter-claims are strengthened by all these absurd restrictions put in the lease?—That is so.

51,254. And that itself has frightened tenants from going to law with their landlords in the endeavour to get justice in such cases?—That is so.

51,255. And if a tenant has to do that and get no compensation, they will rather fall back upon the old plan of running down their farms and taking out of it all they can get?—They invariably do so, and that neither pays the tenant nor the landlord.

51,256. The Agricultural Holdings Act was framed with the object of keeping the land up to the mark up to the last year of the lease?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

51,257. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Are there any farms in landlords' hands in your district?—No; there are none.

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51,258. When one becomes vacant are there many applicants?—Usually there are a great many.

51,259. How is it that you expressly say that all the agreements are one-sided as against the tenant? How are Scotch gentlemen, who are generally regarded as very astute, so anxious to take the farms with agreements so very one-sided?—The land is very limited in comparison with the number of people who want to occupy it.

51,260. That may be, but I wanted to know your opinion as to how it is with agreements so very one-sided, they have all these applicants?—One who is not willing to subscribe to the agreements is just set aside, and another is taken in his stead. There is always someone willing to subscribe.

51,261. You tell us that there are tenants who are perfectly ready to sign any agreement put before them, without even reading it?—I have known of cases.

Evasive clauses in leases.

51,262. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) How recently have any of these evasive clauses been signed?—Those I have quoted were made in 1884 and 1887. There is one dated 1893.

51,263. Are such leases being signed now to your knowledge?—Certainly.

51,264. To this day?—Certainly.

Contracting out of the Act.

51,265. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Your strong point is that there should be no way of making an arrangement between landlord and tenant to keep out of the Act?—That is so.

51,266. Is one reason of its not being taken advantage of in Scotland to the extent that might have been expected, the expense of carrying out everything in connection with the Act?—That is partly so.

51,267. Is it one of the very strongest reasons why it has not been taken advantage of?—I do not think so.

51,268. Do you know the schedules that are in vogue on some very well-managed properties in Scotland?—I have seen several of them.

51,269. On such as the Dalhousie, Richmond, and other properties are those schedules not fair and reasonable as between landlord and tenant?—Perfectly.

51,270. As you admit that they are fair and reasonable, can they not be carried out at very much less expense than references under the Act?—Yes, that is so.

51,271. In spite of that you would make it a provision that there should be none of those arrangements carried out between man and man?—No; I would not do that, but there ought to be some law in force to prevent some landlords who would seek to evade the provisions of the Act, from making the tenants worse than the Act made them.

51,272. I understood you started at first with the clear statement that you would not allow any contracting out in the way of making any fair and reasonable arrangement?—In looking to those agreements I have mentioned, I certainly said that.

51,273. Those schedules that have been worked upon several well-managed properties in Scotland, lay down certain per-centages for which vouchers have only to be produced, without any extreme to either party. In spite of that you still hold the opinion that they should not be allowed?—I have not been able to find any such agreements in the west of Scotland. I have seen the Dalhousie, Fife, and other estate regulations in the north and east of Scotland, which I consider perfectly fair and reasonable. I question if I have seen one such that is applicable to the west of Scotland, to the district I represent. I can only speak to that.

51,274. Is there any reason why the west of Scotland men should not be able to come to a fair and reasonable agreement as those in any other part of Scotland?—The application for land has been much keener in the west than in the other parts of Scotland.

Depression in the west of Scotland.

51,275. Is there any depression in your part at all?—Not much.

51,276. Yours' is chiefly early land?—For the most part, in my own immediate neighbourhood. In other parts of Ayrshire there are later lands, in Kilmarnock and that neighbourhood.

Contracting out of the Act.

51,277. (*Mr. Lambert.*) As regards that question of contracting out, would this meet your views, that if a tenant was not satisfied with the provisions that he had signed in his lease or in any other agreement, he should be at liberty to go out under the provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—That would meet my case exactly.

51,278. You would in that way have the tenant backed up, at all events, by being able to quit his holding under the terms of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Or no worse than the Act would have him.

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51,279. That would meet your views?—Yes.

51,280. That would not affect those fair and equitable landlords who are ready to treat their tenants in a fair and reasonable manner?—No, it would not.

Reduction of rents and prices.

51,281. About what reduction of rents has taken place in your district?—I could not put a figure on the per-centage that has taken place, but I would think that 5 per cent. would recover the reductions of rent within the last twenty years.

51,282. Has agricultural produce depreciated much in that time?—Certain kinds of agricultural produce have depreciated from 20 to 40 per cent. Others again have not depreciated to such an extent.

51,283. Has labour decreased in value?—It has increased about 10 to 15 per cent.

51,284 So the tenant farmers have had to bear practically the whole of the present depression, with the exception of a decrease of 5 per cent. in their rents?—Yes.

Evasive clauses in leases.

51,285. Would you mind reading out the clause in one of the leases from which you have quoted under which the tenant has to take a pew in the parish kirk with his farm?—"And the pew or seat in the parish kirk of Stewarton "he now occupies, and that for the space of 19 years from "and after the terms following, namely, Martinmas, "1887."

51,286. And will you read that clause in which the landlord endeavours to contract himself out of the Ground Game Act?—"Also power to enter upon the said farm at "all times, and also the whole game and fishing, including "hares and rabbits, with the exclusive privilege of fowling, "hunting, fishing and sporting."

51,287. Will you kindly read the provision in which the pew is included in the rent?—"For which causes the said "—— binds and obliges himself, and his heirs, successors, "and representatives to make payment to the said —— "and his heirs, successors, or assignees, or to her or their "factors, yearly for the said land and farm of —— and "said pew in the parish kirk of Stewartson, of the sum "of 128*l.* 6*s.* 11*d.*, in the name of rent, payable half-"yearly at Martinmas and Whitsunday."

51,288. Has the tenant to pay for that pew?—I am not aware that he is.

51,289. Is he bound in any way to attend the parish church?—No; it is optional on his part entirely.

51,290. Will you also read that clause in which it is provided that the tenants' improvements shall be deemed to be exhausted within four years after they are made?—"No counter-claim in respect of deterioration or breach of "covenant shall be barred in respect of such breach of "covenant or deterioration occurred more than four years "before the determination of the tenancy."

51,291. I suppose the reason they sign such agreements is that there is an enormous competition for farms? The landlords are not the purely philanthropic individuals we are sometimes led to suppose?—Not in every case.

51,292. Good landlords do not need to be bound with law; it is the bad landlords who require the more stringent provisions of the law in order to keep them from doing injustice to their tenants?—That is so.

51,293. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You have said that having signed such conditions as are to be found in nearly all leases, tenants are not sufficiently independent of their landlord and his factor. Do you mean to imply that these conditions are found in nearly all leases?—In the great majority of them that I have perused.

51,294. You have produced five or six leases. Have you any general acquaintance with the terms of others?—I have perused as many more.

51,295. On many estates?—They are all on different estates, all in Ayrshire.

51,296. You are merely speaking of that part of Scotland?—I am not making a statement for the whole of Scotland. What I have said applies only to the district I represent.

51,297. Is that the whole of Ayrshire?—Yes.

51,298. Would it not be natural that your attention should be drawn to leases that contain those covenants, rather than to those which do not?—I asked for leases on different farms, not knowing what the terms of them were before I asked for them.

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51,299. You did not ask them for the purpose of finding out cases in which there were agreements?—I did.

51,300. You asked generally. You did not select your tenants to whom you made those applications?—No.

51,301. Do you think there would be any advantage in having a statutory form of lease, in the same way as a statutory form of mortgage?—It would be better than the leases that we have to submit to at present. It could not certainly be any worse.

51,302. In one of those leases it is stated that on any breach of the covenant, there shall be an additional rent of 10*l.* per acre paid which is not to be regarded as a penal but as a pactional rent Have you ever known a case where additional rent has been paid for the breach of any one of those covenants?—I have, but I do not know that it has amounted to 10*l.* I know a case where a penal rent was enforced.

51,303. For breach of what covenant?—For not cropping according to the terms of the lease.

51,304. I suppose that would be a very rare case?—Well, the clause is inserted pretty generally in all leases.

51,305. I understand that one of the covenants about manure is impossible to fulfil. It is never enforced in such a case as that?—No. I know a case where it was enforced, when a counter-claim was raised by the landlord against a claim made by the tenant.

51,306. I understood that the time had not come for enforcing most of these claims?—Most of them.

51,307. That claim you speak of was enforced successfully?—It was.

51,308. Before the arbitrator?—Yes.

51,309. What was the clause?—I do not remember exactly the particulars, but the tenant had broken up a field contrary to the terms of his lease, and the arbitrator, in making his award, took that into consideration in enforcing the penalty.

51,310. But damage had been done, I suppose?—I do not know that that was proved.

51,311. (*Captain Thomas.*) How many acres of land do you farm?—320.

51,312. Do you hold on a lease?—Yes.

51,313. How does it compare with those you have read?—They are a little better. I made an effort to get them a little better, but it was after a struggle I managed it.

51,314. (*Mr. Everett.*) The competition for farms is very keen in your county?—That is so.

51,315. Even at present rents?—Yes.

51,316. So that the farmer may be assumed to be getting a living?—They must be getting some living, else they would not compete as they do.

51,317. Looking at the way in which they are willing to sign agreements which are illegal agreements it looks very much as if, when there is a keen competition for farms, no legislation can prevent the landlord being master of the situation?—It does not seem as if it were possible.

51,318. Neither the Ground Game Act nor this Act, which it is illegal to evade appear to have saved tenants from the domination of landlords, so to speak?—That is so.

Migration of farmers.

51,319. A good many farmers have migrated out of your county southwards?—They have.

51,320. I suppose it is the severity of the competition at home that has tempted them southwards?—Partly that, and partly because the farmers are of moderate size, and farmers' sons employed on the holding have had to strike out for themselves. The young men who were brought up to farming were far in excess of the farms that they could get within the county.

Dairying.

51,321. Is dairying the chief branch of farming within your county?—Chiefly so.

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51,322. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you make cheese in your district?—Not in my immediate district, but in Ayrshire generally they do.

Size of farms.

51,323. To what size do the farms run?—From 150 to 250 acres generally.

51,324. Do you call these small farms?—Yes.

51,325. Does a man and his family generally work them?—Yes, without much labour, but he works harder than any servant in the country.

Migration of farmers.

51,326. Do these young men take capital with them?—As much as they can get.

51,327. They would not be admitted as tenants elsewhere if they did not bring some capital with them?—Some of them struggle away for years, and do not get as much as if they were in farm service elsewhere.

51,328. But they would not be admitted as tenants if they did not bring capital with them?—In some parts of England they are very glad to see them, even supposing they have not much capital. They do not go so much to other parts of Scotland.

Demand for farms.

51,329. Has that competition prevailed during the last fifteen years, or has it only come to that point quite lately?—It has prevailed all along for twenty years.

51,330. When a farm is vacant are there a great number of applicants?—Probably from ten to thirty.

Reduction of rents.

51,331. You said, I think, that in your immediate district rents have only been reduced on an average about 5 per cent?—I think that will cover it.

51,332. In other parts of Ayrshire?—From ten to 15 per cent, and in some cases 20 per cent.

Fall of prices.

51,333. You said some kinds of produce had been reduced, whilst others had maintained their price. What articles have maintained their price?—Early potatoes have maintained their price throughout all the depression.

51,334. What else?—That is about all.

51,335. Has dairy produce maintained its price?—It has not.

51,336. What has been the fall in dairy produce?—I suppose about 10 per cent. within these last three months.

51,337. Take an average of years, because we must be guided by that?—The fall has been greater within the last three months. Dairy produce has pretty well kept its price up to a short while ago.

51,338. The fall has only been in the last few months?—Yes.

Leases.

51,339. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Who pays for the drafting and the writing of these leases?—The tenant pays one-half and the landlord the other half.

51,340. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are copies furnished to tenants?—Not in every case.

51,341. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do leases generally prevail in your district?—Mostly nineteen years.

51,342. There has been no change in that respect?—Usually there is a break made after five years in recently drafted leases.

Remissions of rent.

51,343. Have landlords made remissions of rent as well as permanent reductions?—They have.

51,344. What have they made in the case of leases?—From 5 to in some instances 20 per cent. in the case of sheep farmers.

51,345. Is that the average?—That would not represent the average; 20 per cent. might represent the average. Of course in leases that have been renewed within recent years, there has not been that.

51,346. But in old leases while the old rent was maintained?—15 per cent. would represent the average I think.

51,347. Every year, or in exceptionally bad years?—Mostly every year.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. W. Munro.

Mr. William Munro, called in and examined.

Mr. W. Munro.

51,348. (*Chairman.*) Mr. Munro, from 1858 until 1877 you were Government assessor of lands and heritages for the first district of the county of Lanark?—I was.

51,349. In 1877 you were promoted to the office of Inspector of Stamps and Taxes for the northern division of Scotland, which you held until 1879?—Yes.

51,350. In which latter year you were selected to fill the office of assessor of railways and canals for Scotland, vacant by the death of Mr. George Dods?—Yes.

51,351. This appointment is held under the Act for the Valuation of Lands and Heritages in Scotland, 1854?—It is.

Procedure before the assessor of railways.

51,352. The law in Scotland differs in this respect from that in England, in that the valuation of railways for the purposes of local rates is made by an officer appointed under the Act 17 & 18 Victoria, chapter 91?—Yes.

51,353. It rests with you to assess the value of railways all over the country?—I do, all over Scotland.

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51,354. Have you any aid in that respect, or does it rest solely with yourself? Have you any assessors to help you? —None. I have several clerks, two being specially skilled.

51,355. When there is a dispute do the parties come before you and argue the case?—Frequently they do.

51,356. Do they appear by counsel?—No. This is before the valuation is finally made up. I invite the railway company or whatever party it is, to a conference with me. We meet and discuss the points on which we differ. If we agree that settles the matter. If we cannot, I make out the valuation, and they have the power to appeal against my decision to one of the judges of the Court of Session, who is known as the Lord Ordinary on the bills. The case is heard before that judge. The railway companies have counsel, and invariably the best to be found in Scotland. I have none.

51,357. Do the local authorities appear occasionally in answer to the railway companies, or do you have to defend your case?—I have to defend my case; but usually I am assisted by the local authorities. They come and appear in their own interest, and they have counsel and also witnesses. The great difficulty is with expert witnesses. The railway companies have them in large numbers whenever they require them, and the judge has more or less to decide upon the evidence led; while I have no power to call witnesses, at least I have no fund to pay them out of.

51,358. How is a case initiated? Do the local authorities in the first place come before you and claim that the railway shall be assessed at a particular amount?—No. I take the accounts of last year of any railway, and find out what the gross earnings were. Then I make the deductions which are allowed, and arrive at a sum which is the gross valuation of the railway.

51,359. You communicate your decision to the local authorities and to the railway companies?—I communicate it first to the railway companies.

51,360. Then the dispute is between you and the railway companies in the first place?—Yes.

51,361. You have a conference on the subject?—Frequently.

51,362. And you finally give your decision?—Yes.

51,363. You communicate that in due time to the local authorities?—Yes.

Appeal from decision of assessor.

51,364. Suppose the local authorities are dissatisfied, what happens?—They have the power to appear before the judge, and they do so.

51,365. On the other hand, if the railway company is dissatisfied, it can appeal against you?—Yes.

51,366. And finally the case comes before a Judge of the Supreme Court?—Yes.

51,367. Are there many such appeals?—There have been fewer of late years, because a great many of the points have been settled. And we also found that it is really hopeless to attempt to open the same point, because the judge naturally decides as his predecessor has done, to a large extent—at least that is really the rule. I may say that the reason why these cases—which are certainly the most important in Scotland—are decided before one judge is that at the time of year when these valuations were completed, the Court of Session was not sitting, and there is only one judge.

51,368. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What court do they go before?—The Court of Session.

51,369. Always the same court?—Always the same court. It is the Supreme Court of Scotland. They depute one of their number, who is Lord Ordinary on the bills, who is always sitting during the recess. Other cases such as the valuation of a house or a farm, are heard at a different time of the year, and two judges sit upon them, which is an anomaly no doubt.

51,370. (*Chairman.*) All the cases of rating of railways throughout the whole of Scotland come before you?—Yes.

51,371. That is the only way in which the assessment is made?—Yes.

Mode of assessment of railways.

51,372. Apparently the mode in which you assess the railway is, you do not merely take into account the value of the land and buildings which they possess in a particular district, but you take the whole gross revenue of the year for the railway, and take into account the working expenses and the plant; and after making certain allowances of from 20 to 25 per cent. on the valuation of the plant, and so forth, you arrive at the amount at which you assess the railway?—The gross valuation. Of the two principal railways in Scotland the gross valuation amounts to something over half a million annually. I proceed to check what portion of that belongs to the stations and the balance is apportioned equally per mile along the line.

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51,373. Apparently under Act 30 & 31 Victoria, chapter 80 you deduct "one half of the expenses incurred "in maintaining or repairing the permanent way?"—Yes.

51,374. And further you make a deduction upon the estimated present value of the working stock and plant, said value being taken at 75 per cent. of the original cost?—Yes.

51,375. That 25 per cent. deduction upon the valuation of the plant is made up as follows:—12 per cent. for tenant's profits, 5 per cent. for depreciation, 5 per cent. for interest, and 3 per cent. for accidents and incidents?—Yes.

51,376. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you to do with nothing but railways?—Railways, waterworks, gasworks, canals, and tramways. The Scotch judges have held that railways and tramways are one and the same thing.

51,377. (*Chairman.*) Previous to 1876 no allowance was made to railway companies for floating capital?—No.

51,378. But the late assessor, in making up the valuation for the year ending Whit Sunday 1877, for the first time made an allowance in respect of floating capital?—Yes.

51,379. The effect of the arrangements in Scotland over which you preside is that one uniform system prevails over the whole of Scotland for the rating of railways?—That is a great benefit.

51,380. Whatever rules you lay down for one district apply equally to the whole of Scotland?—Yes.

Mode of assessing in England and Scotland compared.

51,381. Therefore there is uniformity throughout the whole of Scotland in respect of the assessment of railways?—Yes.

51,382. Whereas in England each local authority is compelled to have a separate dispute with the railway company in respect of the railways within its own district?—Yes.

51,383. And there is no general rule applicable to the whole?—That is so. I have always understood that the difficulty in England was, that while the railways had always highly skilled people to meet such cases, the local authorities had frequently men not exactly trained to the work.

51,384. In England it would go to the assessment committee of the county, and if their decision was disputed it would go before the magistrates?—Yes.

51,385. Subject to an appeal to the courts on a question of law?—Yes.

51,386. Whereas with you the whole subject is dealt with in your office by yourself, with appeal to the judges on fact as well as on law?—On fact as well as on law, or the interpretation of law.

51,387. But on a question of fact?—Yes, there are witnesses examined as to questions of fact, but it is generally more upon law, and what the law includes.

Appeal.

51,388. Supposing a particular railway disputed your method of calculation, or thought you had hardly deducted sufficient in respect of these allowances, not on the question of law, but on the question of fact and amount, they might appeal against your decision to this judge?—They might, and do.

Basis of valuation of railways.

51,389. The general result of the assessment of railways in Scotland seems to imply, that to that extent personal property is rated, because you take into account the plant of the company, including the valuation of its carriages, and so forth, as well as the valuation of the land and buildings?—I do not take into account the value of the land. The basis of the whole valuation is the gross earnings of the company.

51,390. The gross annual receipts?—Yes.

51,391. These gross annual receipts would be based not only upon the valuation of the land and buildings, but also upon the floating capital of the company?—Yes.

51,392. Including its waggons, engines, and so forth, which are personal property?—Yes.

51,393. Therefore *pro tanto* in Scotland, personal property in respect of railways is to some extent rated?—Yes. The profits could not be earned without the plant. I think in England what they attempt to do is to ascertain the earnings, the receipts, in each parish or for each mile. Of course they make many deductions from these gross earnings, just as I do to some extent.

51,394. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Only in a different way?—Yes. The difficulty is to ascertain how much is owing to each parish. Perhaps what many consider the fault of the

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Scotch system, is that to the mile coming into such a town as Glasgow, you have to give just the same rate as a mile-length twenty miles away, where the actual receipts are not and cannot be the same.

Method of estimating railway valuation.

51,395. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you reckon the mileage according to rails?—According to the running track, which, I think, is another difficulty. I proposed some years ago that the rating should be upon each single line, that there might be a difference.

51,396. On the double line would you rate on both lines?—Yes; and on the single only one.

51,397. At the present moment, whether single or double, or quadruple, it is all the same?—Yes.

51,398. (*Chairman.*) Having based your estimate as you have explained, you then divide it among the parishes in proportion to the length of line?—I first check off the valuation of the stations, ascertaining their gross cost as nearly as possible, and take 5 per cent. on that, which may make up two-thirds or thereby of the whole valuation of, say, half-a-million, for a large railway.

51,399. Having made that deduction, you divide the balance between the different parishes through which the railway passes?—Yes.

Rating on single and double lines.

51,400. Making a distinction between those parishes where there is a single line or a double line?—No; I make no distinction. I think there ought to be.

51,401. At present you make no distinction whether a line is single, or double, or quadruple?—No.

51,402. The poor districts rather gain?—Very much. In some parishes the valuation of the railways is a very important thing. Among the poor agricultural population in the Highlands, it is often a very important matter.

51,403. In your opinion there ought to be some change in that respect?—I think so.

51,404. That it is hardly fair to the districts which a railway with quadruple lines passes through?—That is my opinion clearly. I ventured to suggest that to the Lord Advocate some years ago, but he never acted upon the suggestion.

51,405. Has the question never been raised before the judges?—No.

Right of appeal against assessment.

51,406. I presume that any parish which thought itself aggrieved by this method might appeal against the decision to the judges?—They might, and raise that very question.

51,407. Take the question as between a parish where there is a line of railway with four lines passing through it, and a very poor district with only one line of rails passing through it. The one parish might contend that the assessment was unfair as between the two?—They might.

51,408. And they might raise the question before the judges?—Raise it before this one judge in the recess season. The experience we have had is that it would be utterly hopeless to get into a question of that kind. There are only a few days to decide the question.

51,409. Why is that?—The Act of Parliament has fixed it so. The 30th September is the last day when the judge can sit. Within 20 days the appeal is heard. It is almost invariably within a very few days of the expiration of the period when the case is heard.

51,410. Do you mean to say that the time given for the appeal is so short that the judge would not be able to determine this important question?—Yes. In the last appeal we had only a few days given us before one of the judges. He expressed his regret pretty strongly that he had so little time to deal with it.

51,411. I presume, inasmuch as your own opinion is, that the system is not altogether fair as between two parishes, in the way you have explained, you might yourself give a decision upon the point?—I might, but it would be opposed by the railways probably, and it would certainly be upset.

51,412. If you took your decision, there would be an appeal against you?—There might.

51,413. On the part of the one parish or the other, and then the judge would have to decide it?—The judge would have to decide it, but in the case of a poor parish, they would never dare to incur the cost of such an appeal. A rich parish, such as some of the Glasgow parishes often do fight these points; but a poor parish through which a single line passes would scarcely do it. It would, perhaps, involve a loss to them as much as all their rates for the year.

51,414. But you express the opinion that the system is not altogether fair?—Yes.

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51,415. It would seem that it would rest with you to alter it, leaving it to the particular parish to appeal against you?—It would be very difficult to upset the practice of 40 years.

51,416. You would hesitate?—I know what the result would be pretty well beforehand, that I, without counsel, without the power to pay witnesses, would be beaten by the railway companies.

51,417. It seems to me that it would not be a question involving any very great amount of evidence, because it would be on a question of fact, easily ascertainable—namely that the one parish has a railway with four lines and the other has a railway with only one, and the question is, how to divide the rate between the two?—Quite true.

51,418. That is a question of principle rather than of fact?—Yes.

51,419. And it would not involve a great amount of evidence. It would only involve a decision of principle?—There is no doubt of that.

51,420. At all events, you have not thought of disturbing to practice of the last 40 years?—I have not. A Committee of the House of Commons sat upon railway valuations some years ago—in 1888—and they recommended that the appeals should be heard before at least three judges. It has been found in the case of other property that occasionally the judges differed when there were only two, and that the appeal fell in consequence.

Present valuation of railways compared with 20 years.

51,421. Have you any return in your office, showing the valuation for each parish in Scotland or each union in Scotland, as compared with 25 years ago, showing the gradual increase of valuation?—Yes. I made up this morning a comparison between now and 20 years ago. The increase is not so large as might be expected, considering that the railway valuations of the present day contain the valuations of large extensions on the part of the railways. Twenty years ago, the gross valuation of all the railways was 1,400,000*l.*; last year it was 1,800,000*l.*, showing an increase of 400,000*l.*

51,422. Not a very great one?—No; considering the extensions particularly.

Assessment of union 1870 and 1894.

51,423. I do not know whether you have seen a return recently laid before Parliament showing the increase in assessments not only of railways, but of all other properties, in each union in England, for the last four-and-twenty years, 1870 as compared with 1894?—Yes, I think I have.

51,424. That shows a very enormous increase in the assessment of railways?—Yes, I have that return.

51,425. Would it be possible to get a return of the same kind for Scotland?—I have no doubt it would. I could furnish any information of that kind as regards the railways. In fact, I think I have draft copies of all the valuations. That would be easily furnished. Of course, from 1870 to 1880 the extensions of railways were very considerable.

Increased assessment of railways.

51,426. But still, as that return shows, the increased assessment is far beyond the increase in mileage of the railways?—Yes.

51,427. Showing that the railways in England must have been assessed at very much below their value 25 years ago, and that the assessments have been gradually increased. I apprehend in Scotland the same system has prevailed during the whole of that time?—Yes, and long before.

51,428. What increase there has been has been due mainly to increased mileage?—Yes. In fact, the Act of 1868, giving the deduction for half the maintenance has of course, reduced the valuation very considerably compared with what it otherwise would have been.

Annual valuation.

51,429. (*Captain Thomas.*) At whose request do you value these railways?—I am appointed by Government.

51,430. But you are asked by somebody to value a certain railway?—I do it every year.

51,431. All the railways throughout Scotland?—Yes, every railway throughout Scotland.

51,432. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is the local assessment for railways the same as the income tax assesament?—The income tax is on the profits. This is on the supposed rental. They are not on the same principle.

51,433. Which is the higher?—The company pay income tax, as I understand, on a much higher amount, but I really could not say.

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Income tax and local valuations.

51,434. You do not know what the relative proportions in Scotland are of the income tax valuation, and the local valuation of railways? Could you put in the income tax valuation for this year and the local valuation?—I have no access to these papers.

51,435. You could put in your local valuation?—Yes.

51,436. Because then we could see whether the proportions were much the same as in England?—Yes.

Deductions from gross valuations.

51,437. I take it from what you say that some of these deductions which you are compelled to allow, partly by statute and partly by custom, are larger than they ought to be. Take the deduction that you are required to allow on account of railway stations?—Of course, that would not lessen the gross valuation of a railway. That is only a proportion.

51,438. It would lessen the valuation of the railways in parishes where there are no stations?—If you gave less to the stations it would increase the valuations along the country.

Per-centage on stations.

51,439. Do you think that per-centage should be reduced?—I think it is too high. When the original Act of 1854 was passed only 3 per cent. was allowed on the cost of the stations. Then, by the Act of 1868, the same year as half the maintenance was allowed to the railways the per-centage on stations was raised to 5.

51,440. The effect would be that towns in which there are stations get too high a valuation of the railway, and rural districts through which lines run get too low a share?—That would be the result, that they would get more. It is certainly more that the Act contemplated originally.

51,441. Then the agricultural interest would be benefited, if this rate of interest, which was fixed at 3 per cent. in 1854, were reduced now?—It certainly would.

51,442. Do you think it should be reduced?—I think there are even additional reasons for it now, seeing the value of money is different from what it was in 1868.

51,443. To that extent you would consider the rural districts are unfairly treated at present in the valuations of railways?—I have always thought so.

Deductions from gross valuations.

51,444. Are these various deductions that are allowed in getting at the gross valuation the result of statute or of practice?—Practice.

51,445. I see they are totally different from the deductions that are allowed in case of gasworks, waterworks, and so forth. Are those also the result of practice?—Very much the result of decisions by the judges.

51,446. Is that also the case with the railways?—To a certain extent. Gasworks and waterworks, which are held by a corporation for the public good, are not allowed to claim tenants' profits. Therefore the judge said that, seeing that is the case, they should be entitled to the whole expenses of maintenance.

Assessment of gas works and water works.

51,447. Are these gasworks and waterworks in Scotland all in the hands of local authorities? Are none of them in the hands of companies?—There are some. I only deal with a certain number of the gasworks; the Act of 1854 makes it imperative on me to deal with all railways and canals. As regards gasworks and waterworks, the corporation or whoever have charge of the concern must apply to the sheriff and get an order from him that I am to deal with them, when the pipes run through more than one parish.

51,448. When you have an assessment of waterworks, how do you divide that among the different parishes?—It is according to the structural cost in each parish.

51,449. When water is brought from a large lake or reservoir, do you value that part of the undertaking as a rule?—Yes; we make up an estimate of the structural cost in each parish.

51,450. As to structural cost, if you take it from a lake, it need not be necessarily high?—No.

51,451. But you take it simply on structural cost?—That is a decision of the court also.

51,452. Is there any work that you could refer us to, upon the valuation of railways, gasworks, and waterworks in Scotland?—Here is a small work which I myself prepared on the subject, if you will allow me to present it.

51,453. You are generally acquainted with the valuation of these properties in Scotland?—Roughly.

Valuation of railways in England and Scotland compared.

51,454. Should you say that in Scotland a higher valuation is placed upon them than in England, or the reverse?—Our impression is that the Scotch railways are quite as highly valued; but the English railways are really so enormously greater that we can hardly compare them. I was just looking at some of the statistics in one of the Board of Trade returns. The capital expenditure in England is 800,000,000*l.* odd, the capital expenditure in Scotland is 131,000,000*l.* odd, and in Ireland the capital expenditure is 38,000,000*l.* In England the miles open are 14,000, and in Scotland 3,000.

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51,455. You cannot say whether, having regard to the expenditure upon the railways in each case, the valuation in England is higher or lower than the valuation in Scotland, proportionately?—I could only give it as a matter of opinion, which probably I am not entitled to form.

51,456. The striking difference between your evidence and that in the English return is that whereas the valuations of railways in England have increased so enormously during the last 20 years, in Scotland they appear to have stood tolerably still?—Tolerably still.

51,457. I think you say that the deductions in respect of plant are always tending to increase, which, with the large percentages given, have the effect of diminishing the valuation of the railways?—Certainly.

51,458. Is that at all a reason why the Scotch valuations have not increased to the extent the English have?—To a certain extent it is. And I do not think that until more recent years, when the rates were becoming higher, the railways made such large demands as to the valuation of plant at stations. There was just a small sum, less than one-half, and I said, "I cannot allow that until you show "me a list of every article at every station, so that I may "have an opportunity of testing. We got lists of barrows "and desks and everything else, and a value put upon "them; and it was in that way seen that they had claimed "less than they might have claimed."

51,459. You do not think that they claim too big a sum now?—I do not think that the sums are too large. Whether the deductions are too large or too small is another question, whether 5 per cent. prior to 1860 should be 5 per cent. now.

51,460. Have you a free hand with reference to the other deductions in respect to plant, or are you tied by statute?—I am tied by the practice of 40 years, and by the concurrence, repeated, of the judges.

51,461. Have the decisions of the judges been constantly becoming more in favour of the companies?—No, I cannot say.

51,462. Or have the companies become more alive to their power of getting reductions?—I think the companies fight much harder than they did originally.

Deductions in estimating railway valuation.

51,463. In getting at the valuation of a line you first of all deduct the valuation of the stations?—I first of all ascertain the gross receipts, then deduct 5 per cent. upon the cost of the stations. At first we get those costs by taking the actual expenditure.

51,564. What do you deduct next—the plant?—Upon plant, 25 per cent.

51,465. How do you get at the value of the plant? do you take the expenditure?—We take the original estimate of the value of the plant, made up by my predecessor, with the assistance of experts, less 25 per cent. They are put in at 75 per cent. of the actual cost. That is a point that the railways think their plant is worth more than 75 per cent.

51,466. What other deductions do you make, speaking generally?—25 per cent. upon the value of workshop tools, office and station furniture, horsing and carting plant, &c.

51,467. That would be all plant?—Yes. I also allow 5 per cent. on floating capital.

51,468. Is that too high a per-centage?—That has been decided by the Railway Commissioners. It was merely as to the amount.

Per-centage deduction on floating capital.

51,469. When was the per-centage on floating capital determined?—Previous to 1876 no allowance was granted to the railway companies in Scotland for floating capital, but the late Assessor, in making up the valuation for the year ending Whitsunday, 1877, following probably the decision (December 1874) of the Railway Commissioners in the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire Railway case, gave to the Scotch companies an abatement in this respect. The annual allowance on these sums is 5 per cent.

51,470. Has it always been 5 per cent.?—Since 1855.

51,471. Is not that a case where the per-centage might fairly be reduced?—I suppose money is much more easily got now.

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51,472. In another case you recommend that the 5 per cent. should be reduced to 3 or 4 per cent. Would not the same recommendation apply to floating capital?—If done on one per-centage it would follow almost that it might be done on the other.

Scotch and English system of valuation compared.

51,473. Do you find that the Scotch system of valuation gives satisfaction to the railway companies as well as to the local authorities?—I think the Scotch system gives the railway companies the benefit of dealing with one man and one office, while in England they are harrassed, they say, by every little parish or large parish, attacking them occasionally when they think they least require it.

51,474. The expenditure is enormously reduced by having one office?—Enormously. In one case I was asked to give evidence in the valuation of the Crewe Works. That went on for many years, and cost thousands and thousands of pounds, whereas here in no case would the cost be above a few hundreds.

Cost of valuation.

51,475. Could you state the total cost of the valuation of the railways in the several years, including the cost incurred by the companies in appeals?—I could not tell what the companies incur. We had only one case last year. Some years we have none at all. Not more than a few hundreds.

51,476. The cost of your office is very moderate?—2,000*l.* a year. That cost is borne by the railway and other companies. There is no cost to the local authorities. That is where the English local authorities would certainly benefit, because they would not have to pay the expense.

Assessment before 1854.

51,477. Prior to 1854 you had the same system in Scotland practically that you have now in England?—I suppose we had. The Scotch Poor Law Act of 1845 made some change.

51,478. You had no central assessment prior to 1854? No, none.

51,479. You had that reform in consequence of the trouble that you had in these local assessments?—I suppose so. Of course we had almost no railways as early as 1845. I have no doubt that is the cause why referring these matters to the Lord Ordinary arose. The questions then were of very small account compared with what they have now grown to.

Assessors of lands.

51,480. Before you held your present appointment you were Government assessor of lands in the county of Lanark?—The greater part of Lanark.

51,481. Were you also local assessor?—In most counties the Government assessor and the local assessor are the same—I was one and the same there.

51,482. What is the reason why that system is not universally adopted in Scotland? Why do some counties prefer to have different assessors for local and for Imperial purposes?—I know of no other reason, except this, that in some counties the authorities desire to have, as they think, more power in their own hands—the power of dismissing a man.

Imperial and local assessments.

51,483. In cases where they have a different assessment for local and Imperial purposes, which assessment is usually the higher in Scotland?—I really could not say.

51,484. Could you tell us where we could ascertain that?—I think they are very much alike now.

51,485. Because in England the Imperial assessment is the higher in a great part of the country?—I could not say that I think you would find any great difference, because there are only a few counties—four, I think—in which there is a local assessor. They go very much together; they are practically one and the same, the only difference being that in the case of these four counties they have to pay all the expenses, whilst in the others the Government pays all the expense.

51,486. But you have a double set of appeals?—You readily might have. In the case of the Government they consider that they have the benefit of having the income tax made up from those returns from their own officials.

51,487. When you were local as well as government assessor, did you get any information as to the working of the classification system?—That is the Poor Law Act. I had nothing to do with that. I merely got at the gross valuation as the Government Assessor. I handed copies of my valuation to the county clerk, and he distributed them over the parishes.

Per-centage deduction on floating capital.

51,488. (*Mr. Channing.*) About the determination of the floating capital allowance. I see the principle of it is that 3 per cent. is taken on the total receipts?—That is the result, it is not the principle. The average is that. These are the two most important companies we have.

51,489. So that you do not estimate what amount of allowance floating capital should have put upon it? You take it from the companies' returns?—It is really more an estimate than anything else.

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51,490. Do you form the estimate, or does it come from companies?—It was arrived at many years ago; it is not enquired into annually. We assume it is much the same. It is all in favour of the companies to increase it, and their floating capital cannot be deminishing.

Increased assessment of stations.

51,491. You draw attention in your brief to the great increase in the proportion assessed on stations?—Yes.

51,492. It has in 20 years increased nearly threefold?—Yes.

51,493. On the Caledonian Railway from 14·5 per cent. to 38·1 per cent.; on the North British Railway from 16·8 per cent. to 29·2 per cent.; and on the Glasgow and South-Western Railway from 14·6 per cent. to 42 per cent. Do you think that produces a disproportion?—It certainly tends that way. Of course the cause is that instead of renewing old stations, they find themselves able to put up new and very expensive stations.

51,494. Have you stated what appears in your brief as the allowance in respect of traffic carried in traders' waggons?—I do not think I have.

Assessment in respect of traffic carried in traders' waggons.

51,495. Will you state how the assessment is arrived at on traffic carried in plant belonging to traders?—This plant is composed almost entirely of coal and iron waggons. To arrive at this abatement, efforts were made to get from each company a statement of the revenue derived by them from such traffic; but the companies all aver that it is not in their power to give the required information, or in any case, that the expense of extracting it from their accounts must necessarily be so great that they should not be asked to incur such expense. For a period of years a deduction amounting to 6 per cent. on the estimated value of the traders' plant was allowed, but this being deemed unsatisfactory, within the last four years an estimate of the earnings of each company from such traffic has been made up, and allowances granted thereon. The estimate is made up thus:—To the number of mineral waggons owned by each company, add number of waggons belonging to traders, and used on the companies' lines exclusively, together with one-fifth of the latter number, as being the estimated number of foreign waggons running occasionally on companies' lines. Deduct 15 per cent. from the combined number of the two latter classes of waggons, as the receipts will be so much less than if traffic had been carried in companies' waggons, that being the estimated average saving to traders from using their own waggons. Then divide total mineral receipts of the company by total number of all kinds of waggons employed in earning them, and thereafter take the proportion of revenue accruing to all traders' waggons, as above ascertained, less 15 per cent. in respect of the reduced carriage rates, and allow 10 per cent. on the earnings of waggons running exclusively on the companies' lines, plus one-fifth for foreign traders' waggons.

Total assessment of railways.

51,496. (*Chairman.*) What is the total assessment of railways at this moment in Scotland?—Railways alone, as valued by me, 1,798,623*l.*

51,497. It seems that the capital expended on the railways in Scotland at the present moment is 131 millions, as compared with 800 millions in England; that is, one-sixth?—Yes.

51,498. But if the assessment for rating purposes was in the same proportion, it would be 2,310,000*l.*, whereas it is only 1,800,000*l.*, or slightly under?—Slightly under.

51,499. Therefore the general result is that the aggregate assessment on railways in Scotland bears a smaller proportion to the capital expended upon them than it does in England?—I have remarked that. I do not think, however, that you could compare the enormously rich English traffics with those of Scotland.

51,500. After all, it is mainly based upon the incomes of the railways; but is not the proportional income of the railways as good in Scotland as in England?—I should not think so. There are lots of lines paying not much more than working expenses.

Assessment of railways making no profits.

51,501. Where railways are not doing more than paying working expenses, how do you proceed?—They get the same ratio per mile as those producing large results, if they belong to the same system, or are leased by the same company.

51,502. But supposing it is an independent line?—Then it is made up independently. Each system of railway is made up distinctly.

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51,503. Would they be assessed at nothing if making no profits?—Yes, they would. The Caledonian and Crinan Canals are this year assessed at nothing.

51,504. Because they are making no profit?—In some cases, such as Ayrshire and Wigtonshire, we had the figure in for years at 1*l.* per mile.

51,505. That being an independent company?—If that had been leased to one of the wealthier companies, the track through which it runs would get the benefit of the average mileage rate of the company to which it was leased. Some years ago the Highland Railway leased and worked the Skye line, and it was a great benefit to the district rom Dingwall on to Strome Ferry, when amalgamation took place; but it diminished the valuations in other parts of the system. In the same way the Caledonian Railway still works the Oban line, and the Oban line gets, not the same rate at the best part of the Caledonian system, but merely according to its own earnings.

51,506. Where a Scotch company is leased to an English line, what do you do there?—I do not think there is such a case.

Valuation of stations.

51,507. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the valuation of the stations do you allow for deterioration?—In getting at this 5 per cent. you say you ascertain the capital valuation by finding out what would be required for the acquisition and erection of these. Do you take the original expenditure?—We did that at one time, and if it is a new station we do that still. If it is an old station we go to the ground, look over it, measure it, and put a valuation upon it. Taking the valuation of the *Solum* is always the most difficult part of it. That may be in one place worth a very small sum, and in a town a very large sum.

51,508. Practically you do allow for deterioration?—Certainly.

51,509. What are the dividends paid by the different companies?—I really could not say. Dividends are so very confusing nowadays, with preferred and deferred stock.

Deductions for tenants' profits.

51,510. Do you make the same deductions for tenants' profits from the value of plant in all cases?—Yes.

51,511. You make an annual allowance of 25 per cent. upon the value of the plant, of which 12 per cent. is for tenants' profits?—In all cases.

Assessment of railways making no profits.

51,512. Ultimately, you say, where one of these undertakings is making no profit you have no assessment?—Well, we have no receipts.

51,513. The deductions that you allow counterbalance the receipts?—We cannot make deductions where we start with nothing.

51,514. Your deductions are made upon a fixed system?—Yes.

51,515. You begin by taking the gross receipts?—Gross receipts.

51,516. Do you find that it mathematically works out that when you have made these deductions, the residue is profit?—Profit or value.

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51,517. Do you find that in no case there would be any valuation of a company that is not making a profit?—I think it is quite possible. We really do not enquire into the actual profits, the income-tax profits, so to speak.

51,518. You might be rating a railway which was not making a profit, and you might be letting off a railway that was making a profit? You might be attributing no valuation at all to a company that was making a profit under this system?—I presume we might; but I think it is practically impossible.

51,519. I think you said, in answer to the Chairman, that if there was no profit there could be no valuation?—I do not think there could.

51,520. Could there, on the other hand, be no valuation where there was a profit?—There might be a dividend, or some preferred stock, or something of that kind. There is one railway in Scotland generally believed to be not much more than paying its expenses, the lately constructed West Highland.

51,521. (*Chairman.*) You have a valuation on it?—It was running for a part of the year. I do not know how it will work out. The Forth Bridge Company is also an independent company.

51,522. It appears that in those cases where companies are just earning a little something and are independent, the parishes where the stations exist have a kind of preferential claim, because they get 5 per cent. before the others get anything?—It was the case with the canals this year, that there was no valuation to distribute among them. They might be paying working expenses and yielding no profit. If they paid 10 or 20 times their land was worth, they would eat up their profits to shareholders.

Valuation of farms.

51,523. (*Captain Thomas.*) When you were assessor of lands, how did you arrive at the valuation of farms?—Of course, as a rule, you get returns from the landlords. That is one enormous advantage we have over England. In England, as I understand the matter, you get the rents from the occupiers. In Scotland we get returns from each landlord or owner of property, with the names of the tenants and the rents they pay every year. That return he is bound to furnish under a penalty, and if he wilfully makes any inaccurate statement he is liable.

51,524. (*Mr. Clay.*) You get that from the valuation roll?—That is what I am talking about. The valuation roll is made up in this way. That is what I am explaining. The valuation roll is composed of those returns. It has nothing to do with profits.

51,525. Is not that a hardship, that a man is paying a rent and is absolutely losing on his farm?—Unless the landlord makes a *bonâ fide* reduction upon the whole rent.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. Black.

JAMES BLACK called in and examined.

Mr. J. Black.

51,526. (*Chairman.*) You reside, Mr. Black, at Sheriffston, in the county of Elgin?—I do.

Particulars of witness's farm.

51,527. And you own land and are also a tenant farmer?—I own Sheriffston, and occupy the whole of it, and I have besides a farm mainly for sheep.

51,528. What extent of land do you own?—220 acres.

51,529. Do you farm it yourself?—Yes. The sheep farm is 172 acres arable, with 70 acres range of keepable pasture, and of hill besides.

Existence of depression.

51,530. Has the depression in agriculture been less felt in the land adjoining the Moray Firth than in other places?—It has.

51,531. Is that a district of good land with good climate?—A large proportion of it is good and the climate is exceptionally good.

51,532. Has depression in spite of that been felt, though not so severely as elsewhere?—It has.

51,533. Especially, I suppose, on the heavy clayey land?—Heavy clayey land has suffered more than anything with us.

Character of cultivation.

51,534. What is generally under cultivation there? Is it an arable district?—Almost wholly.

51,535. What does it produce mainly?—It was a wheat-growing country to a large extent at one time, but that has been mainly given up. It produces, perhaps, the finest barley in Scotland, oats to a considerable extent, potatoes largely, turnips very largely, and hay to a large extent as well.

Reduction of rents.

51,536. Have the rents been considerably reduced there?—They have in a great many cases.

51,537. What should you say has been the reduction there?—It would be a little difficult to define it exactly, but, I should think, perhaps, on the whole, 20 per cent. On some of the larger farms it has been a good deal more than that. Small holdings keep up their value better.

Small holdings.

51,538. What should you say has been the reduction in the case of the smaller holdings?—A good many of them are without any reduction at all almost, except yearly abatements. I should think, perhaps, 10 per cent. would be a fair average.

51,539. What do you consider to be a small holding?—Under 100 or 120 acres.

51,540. I suppose there the tenant works himself?—Yes, and employs very little labour.

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51,541. They are not crofters, I suppose?—No, they are above that.

Barley growing.

51,542. What do they generally rely upon for their receipts? What do they make their money out of?—Cattle mainly, sheep partly, and the usual grain crops. The staple grain crop is barley, which finds an exceptionally good market in our district in consequence of the very large number of distilleries about. Elgin market is perhaps the best market for barley in Scotland.

51,543. The quality is particularly good?—It is, in the low country.

51,544. I suppose, therefore, the price is better than the average in respect of the higher qualities?—And the amount of barley required in the district. We have nearly 30 distilleries within 30 miles of the capital of Moray.

Price of barley.

51,545. What do they make of their barley?—This year it would be about 24*s.* and 25*s.*, and at one period up to 27*s.* and 28*s.* Within the last two or three years it was 33*s.* Though it goes a little beyond my experience, I think within the last 20 years it was 40*s.* That was before I was a farmer in the low country; I was a farmer up in the Highlands.

51,546. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What you are speaking of now is the best samples of barley, not the lowest?—The average price.

51,547. (*Mr. Everett.*) You got your barley fairly last harvest?—It was well harvested. It was very much injured by lodging. The crop was far too heavy. It was not of a quality to compare with districts that do not usually grow so good barley as we do.

51,548. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was the lower price obtained due to some extent to the inferior quality?—It was. Very often a large proportion goes to England, Glasgow, and Edinburgh for the making of beer when the colour is good and the quality up to a certain point; but last year there was almost none of that.

51,549. All the best quality was kept in the country?—To go to the distilleries.

51,550. What was the best price for the best quality?—In the first part of the year it was 27*s.*, and it came down afterwards to 24*s.* and 23*s.* 6*d.*, and in some cases lower.

51,551. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that Imperial measure, or is it weight?—Both. We calculate by the quarter weighing 54*s.* per bushel, with 8 bushels to the quarter. It is bought by weight sometimes, as at 448 lbs. to the quarter. You get 27*s.* for 448 lbs., the buyer judging of whether it will be 54 lbs. or 56 lbs. per bushel by the information of the seller, and by his own opinion of the look of the barley.

51,552. And that is about the natural weight of that measure?—The standard weight of the district is 54 lbs., but I should think 56 lbs. is about the figure now, with improved means of agriculture.

51,553. (*Chairman.*) The best samples fetched more than 27*s.* to 24*s.*?—They did.

51,554. Are there many small farmers of the description you speak of?—A good many round the hillsides and up towards Strathspey, on the Seafield estates, which are within the county of Moray, to a large extent.

Reduction of rents.

51,555. With the larger farmers the reductions have been greater?—They have, and the competition less.

51,556. What is the average?—The Morayshire Farmers' Club, of which I am secretary, formulated a statement about 10 years ago, and they claimed that rents should be reduced 33 per cent. That was thought considerably extravagant at the time, but the outcome of it since then has been that a good many of the larger farms, especially those where there is a good proportion of clayey land, have gone down quite as much as that.

51,557. Should you say that the average reduction has been 33 per cent., or is that only in exceptional cases?—Exceptional cases. I do not think the average would be as much as that over the whole.

51,558. What should you say the average was on the larger farms?—25 per cent. perhaps. I should like to say that that refers also to those that have gone out of lease within the last 10 years mainly. A good many large farms continue on lease where there has been no fixed reduction.

51,559. What have the landlords generally done where there were leases and where the value of the land fell? Did they make reductions in respect of leases?—They did, and they have done so as a whole very handsomely.

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Temporary abatements and assessments to rates.

51,560. By permanent reduction or temporary abatement?—Temporary abatements largely. I think I ought perhaps to explain that some of these large as well as small farms remain as they were on the valuation roll officially, and taxes are paid both by proprietor and tenant upon the rent that was the rent when the lease began, while year after year reductions have been made upon these rents. At first these reductions were given effect to in the valuation roll, but the assessor objected, and some three years ago all the farms on which temporary reductions were given from year to year had to be put into the valuation roll again at the rent their leases showed.

51,560*a*. So that the tenants have not had the benefits of the reductions in assessments?—No, nor the proprietors either.

51,561. I suppose where the landlord has made a permanent reduction, and has actually broken the lease and made a new rent, the tenant has obtained a reduction of the assessment?—That is so.

51,562. But where the landlord has only made temporary abatements, although year by year, then, I understand neither the landlord nor the tenant have obtained the benefits of the reduced assessments?—Neither.

51,563. That would point to the expediency of these abatements, which you say are made year by year, being converted into permanent reductions?—I think the time has now come when that should certainly be done. At first when the depression came upon us there was a hope that better times might come, that abatements might tide over the difficulty, and that we might get back to the old standard; but I think that hope has all gone.

Demand for farms.

51,564. Where farms become vacant has there been a demand for them?—Yes, especially for the smaller ones, and not very much difficulty in getting tenants for the larger ones, but still a considerable reduction of rent.

51,565. Was there a renewed demand for farms four or five years ago?—There was, and it is manifestly falling off again as people begin to see that the revival of agriculture is not so sure as they hoped it would be.

51,566. How do you account for the revival that took place?—I think a little better prices started up for some things, and people took it into their minds that the worst was past and that better times were in store.

51,567. That prices had reached their bottom?—Yes, and that better things were to come for the future.

51,568. Lately, in consequence of the greater fall in prices, the demand has fallen off?—Yes.

51,569. But still I gather from you that there is a demand for farms even now?—Middle-sized and smaller ones most largely.

51,570. And that with smaller reductions on the smaller farms?—With reductions of not much more than 10 per cent.; in some cases at the old rent.

51,571. And that in spite of the fact that many of the tenants have lost capital?—Many of them have lost capital largely.

51,572. By that you mean that the value of their stock is reduced?—Yes.

51,573. Or that they have got less stock than they had?—The value of their stock is reduced undoubtedly. I do not know that they have less stock in their hands, but they have drawn very largely upon any spare capital that they had in hand to keep their work going, or perhaps if they were borrowing money, going into borrowing a little more deeply.

51,574. How do you account for the fact that in spite of these leases there seem to be persons able to come in?—I think one of the main reasons is farmers' sons grow up who are trained to the work and are not trained to anything else, and the encouragement to them to go abroad is not as it was some time ago. They keep these at home, and they have to find places for them, and as the capital they can spare from their own farms is not equal to taking a large farm, they begin by taking a small one. That, to a certain extent, I think, accounts for the competition.

51,575. They cannot make so large a profit elsewhere as they could formerly, and the general range of profit is reduced?—Reduced.

51,576. These men, finding that, are better disposed to remain at home and accept the lower rate of profit?—Yes. They think there is now risk in going abroad. Young men going abroad have not been succeeding in the world so largely as they did some time ago, and their fathers and themselves prefer to take a holding at home and make the

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best of it, even though the profits are very small and the work is hard.

51,577. They find that on the whole it is better to to remain at home and to submit to a lower rate of profit than to go abroad and run risks of not succeeding?—Yes. There is another thing that weighs with us very considerably. We have a range of high-lying country between us and the higher Grampians, where there is a large number of industrious farmers and an unfavourable climate. They have been finding the seasons going very badly against them, and they all want to come down to the low country, where they will have a better climate and are surer of a return for their work and toil. Their holdings are not very large, and their capital is in proportion. It is the middle-sized and the smaller holdings that they chiefly run upon.

Labourers' wages.

51,578. Is there a large or a small class of agricultural labourers in the district?—A large class.

51,579. And with regard to their wages, have these been maintained?—Quite.

51,580. As compared with, say, 15 years ago, have they increased in money or remained the same?—As compared with 15 or 12 years ago, I think they are very much about the same. There was a period since then, about six years ago, when they were down a little, but they have got up again.

51,581. They came down about six years ago, and since then wages have risen?—They have.

51,582. I presume, taking into account what they can get for their money, they are a good deal better off than they were 15 years ago?—Yes.

51,583. What s the general rate of wages there?—My foreman, who was a young man last year, got 15*l.* a half-year, or 30*l.* a year. He was boarded with one of the married servants. He got 66 Imperial stones of meal in the year, and some bags of potatoes. I think these were all his perquisites. The perquisites of the married men are much larger.

51,584. What do the married men get?—This man is married this year, and his wages, I should think—I have been in London, and it was my grieve who engaged him—will be about 27*l.* in the year. He has his free house,—ton of coals, a thousand yards of a drill of potatoes, sometimes equal to two or three tons, and his garden plot.

51,585. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you not put the perquisites into money value?—No, with the exception of the milk. I was obliged when I went into farming pretty largely to stop giving them milk, allowing them to buy the milk and get the money. They can buy it anywhere they like. They pay for it.

51,586. What do you pay them for the milk a year?—They get their wages just in a slump. I think they pay for their milk about 15*s.* in the half year.

51,587. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do they buy a good deal of milk?—Yes, they do.

51,588. Even though they pay for it?—Yes. One or two have tried to go elsewhere, but they find that they do not get so good measure or so good milk.

51,589. (*Chairman.*) Is there indication from their houses that the labouring people are better off than they were?—They are certainly more comfortable.

Employment of labourers.

51,590. Has there been any reduction in their employment?—I do not think so.

51,591. About the same proportion are employed?—Some of the farms have gone into grass a little more largely, which reduces the number of hands they want; but I do not know of anyone round our neighbourhood who is not fully employed.

51,592. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Has the population moved at all?—Not much, I think, outside of the towns. In the towns it is increasing. In a few country parishes it has gone down a little; in others it continues going up.

51,593. (*Chairman.*) At all events there is no indication of any considerable reduction in the number of the agricultural labourers?—Oh, no.

Labourers' houses.

51,594. Is the system of bothies still carried on there?—Partially. Considerably less than it was.

51,595. Is there any difficulty in the married men getting houses?—They have been increased in numbers a good deal. The Richmond property, which has lately been referred to prominently throughout the country, has been doing much, and the Duke of Fife has been doing a good deal in that way, and the Earl of Moray has also been providing good buildings for his people. Other proprietors have been doing the same to a large extent. The house accommodation of farm labourers has very much improved and extended within the last 20 years; but there is a good deal to do still. That does not apply to the whole. There are a few labourers' houses in some parts of the country over the north not what they ought to be.

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Land laid down to grass.

51,596. Land, you said, has to some extent been laid down in grass?—It has.

51,597. In the main are the farms arable?—Arable almost wholly.

51,598. But still a portion has been laid down in grass?—To give you an illustration. Instead of five-shift courses, or six-shift courses they are taking seven, leaving grass for three and in some cases for four years or more before breaking it up.

51,599. I suppose they make some economy in working by effecting that change?—Yes, and that is one of the main objects of it.

System of manuring.

51,600. Has there been any change in the system of manuring?—A good deal. We are getting to know better the manures that suit different kinds of soil, and have been able, since the pressure of bad times came upon us, so to economise a good deal in artificial manures without doing any injury, I think, to the fertility of the ground.

51,601. Is the expenditure on manure and feeding stuffs large in the districts?—Yes.

51,602. Tenants have derived some advantage from the reduction in the price of manure and feeding stuffs?—Yes, both.

51,603. Have there been many changes of tenancy?—No, not very many. I could not say the proportion, but nothing very noticeable.

Leases.

51,604. Does the system of leases still prevail there?—Yes, pretty largely. But I think all the new ones, or most of them, are having breaks in them at the end of five or seven years as may be arranged.

Estate management.

51,605. Do you consider that on the whole the estates are well managed in the district?—I do.

Restrictive clauses in leases.

51,606. Has there been any change in the system of binding the tenants to fixed systems of rotation?—I am afraid these restrictive clauses are not all out of the leases, as I think, to a large extent, they ought to be. But they are not enforced, they have not been enforced recently—in fact, not since the difficult times of farmers began have we heard much about them. As a matter of fact, farmers have taken the law into their own hands, and are working their land pretty much as they find it profitable.

51,607. Do you think anything can be done in that direction? Should it be left to law, or should it be left to landlord and tenant to make their arrangements in this respect?—Public opinion has been leading to a very considerable modification in that way. Some of these very antiquated clauses—we have heard one or two to-day—are, I think, pretty well out of use with us, but they are very much too restrictive still in most cases. There are portions of them, such as those tying the tenants to a particular rotation in the working of their farms that I think should be done away with at once and for ever. The only obligation upon a tenant should be that he farms according to the rules of good husbandry.

Expenditure on improvements.

51,608. Have the landlords expended much in improvement during the last few years, or have they been unable?—I do not think some of them have been quite so liberal, or inclined to be so liberal, as formerly. The tenants would like them to be a good deal more so than they are.

51,609. Have the tenants themselves expended any money on permanent improvements without the consent of their landlords?—They are not nearly so much inclined to do that as they were in former times. They are all getting to see that they have some difficulty in getting the money back again that they expend, or in getting it reckoned at the renewal of their leases as any claim for moderating the rent; and they take care now that they do not spend their money unless they have some arrangement with the proprietor. Sometimes they carry that out between them; sometimes the one, sometimes the other. There is always the difficulty of getting improvements done at all.

51,610. Do you consider that any greater inducements can be given to tenants to expend money upon permanent improvements?—I think the Agricultural Holdings Act might be modified and improved to a considerable extent, to encourage a man to lay out his money with more confidence and freedom.

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51,611. Do you think the tenants would expend more money if a change was made?—I think they would more freely than they do at present.

Fixity of tenure and judicial rents.

51,612. Is there any demand in your district for fixity of tenure or for judicial rents?—I think not. Not for fixity of tenure, certainly.

51,613. Or for judicial rents?—I think not. I do not think it amounts to much. No doubt there are people who would like it, and perhaps along the hillsides there may be instances where fixity of tenure would be welcome, but there is no claim for it publicly that I know of very much.

51,614. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When you say people along the hillsides, to whom do you refer?—Crofters.

51,614*a*. As distinct from farmers?—Yes.

51,615. And it is to that class that whatever claim there is is limited?—Yes. And perhaps there is another reason for it, looking into the matter a little closer. These men plant themselves down upon hillsides, where the land is unreclaimed. In past times they got a certain area of land from the proprietor, on condition that they were allowed to reclaim it, trench it, and make it arable. And they have done it. People doing that sort of work, and getting themselves into a holding in that way, would like fixity of tenure, in order that they should not be removed, and that they might be secured in the benefit of their labour and the outlay of capital.

Local rates.

51,616. (*Chairman.*) Is there much complaint of the increase of local rates?—There is a good deal since the county councils came into operation.

51,617. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was there none before?—There was some before, but it has been intensified.

51,618. (*Chairman.*) They have increased as a matter of fact?—Yes, considerably.

51,619. What is your own parish?—St. Andrew's, Llanbryde, in the immediate vicinity of Elgin. My own parish is moderately taxed.

51,620. The poor rate there has remained about stationary?—It has.

51,621. The school rate has somewhat increased?—A little.

51,622. Generally speaking, in Elgin, apparently from this return I have before me, the poor rate has considerably diminished?—Yes, I think so.

51,623. In many parishes it was 1*s*. 8*d*. and 1*s*. 6*d*., and has gone down to 1*s*. 3*d*. and 1*s*.—in one parish from 1*s*. 8*d*. to 1*s*. On the other hand, school rates have increased in the interim. In fact, it is a new rate, apparently averaging from 6*d*. to 10*d*.?—Yes.

51,624. I suppose that besides that there is the new county rate?—It is a separate rate.

51,625. What does that average?—I pay about 17*l*. on a rental of 250*l*.

51,626. I see that over the whole county of Elgin the county rate was 1*s*. in the £ in 1874 and in 1893 10¾*d*.?—Yes. Does that include roads?

51,627. It says county rates. I do not know whether it includes roads or not. But apparently this return gives the aggregate of rates. In 1874, over the whole county of Elgin, they averaged 2*s*. 5¾*d*., and in 1893 exactly the same, which would tend to show that the rates are about maintained?—There is a notion about the county that since the county councils came into operation the rates have increased. It may be produced by the fact that they are all paid in a lump. Formerly the road rates were paid at one place and the other rates at another, and not so much felt through being spread over.

51,628. It gives the impression of the rates being increased, whereas practically they may not be?—I do not think they are much. I do not know the figures so well, as to the whole.

Technical education.

51,629. Have you any suggestions to make as to what should be done?—Not many. But there is one thing I should like to refer to if you would allow me, and that is technical education. We have had a somewhat unusual experience in that matter up in our part of the country. When the residue grant was obtained for technical education and put into the hands of the county and town councils I had an opinion that it was a very excellent arrangement, but experience has changed my mind on that point. Many of the county and town councils were quite at sea as to how to apply the money. Indeed I heard one leading commissioner for a large property say that it was a shame of the Government to pitchfork this money at their heads without giving them some lead or indication what they were to do with it. Itinerant lecturers and teachers were first resorted to and did good up to a certain point. But it is universally acknowledged now that if the full benefit of the money is to be obtained something more permanent and systematic must be resorted to. My opinion is that technical education, including agriculture and the sciences that come into it, must be given through the ordinary schools of the country in an elementary form, and that beyond that there should be in every county or district a fully staffed and equipped science and art school at a convenient centre, and that beyond these centres there should be agricultural and scientific courses in the universities for those who wish to pursue their studies into the more advanced stages. County councils are not acquainted with the machinery required for science classes in the ordinary schools. The Scottish Education Department should, in my opinion, formulate a scheme for working them as they do for other sections of educational work. I know one county where the county council had formulated for them a scheme for the working of technical instruction through the ordinary schools, and where they had a science and art school fully staffed and equipped at the most convenient centre in the county. The scheme was adopted and was actually working for fully a year when the county council found there was so much detail in it, much of which was beyond their experience and knowledge, and when they found that the necessity for an organising secretary led to a certain amount of division of duties among county officials, they came to a resolution one day to sweep the whole thing out of existence. And they did it. Connexion with the Science and Art Department was abandoned completely, the resolution providing that only the technical subjects should be taken up in the county schools which the Scottish Education Department include in their curriculum of an ordinary general education. That is an example that came within my own knowledge, and I think that though it is a little more pronounced than any I could bring before the Commissioners, I know several counties in the same neighbourhood that have been in great perplexity how to use the money, and are so still. I think it would be of the greatest importance to agriculture as to many other interests and industries that the Education Department should take the matter into their own hands and administer it themselves as they do other branches of educational work.

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The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,630. Do you think the Agricultural Holdings Act might be amended with advantage?—I do—simplified very much. The machinery of it is very expensive and cumbrous.

51,631. You have read Mr. Hope's report?—I have.

Official referees.

51,632. (*Mr. Channing.*) Which of them?—The one referring to my own part of the country. I think the one important part of it is the appointment of a referee. He suggests that Scotland should be apportioned out into a certain number of districts. I have heard it argued, and there is a good deal to be said for the contention, that there should be one for each county; but I think Mr. Hope is right in his view, although I believe that the districts he indicates are perhaps a little too large. At any rate, I should be strongly of opinion that whoever is appointed to an office of that sort should be paid for it sufficiently and should not have any other business. I do not think he should be allowed to act either for proprietors or tenants in the way of valuing anything, either as an arbiter or in any other way. I should have him a county official, or an official like Mr. Munro, the valuator of railways.

51,633. Do you mean that where there is a question between landlord and tenant at the end of the lease, any matter in dispute should be settled compulsorily by the official referee?—I think that would be a simpler plan and less expensive and more satisfactory.

51,634. Would you not allow the parties to agree to any other arbiter?—I suppose, if they made a private arrangement between themselves, I do not know that it could or should be prevented.

51,635. It was explained to us yesterday by one of the witnesses, that in Scotland, either party to a dispute has a right to appeal to the Sheriff to name a person to decide a question between them?—That is so.

51,636. And the sheriff, as a rule, names a competent person—some person whom he thinks competent for the purpose?—He does his best. But the sheriff, as a rule, is not an expert in country matters of that sort. I am not very sure that he might come to the wisest decision in picking out the right man. I am still more doubtful whether the right man is there to be picked out. I think

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we want officials who are officials and nothing else, who are not dependent on either proprietors or tenants for their business otherwise.

51,637. Somebody must appoint this referee. Even under Mr. Hope's or your recommendation the responsibility would have to fall on somebody?—My opinion is, that we should have a permanent one for a defined district of the country.

51,638. By whom should he be appointed?—That is a question about which I would have some difficulty.

51,639. A great deal would depend upon the proper selection of these persons?—It would.

51,640. And these might be selected, perhaps, for political or other reasons, and might not give satisfaction?—Yes.

51,641. When once you had a man appointed of that kind, it would not be easy to get rid of him?—It would not.

51,642. Whereas the sheriff makes a selection from time to time?—I think it would be exceedingly important that a man of the kind I indicate should retire at a certain age when he might not be so alert in keeping in touch with the agricultural interests in the district.

51,643. (*Mr. Clay.*) You think he should be a sufficiently practical man, independent of landlord and tenant?—Yes.

51,644. (*Chairman.*) Apparently the law of Scotland aims at that already, because it gives the right to apply to the sheriff to appoint a referee. The sheriff is a judicial officer, responsible for the selection of a competent person and not justified in appointing a man without agricultural knowledge?—Yes. But a sheriff's substitute, or even sheriffs, are not very competent in these matters as a rule. They have not had experience nor knowledge, nor can they be expected to have it. I doubt if the men are in it to be appointed of the kind that I want—officials who would be arbiters in this matter and have no business to sway them one way or another.

(*Chairman.*) The only difficulty I see in your scheme is whether you can be sure of getting a thoroughly competent man who would give satisfaction to both parties.

51,645-6. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would you be satisfied with a list to be made up by the county council and submitted to the Board of Agriculture?—I should be satisfied, failing anything better, but, whether there is any ground for it or not, there is a suspicion about the country that, like other human beings, they are not above having a leaning towards the people that they are most closely in touch with in business.

State loans.

51,647. Do you think any good could be done by the State advancing money by way of loan at easy rates to landowners?—I do. I can see no possible reason why we should not have the Ashbourne Act in Scotland the same as in Ireland. I think it would do a vast amount of good and cure a good many of the evils with which agriculture is beset.

51,648. Do you think the State should, as in Ireland, advance the whole of the purchase money?—Under certain conditions and securities.

51,649. Would there be any security to the State under such circumstances beyond the amount of the advance?—No, I think there would not; and the character of the men.

51,650. In Ireland there is the security to the State of the value of the tenant's interest. The landlord's interest, which is bought by the tenant, is generally not much more than equal to the tenant's interest. Therefore there remains to the State the security not only of the property, which has been bought by the tenant, but also the interest of the tenant. There is consequently adequate security for advancing the whole of the purchase money; but in Scotland, where the tenant's interest is of no value beyond the actual improvements which he has affected, there could be no such additional security?—If the tenants were in the same favourable position in Scotland as in Ireland, their security would be the same as in Ireland, I suspect.

51,651. Apparently the condition is not the same?—Our tenants are so much "squeezed" in Scotland that their interest in their land is not worth much. It is worth a good deal in Ireland. I think a system could be devised something on these lines—the State could take the security of the holding, not advancing the whole capital, but perhaps three-fourths of it.

51,652. You said the whole?—I think the State in lending money at a low rate of interest is perfectly entitled to save itself by sufficient security, whatever way you take it.

51,653. I understood you to say that the same principle should be adopted as in Ireland, namely, where the State advances the whole of the purchase money. The conditions are not the same, inasmuch as in Ireland there would remain a considerable security beyond the sum advanced?—That is to say the tenant is ready to pay a considerable sum to get possession of the holding. I have known cases of that kind occurring in Scotland, but all proprietors within the last 20 or 30 years or more have prohibited grassums, and will not allow them.

51,654. Are there many occupying owners in Elgin?—A good many round about.

Purchase of small holdings.

51,655. Are estates sometimes broken up and sold to the tenants?—The Duke of Fife has been selling a good many of his farms. I bought Sheriffston from His Grace.

51,656. Have the tenants bought them as a rule?—Almost invariably.

51,657. Do they borrow, or find the money from their own capital?—Some of them are able to find it from their own capital; some have to borrow a good deal.

51,658. (*Captain Thomas.*) Were they sold privately or by auction?—Privately.

51,659. (*Mr. Channing.*) At what sort of prices?—Twenty-five years' purchase has been the rule on the rent, after deduction of public burdens.

51,660. What is the rent?—The rent would vary. I could hardly tell. The rent of my sheep farm is 7*s.* an acre, and when I went to the low country farm in 1882 the rent was 37*s.* an acre. But I got a considerable reduction off 500*l.* of rent. His Grace the Duke of Fife gave me a considerable abatement. His factor and I agreed upon a medium rent, not quite the whole reduction, but a considerable proportion of it. We deducted the public burdens and multiplied the remainder by 25. I think my case is a fair example of what has taken place.

Condition of the agricultural industry.

51,661. The general result in the district is this, that the landlords have had to submit to considerable reductions of rent—very large reductions in the case of large holdings, but smaller in the case of smaller holdings?—That is so.

51,662. Farmers, who have made less profit than they used to, are only just able to make a fair living at the reduced rent?—That is so.

51,663. On the other hand, labourers are very much better off than they have ever been?—I think so.

51,664. That is the condition of the three classes of the agricultural community?—As an instance, I happened to be connected with a mercantile business in the early part of my life, and I have sold sugar at 10*d.* a pound. The same sugar could now be bought at 2½*d.* I do not know that other things have come down quite so much in proportion, but I know that boots, shoes, and nearly everything have come down very largely.

Position of labourers.

51,665. Should you say that, on the average, the labourers get 40 per cent. more for their money than they once could?—I think more than that, I should say 50 per cent.

51,666. Then they must be twice as well off?—Half as well off again I would think. Referring again to my experience as a boy, I have sold tea at 6*s.* a pound, whereas now you can buy very good tea at 1*s.* 6*d.* Four times the quantity can be bought for the money. Meal is not so much down, but it is down considerably. Butter and some other things are not down, and hold their own pretty well; but, then, clothing and shoes are very much down. I should think that 50 per cent. more purchasing power for their money would be a low estimate. I think it is well within the mark.

51,667. Then they must be better off than they were in the past?—Oh, I think they are. So far as I know, they admit it, and are quite content with their lot, as a rule. They are now educating their families very well, and sending a good many of them away into the towns. I think too many go away. We are getting a little scarce of labour, and especially female labour.

51,668. A larger proportion of the share of the produce of the soil goes to the labourers than used to?—Yes.

51,669. And less to the landlord and tenant?—Yes, I think it does; but labourers deserve it, and work well for it.

Reduction of rents.

51,670. (*Mr. Everett.*) You speak with knowledge of an exceptionally fertile district on the Moray Firth, and rents have been reduced about 33 per cent.?—No. You might allow me to explain that that is on large farms with a considerable amount of clay land in them. Tenants for them

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must be men of considerable capital, and they are not so plentiful as men who are able to take smaller farms.

51,671. In spite of such reductions as have been made, there is no money to be made in farming now?—I think very little—a living, and little more. Sometimes a loss of money even in getting a living.

Low prices.

51,672. The opinion has taken hold of the public mind that the low range of prices will be permanent?—That is much more so within the past two years, and especially this year, than it was two or three, or four or five years ago.

51,673. If prices fall still lower the situation will be aggravated still more?—Yes.

51,674. Those farmers who have been able to do a little better, have done that largely at the expense of their children's advantage?—That is so, undoubtedly.

Prices and wages.

51,675. Agricultural labourers, you say, find plenty of employment and earn good wages?—I do not know a single idle man or woman within reach of me who is unemployed.

51,676. If agriculture itself were a flourishing instead of a failing industry, do not you think the labourer is in the position to get his full share of the more that there would be to divide among the agricultural classes?—I think so.

51,677. His wages would be considerably higher, probably, if prices went up?—Probably they would.

51,678. Would not he like that rather than benefit by the larger purchasing power of his unaltered wages?—I think he appreciates the increased wage more readily; but it is very important for the money to go a good deal further. I think he would more appreciate the larger wages.

51,679. He would rather take his advantage in the shape of higher wages than lower prices?—I think he would.

51,680. (*Chairman.*) What certainty have you that wages would rise?—I hardly said so.

Crofters.

51,681. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do not wages depend largely upon which is master of the situation—the employer or the servant?—It is like other things. It very much depends upon supply and demand. I am in the happy position of having a colony of about a dozen crofters in my immediate neighbourhood. They have families and they are most advantageous to us for a supply of labour. They get good wages from us and steady employment, and they are all comfortable and contented. The difficulty of the crofter problem with us is putting a large number of crofters together in a district where there are no large farms to give employment for the surplus labour. If means could be devised whereby large farms requiring a considerable amount of additional labour could be intermingled with crofting colonies, where the families of the crofters would grow up and supply that labour, it would be a blessing to them for their usefulness in life and for their happiness and welfare.

51,682. It is an advantage to both parties to have a few crofters in a district?—Yes. I may mention that the late Sir George Campbell came up our way some years ago, and I asked him to come out to my place. We drove up together through this colony. He was very much taken with it, but it did not suit his purpose exactly. He would have liked an agitation rather. They were not inclined to make any row.

Law of hypothec.

51,683. You consider hypothec and distraint well away?—I do.

51,684. You have not seen any disadvantages following on the sweeping of them away?—No.

Fixity of tenure.

51,685. Fixity of tenure you speak of as undesirable?—I do not approve of it at all. I think it would be a misfortune.

51,686. Is there any man more fixed in his tenure than the man who buys his farm?—No, if he is able to keep it. I think not. I bought my own farm very much for the purpose of securing my tenure.

51,687. And in the hope that prices would not fall lower?—Well, yes.

51,688. I am afraid your experience has not been of the most pleasant kind?—Not in that way.

51,689. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When did you buy?—I think in 1891. I have some other occupations that make me a little independent of it, and I can feel all the easier on that account.

Purchase of small holdings.

51,690. (*Mr. Everett.*) If many were to buy under the Ashbourne Act and prices were to go on falling, would not they be likely to find themselves in a difficult place?—Not unless they bought too much beyond their means. If they had a certain amount of capital, and were able to put it into the land, and were capable industrious people able to work it themselves, having no rent to pay, and providing food for their families, I think they would be a happy, contented and vary useful class of the population.

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51,691. If that Act were put in operation extensively, most of them would have an annual rent to pay for forty years or so?—Yes.

51,692. Rents which they could not get altered?—That is so. I could easily conceive how it would lead people into difficulties who had not entered upon it wisely.

51,693. In order to make it safe, the stability of prices of produce would be a necessity?—More or less it would be so.

Allotments.

51,694. The Allotments Act in your district has not worked at all?—We advertised as a county council for applications and I think we got two. One was an avowed hoax, and the other was an application from a neighbour of mine who wanted half an acre to put up a place for sheltering a steam thrashing mill, not to cultivate at all.

51,695. Your men have got good gardens, or you give them potato ground?—I do both. I give them 1,000 yards of a drill of potatoes, and as much garden ground as they wish. I have told them I will extend their gardens as much as they like, and they say they do not want any more.

Female labour.

51,696. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is there much female labour in your district?—It is getting less I am sorry to say. If it were not for the crofters' colony, we should have difficulty in finding female labour.

51,697. What do they do mostly?—Hoeing and gathering weeds, sometimes spreading manure, carrying seed, carrying manure to the men who are sowing it, dressing grain in the loft, and all that sort of thing.

51,698. What wages do they get?—1*s.* 6*d.* a day. I give them 9*s.* a week.

51,699. What hours do they work?—Ten hours while there is daylight, but only the short hours of the winter.

51,700. Pretty nearly the same as the men?—Just the same as the men.

Cost of living.

51,701. You have spoken of farmers being able to live. What do you estimate the cost of farmers' living?—Perhaps 200*l.* a year for an ordinary family if he had to pay for all in money.

51,702. If he rented a house, and paid for everything?—200*l.* a year, perhaps.

Farming capital.

51,703. What would be the capital required on a farm of 500 acres in your district?—I was very much surprised at evidence that was given here yesterday by a gentleman who was able to work a 500-acre farm with 3,000*l.* I learned afterwards that it is a dairy farm with Alderney and Ayrshire cows, and all that sort of thing. A farm of 500 acres of anything like fair land cannot be worked on 3,000*l.* nor yet on 4,000*l.*

51,704. (*Chairman.*) I think he admitted that the capital was not large enough, and that he wished he had more?—My own experience when I went into the large farm of 320 acres in 1882 was that it took 5,200*l.*, which is more than 15*l.* an acre.

51,705. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Purely arable?—Yes. Good land. 37*s.* an acre. I did it perhaps a little too well.

51,706. (*Chairman.*) That must be very far above the average?—Even now, at the reduced rent of from 15*s.* to 30*s.* an acre, my experience is that it cannot be under 10*l.* an acre.

51,707. (*Captain Thomas.*) In that way 2,000*l.* would work a farm of 200 acres? And I think a man would be entitled to 10 per cent. on his capital, and live about the rate I have mentioned. There are farmers paying 200*l.* a year of rent who are living at less than 200*l.* a year, especially recently. I think there is nothing more to the credit of the tenant farmers, than that since the depression came upon them they have given up luxuries, reduced their establishments, and adopted a style of living much more economical altogether, in order to hold their own, to pull through bad times in the hope of something better coming.

51,708. Do you keep a farm account?—I do, carefully.

Results of farming.

51,709. What has your farm done of late?—In the way of profit?

51,710. Yes?—I have never had a loss on my farm from year to year. I had sometimes 300*l.* a year, and sometimes

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it was down to 100*l*. That is besides supplies from the farm to the house.

51,711. (*Chairman.*) Taking the average of years, after paying yourself, have you made a fair average profit upon your capital?—Yes, from year to year, I have. But there is this misfortune to be taken into account that while it cost me 5,000*l*., if I were to go out of it now, I should be 25 per cent. or more under that, from the reduction in the value of the stock.

51,712. That is in consequence of the shrinkage in value of the stock?—Yes.

51,713. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But the stock is there?—Sheep are pretty high, and cattle are better within the last month or two.

51,714. (*Captain Thomas.*) I do not think you have stated the average of profit you have?—I am talking of the outgoings and incomings. If I had valued my stock from year to year and taken it in that way—which I did not do, I knew pretty well I had about the same number of them, but I have never done that—I do not think I should have had any profit at all sometimes. The reduction in the value of the stock has taken perhaps the greater part of the profit I have made. In some good years I would have had a fair margin even over the fall in value of the stock.

Existence of depression.

51,715. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How do you account for the labourers' wages having risen during the six years?—The depression, we think, has been rather wearing off during the last six years. The worst of the depression was about 1886 or 1887.

51,716. You do not think there is any depression now, as compared with six years ago?—There is still, and I think it has perhaps taken a turn to the bad again this very year. I have heard a good many people up beside me say that this is the worst year they have had for many years.

Wages.

51,717. How do you account for the fact that wages have risen?—One reason is that the improved education that the young people are getting is taking them away to other occupations; and particularly that is so with female labour. Our girls about the country are all getting an education and finding their way into shops as cashiers and book-keepers and into business.

51,718. There is plenty of occupation for them elsewhere?—Plenty.

51,719. Nobody is out of employment in your district? Nobody I know of.

Evasive clauses in leases.

51,720. As to these antiquated clauses in leases, is it your experience that they are common in your neighbourhood?—Still, but they are modified very largely.

51,721. Do you think it is the lawyers or the landlords who wish to retain these clauses?—Perhaps partly both.

51,722. Is it not in very much the same way that you keep old clauses in conveyances and other deeds, where the owner does not even read the legal document?—I will give you a case in point. Some twenty years ago, perhaps, the Duke of Fife wished new conditions for his farms to be let on. I know that he took the advice on that occasion of professional men. Not only did he consult his factor and his law-agent, but they took into their counsels some farmers, and gave great consideration to the matter. I saw the draft of the document myself, and approved of a great many of the concessions that were made. These were all adjusted and met the approval of his Grace. They are in operation still. While I own the one farm that I bought from the Duke, I occupy the other farm under these very conditions. Some of them are very much modified as compared with the conditions about thirty years ago. We have heard nothing of them for the last ten or twelve years. Since the difficulties came upon farming, factors and officials are glad to let farmers do as they like so long as they are able to make their way.

51,723. Are these leases not longer than English leases?—I know that they are far too long and too technical.

51,724. Are they not kept so intentionally?—I daresay they are kept in for another purpose.

51,725. By the lawyers?—Sometimes by others. Factors and others say that while there may be proprietors who are not all they should be, there are tenants who are not all they should be. While a good man is easy to deal with, they must protect themselves against rogues that they might fall in with.

Local rates.

51,726. I think that in your brief you say that rates and taxes have increased enormously; but I do not think the figures you give would bear that out?—Well, perhaps not enormously.

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51,727. You are paying 17*l*. a year on 250*l*. rental which is about 1*s*. 4*d*. in the £?—When I think of it I have the county rates in addition, and they are about the same. I pay about 17*l*. for poor rates, school rates, churchyard, and registration, and all these things. I have county rate, road rate, police rate, equal to about 17*l*. more.

Taxes.

51,728. Have the taxes increased at all in Scotland?—I think they have a little.

51,729. What taxes? Imperial?—How do you distinguish? The income tax has gone up a good deal.

51,730. But the majority of farmers do not pay income tax?—Do not we? We get let in for it, I assure you, the bigger ones, very smartly.

Fixity of tenure

51,731. (*Mr. Channing.*) You object to fixity of tenure on the ground of the constant and rather irregular drop in prices?—I think the main objection to it in our part of the country is that it does not give people, outsiders, who want holdings, a chance of ever obtaining them.

51,732. This objection is taken by those who want farms, and not by those who have them?—That is so.

51,733. You are a member of the Morayshire Farmers' Club?—Yes, I am secretary.

51,734. You said that their recommendations as to the reductions of rent were proved to be accurate?—They have been. I would not say all over, as I have explained; but in some of the larger farms in clayey, stiff, retentive districts, the reduction is quite as much as they estimated would be required.

Produce rents.

51,735. Some years ago I had a very interesting paper sent by the club showing the possible valuation of rents according to fiars prices and similar calculations. I should like to ask you whether this reduction of rent was based upon any calculation of that kind, or upon what basis it rests?—The paper you refer to is the very one I am quoting from, where 33 per cent. reduction was claimed in order to make farming possible. There were people who in the depths of their dismay, would have thankfully welcomed a rising and falling rent in proportion to the average of prices of all farm products; but that would take out of farming a great deal of its charm. A good deal of the charm of farming is its chances and its speculative character, to be able to pull through two or three bad years, expecting a considerable lift in another. There is a little bit of a gamble in it.

51,736. If prices improved, that would affect produce rents?—Yes.

51,737. What is the scheme of produce rents?—I think, so far as I remember it, it went up so many pounds for every 6*d*. on the stone of beef, 1*s*. on the quarter of corn, or something of that sort. It was a sliding scale.

51,738. It took into consideration all articles of agricultural produce?—It did.

51,739. In your opinion is it possible to draw up a scheme of that kind so as to be workable?—I think it is. I am not sure that it would be so much welcomed in our country now, as it would have been at that time.

Official referees.

51,740. How about the official arbiter? I understand your preference would be for something like what we in England should call an agricultural county court judge, a fixed official with a fixed salary, to deal with the district and remain during good behaviour. Is that what you mean?—Yes, up to a certain age.

51,741. How would you provide for the appointment and payment of such an official?—That is a rather difficult question to face. I do not know whether the county council could be called upon to do it. I do not think it would be at all a bad use of money raised by local assessment. The right theory would be for the Government to do it as a national matter.

51,742. It would be more popular for the Government than the county council to do it?—Yes, and I think more independent and efficient.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,743. How about the Agricultural Holdings Act? I understand you generally to support the views embodied in Mr. Hope's report with regard to Banff, Nairn, and Elgin?—I do.

51,744. Do you think there should be compensation for continuous good farming?—To a certain extent.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

51,745. Do you think there should be compensation to the sitting tenant, that is to say, on the renewal of the lease he should have a full allowance for the remaining value of his improvements before the terms of the new tenancy are settled?—I think that is one of the most important parts of the whole arrangement. I think a man renewing his lease is equally entitled to the benefit of anything he has done on the farm, as if he were going away.

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I think much of the injustice that the tenants feel they have suffered has been by putting a rent upon the tenant at the renewal of the lease, based upon improvements which he has carried out with his own labour and his own money. I think that has been one of the most serious grievances that tenants have had to complain of.

51,746. You know it is argued on behalf of the landlord that in this case the tenant by the fact of renewal will have the enjoyment of his improvements; but is not that argument disposed of by the fact that the rent would be increased in consequence of the improvements?—The rent should be fixed not upon the farm as it is improved by the tenant's labour and outlay, but upon the farm as it would have been without these improvements, or at any rate giving him reasonable and fair consideration for the amount of improvement he has himself effected upon it.

51,747. If the tenant had his improvements assessed in value at the time he was renewing the tenancy, there would be no injustice to the landlord in allowing for the remainder of the improvements?—If you assess the improvements, if you value them and pay the tenant for them, then I think that does away with his claim to have consideration in the fixing of the rent for the coming lease; but if he is not getting payment for them, as is very often the case—I do not know a case where he ever has got payment if he was continuing in the holding—I think he is entitled to consideration, in the fixing of his rent under the new lease.

51,748. An allowance off the rent for the proportionate number of years up to the exhaustion of the improvements?—It might be put in that way. But I think a fairer and more generous and business-like way would be this: supposing the rent for the farm in the improved state were to be 300*l.*, perhaps a fair rent, to give the tenant full consideration for what he has done on the farm, might be 250*l.* I am putting that hypothetically, but it would be an important thing to make some arrangement of that kind.

Reduction of rents.

51,749. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you think there has been a sufficient reduction of rent in your district?—Not in all cases. In a good many cases the tenant has been fairly met.

51,750. I see that your club recommended a reduction of 33 per cent. In what proportion of the cases has that been carried out?—I could not say. A fourth or fifth perhaps.

Demand for farms.

51,751. How is it that plenty of candidates appear to be ready to give old rents for farms now?—I am not aware that they do appear ready to give old rents for large farms.

51,752. For smaller and middle-sized farms?—I have explained in my evidence-in-chief that farmers' sons when they grow up are not trained to any other occupation. The colonies do not afford them the encouragement now that they did some years ago, and they prefer, with such capital as they can muster, to take a farm in their own district.

51,753. Can they make a living at the old rents?—In some cases they can perhaps with their own labour and the labour of their families. A man with two or three young sons and some young daughters doing all his work for him, saving his labour bills, may, in spite of the bad times.

51,754. At the old rents?—Yes, but at the sacrifice of his family, who are giving their labour and getting nothing for it.

51,755. Do you attribute the number of applicants to the fact that there are more farmers than farms?—That is so. I attribute what I have said about the applicants for farms also to the fact that away up in the hilly district where the climate is not so good there is a desire to get down to the low ground where the climate is more certain.

Abatements of rent.

51,756. You say, too, that owners of the estates are heavily burdened, and have great difficulty in giving an adequate reduction of rent?—I do not think I said heavily burdened, though I daresay it would be true in some cases. The abatements they have been obliged to make must necessarily encroach upon their revenues, and they cannot possibly in the nature of things have so much money to spare to improve their estates as formerly.

Fixity of tenure.

51,757. You say fixity of tenure would be a misfortune. What kind of fixity of tenure do you allude to?—What I allude to is this: those who had the fixity of tenure might not object to it, but we have a class of well-to-do farm servants who rise to be grieves, and if they have got together a little money they want holdings, and there is great difficulty in getting them. They disapprove very strongly, and very naturally, of fixity of tenure that would fix in their holdings those who have them, and not allow others to get a chance of them.

51,758. The old tenants would die and give up?—But they provide successors, and in that case the fixity of tenure would have to be bought. That would be a very different thing from getting a croft on the Fife, Richmond, or Moray or other estates of that kind. There is no grassum to pay for anything but the valuations of the previous tenant.

51,759. That tends to make the competition for farms more keen?—And keeps up rents. What I would suggest is to increase the number of small holdings; and I think it would be extremely important if we could get advances from the State at moderate interest to put up buildings on them. The buildings are the difficulty.

Ground Game.

51,760. In what way would you advocate the Ground Game Act should be extended?—I would have it extended to do away with all restrictions as to how rabbits should be killed round about the farmer.

51,761. Give them the right to kill rabbits upon their holdings, how, when, and where they liked?—Yes.

51,762. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Whether that has the effect of destroying all the rest of the game or not?—I do not think it. So far as I remember, there is a provision in the Ground Game Act about going 25 yards into a wood. I would not go the length of allowing tenants to go over a hill or into a wood where there is a preserve of deer or anything of that sort; but I would give them all reasonable facilities for protecting their crops. I would allow a man to set a trap in the mouth of the rabbit hole or outside of it, and I would let him go a certain length into a wood in order to get rid of these troublesome creatures that prey upon his crops.

51,763. Is it a complaint that they suffer from rabbits?—There is a complaint about suffering from rabbits, but it is only upon certain farms that they are troublesome. I have never had much trouble with them, even when I was a tenant.

Price of barley.

51,764. How is it the price of barley has fallen very greatly as compared with 20 years ago? To what do you attribute the fall?—I do not know, except this, that the railway facilities now are very great for taking barley into our country from other parts of Scotland. We get barley up from Berwickshire to Elgin, and largely from Forfarshire. Part comes from Fifeshire and from Kincardineshire, and from Aberdeenshire systematically.

Malt tax.

51,765. Have you ever considered whether it was affected by the repeal of the malt tax?—Not with us, except that we had a better demand for the better class going away to breweries before the repeal of the malt tax than we have now.

51,766. So far that might have affected it. Do you suffer from the climate?—We suffer from the climate occasionally.

51,767. There is a great deal of barley grown in Elginshire, as a rule?—We grow little else.

51,768. Throughout the whole of Scotland?—Barley is a peculiar crop. There is no barley grown at all in the western half of Scotland. Up the eastern coast, coming up the Lothians, part of Fife and Forfar, Kincardine, Aberdeen, and Banff, it is grown. With us it is the staple crop.

51,769. That probably is why your farms still let so readily?—No doubt.

Wages.

51,770. I think you told us that the supply of labour was deficient enough in many places?—It is not overabundant round about my part of the country, although by means of a village near and a colony of crofters we are a little better off than many other parts of the country. But I know many parts of the country where people have been compelled to cut their hay by machinery when they would have very much preferred to cut it by hand labour.

51,771. That has had the effect of keeping up the wages?—Oh, yes.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

51,772. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In that question about the sitting tenant, is it not the practice that the sitting tenant regulates his offer for the farm so as to cover the compensation that he is entitled to?—A practice very common with us, especially in past times, was for the proprietor to make his own valuations, either through his factor or through a professional valuator, and the new tenant, even on the best properties, was offered the farm at this valuation, and if he did not take it some other one would take it.

51,773. If the sitting tenant did not take it?—Yes.

Leases.

51,774. You spoke about the breaks that are getting common in leases now. Does that not simply mean a

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new arrangement at the end of five or seven years?—
—Opportunities for it.

51,775. Has not that been the result of it?—I believe it has, in some cases. In some cases they have taken advantage of it, and stopped the occupancy altogether. I think that is perhaps more from changes in their families than from any falling into bad circumstances. I have not known many cases where breaks have been taken advantage of for any reason. They are in nearly all the new leases.

51,776. In your experience do you think that the 19 years' lease has been a great benefit to agriculture in Scotland?—I do, in the past, but I am not sure under new conditions. I think I should prefer year-to-year occupancy, with two years' notice.

Restrictive clauses in leases.

51,777. I think I understood you to say that penal clauses might be done away with, and a simple clause substituted in leases providing that the farm should be cultivated "according to good husbandry"?—I think it might be in the majority of cases.

51,778. Could that not be very liberally translated?—A difficulty might arise there.

51,779. Do you know of those penal clauses being put in operation?—Not very frequently. I happened to be arbiter in a case under the Agricultural Holdings Act last year, and one of the claims which the proprietor set off against the tenant's claim was damage for miscropping the farm. The other arbiter and I could not agree, and it was referred to an oversman. How far he gave effect to the claim for mis-cropping, I do not know.

51,780. But in practice those penal clauses, although kept in the leases, are not taken advantage of?—Not for the last 10 years.

51,781. I suppose you will admit that it is necessary that the landlord should be protected against a bad or designing tenant?—Certainly.

Official referees.

51,782. You have spoken about a special valuator. Is it not a fact that almost all valuations come on at one time of year in a district?—Yes.

51,783. How would this man's time be otherwise occupied during the year?—If he were an official of that sort I think it might very fairly be required of him, according to legislation that has been proposed, if it were adopted, to make estimates, calculations, of the state of farms when tenants went into them, and register it in a book in the sheriff-clerk's office, or anywhere where it could be appealed to, so that he might be the better able to judge if the farm had suffered at the close.

51,784. Would that not be the actual work he would have to do in going over the farms?—I do not think an expert would take very long to do valuations.

51,785. Is it not the fact that valuators who are held as being the best, are local men in all the different parts of the country?—That is so undoubtedly. That has been very forcibly brought under my notice. I think a man who might be a very competent valuator in Aberdeenshire or Banffshire, for instance, would be entirely at sea in the county of Moray.

51,786. Do not you think there would be a very practical difficulty in getting a man who would accept such an appointment as a government official might have to accept, and who would be a thoroughly reliable and good man for the district?—I do not think there would, though I may point out this in reference to Mr. Hope's districts that I think they are if anything too large. Moray, Nairn, Inverness, and Ross might go together; Sutherland and Caithness; Banff, Aberdeen, and Kincardine; Forfar and Fife might go together. You must divide them according to the different kinds of land, the climate, and the systems of farming and not by so many acres and miles. Though Banff and Elgin are divided only by the Spey the conditions of farming and valuation are as different as the poles are wide asunder.

51,787. I want to know whether you think that in practice you would get the benefit of a man's services who would hold the same position in the locality as a man who was working himself upon a farm in that district and therefore knew all about it?—Oh yes, I think you would. A man prefers as a rule, to be an official with a fixed salary even to the chance of making a still bigger salary. I think you would get a man for a reasonable salary. I would not prevent him from taking a farm on his own account. That would not take away his independence or give him any bias.

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51,788. (*Mr. Clay.*) You made a reference to the bothy system and you said the bothies are improved?—I think they are, and largely reduced in number.

Bothies.

51,789. But even with that, are they not a disturbance to the social system?—I think they are not desirable where they can be got rid of.

51,790. You would be glad to see them abolished altogether?—I should.

51,791. The same as in the south, where every servant has his own house?—I think that is very desirable.

Management of estates.

51,792. The Duke of Richmond has given evidence before us. I suppose his estate is very well managed, with scarcely ever a change of tenant?—Very seldom.

51,793. The Duke of Fife's property is well managed, and also the Earl of Moray's?—All particularly well managed.

51,794. And the Seafield property?—We have a large amount of well-managed property.

51,795. The way the Duke of Richmond has managed his bothies is a high example to all other landlords—taking the superintendence of his property out of the land agent's hand, before he lets a single farm?—I think it is very commendable.

51,796. He never lets a farm until he knows all its advantages or disadvantages?—Although he perhaps does not go into it so minutely, I think the Duke of Fife does the same. I think all come through his Grace's hands.

51,797. Were all landlords to take the same oversight of their properties when at home, regulate the factors and their tenants' interest, it would be a great deal better for British agriculture?—There can be no doubt about that.

51,798. I suppose you do not care much for the Edinburgh lawyer factors?—Some are willing to be good to the tenants, but they very often do not know how, and they make mistakes. I like a practical man much better.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

51,799. Regarding Mr. Gilmour's question about the sitting tenant, I gathered from your evidence that the sitting tenant is sometimes, perhaps too often, rented upon his own improvements?—Yes, that has been so in the past. I think not so much now.

51,800. Mr. Gilmour put a question indicating that the tenant had something to do with the making of the rent. Is the rent not made by landlord, on the facts put before him?—Yes. That is so. But I think it right to say that if a good tenant were to say he would take the farm if the rent were reduced 20*l.* or 30*l.* from the valuation, and the proprietor were willing to keep him, an arrangement of that kind might be come to.

51,801. That is meeting the tenant in a liberal way?—But as a rule the practice has been that the proprietor, either through his factor or through a professional valuator, has put a rent upon his farm, and the sitting tenant has just the option of taking it at that rent or leaving it.

51,802. Am I not justified in saying that the landlord values the farm as it stands, with its improvements on it?—I expect that is so—too much so.

51,803–4. Is it your opinion, say, for example, if it were a proved fact that there were 500*l.* of compensation of that tenant's money in the farm, and it were valued upon that, might not the landlord, instead of giving the money to be paid down, which may be inconvenient, allow the tenant perhaps 6 or 7 per cent. off his rent—30*l.* or 35*l.* a year off the rent with its improvements? Would that not be a fair and just way of settlement?—The shape of it would be right. The extent of the reduction might be a matter of agreement; but the principle is right.

51,805. You have seen and read Mr. Hope's report?—Yes.

51,806. And consider it is a fair statement?—I do.

51,807. Both towards landlord and tenant, and the general state of agriculture and farming in the part of the country you are in?—Yes. I do not know that I would agree with it in every particular perhaps. But talking generally, I think it is almost wholly all you say.

51,808. It is a very practical working report?—I think so.

Witness then withdrew.

Adjourned.

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Ninety-ninth Day.

Edinburgh, Thursday, 6th June 1895.

PRESENT:

VISCOUNT COBHAM IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEO. LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. A. R. Stuart.

Mr. A. R. STUART called in and examined.

Mr. A. R. Stuart.

6 June 1895.

51,809. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a tenant farmer holding land from the Duke of Fife?—Yes.

51,810. Where is your farm?—In Banffshire.

Particulars of witness's farm.

51,811. It is a farm consisting of 146 acres arable and 1,200 of hill pasture?—That is so.

51,812. Do you farm any land of your own?—A small acreage adjoining the other farm.

51,813. What is the character of the soil?—Heavy clay land. There is a brick manufactory worked on the farm. It is very heavy land.

51,814. All of it?—About three-fourths of it.

Effect of depression.

51,815. Do you consider the depression in agriculture has affected that class of land more than others?—Yes, I think it has. That class of land requires more extensive labour than others. You require to keep a heavier staff of horses.

Wages.

51,816. How has the depression affected you?—We find that the labour bill has considerably increased.

51,817. How much has it gone up?—Over 30 per cent. in the last 16 years.

51,818. Do wages show any tendency to fall again?—They fell a few years ago but they have gone up again this year in particular. They have risen 10 per cent. simply because we have great difficulty in getting labourers. They are leaving the farm business altogether.

51,819. Are they going into the towns or emigrating?—They are going into the large towns which seem to absorb all labour.

51,820. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Notwithstanding that wages have increased?—Yes.

51,821. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is what keeps wages so high?—Yes.

51,822–3. (*Lord Cobham.*) What are the market rates of labourers at present?—I am paying my horsemen 32*l.* in money wages and in kind; well I have not estimated its moneyworth but they get 6½ bolls of meal, 4*l.* a year in milk, and about 3*l.* to 4*l.* a year in potatoes, and they have their lodgings of course, equal to 3*l.* to 4*l.* It would come to about 15*l.* That would bring up the wages to about 47*l.* to 49*l.*

51,824. (*Mr. Channing.*) They have no allotments of land?—They have no land. We have no houses for our labourers.

51,825. (*Lord Cobham.*) The horsemen, I suppose, get the highest wages?—No; our cattlemen get about a couple of pounds more in the year.

51,826. You have ordinary labourers to employ also?—We have men engaged by the six months. I could not get labourers unless I engaged them for six months.

51,827. They get smaller wages?—An ordinary labourer gets from 21*s.* to 22*s.* 6*d.* a week. They get very high wages.

51,828. (*Mr. Lambert.*) That would be exclusive of everything?—Yes, he has to find for himself with that.

51,829. (*Chairman.*) Have you been able to reduce labour to any extent by labour-saving machinery?—I have not. When I entered on my present lease I used to get sufficient female labour; now I cannot get it. They will not work in the fields at all unless at harvest time, and even then it is difficult to get them. They seem to be running away from the land.

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Reduced labour.

51,830. And the result is that your labour bill is up 30 per cent.?—That is so.

Prices.

51,831. You have suffered from the fall in prices of agricultural produce?—Very much.

51,832. To the same extent as English farmers have?—It is chiefly with us on the price of beef. I breed and feed cattle, and use the bulk of the produce on the farm in doing so. In 1876 when I entered on my lease, we got about 84*s.* per cwt. for beef—the finest Banffshire beef. I have frequently since then accepted 56*s.* Just now it is about 60*s.* Over a series of years we have accepted 60*s.* per cwt. for our beef.

51,833. But you have not done so badly in store sheep?—Black-faced sheep have fallen about one-third in selling price.

51,834. At present prices?—Yes. In the eighties I could sell my ewe hoggs at 29*s.* and 30*s.*, and I can only get for them now about 20*s.* to 21*s.*

51,835. For the same class of sheep?—Yes; that is store sheep, black-faced sheep.

51,836. You consume nearly all the produce grown on your farm?—Yes, I sell nothing but barley.

51,837. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have not sheep risen lately?—They have; black-faced sheep have risen a bit, three-year old hoggs particularly. But this spring on account of the lack of turnips they did not sell as they would otherwise have done. Those of us who had store sheep and sold early did not get the benefit of the rise of the market.

51,838. (*Lord Cobham.*) Considering the large increase in the labour bill and the depression in value of farm produce, how have you managed to meet the position?—Unfortunately for some years we have been very far from being able to meet it. I have been losing money on my farm for several years.

Reduction of rent.

51,839. Notwithstanding a considerable reduction of rent?—I have never got a reduction of rent from the Duke of Fife. On one occasion he gave a remission of 5 per cent., which I was exceedingly unwilling to accept. However, as they were all getting it the factor thought I should accept it also. After considerable pressure I did so, and that is the only reduction I ever had.

51,840. You have had no temporary remissions of rent? Nothing with the exception already given. You must understand that I have been an "improving tenant." I have built my steading around the land, fenced it, dyked it, erected my own steam-mill and steam-engine, and I consider I have as much value on the land as the Duke of Fife. How could I then accept a reduction of rent? I have got nearly as much value on the farm as he has. The

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Mr. A. R. Stuart. 6 June 1895.

system on the Duke of Fife's estates in this county is that the tenants have done all the improvements themselves.

51,841. Under a lease?—Yes, under a lease. They have been "improving" tenants. Under the old system the Duke of Fife's tenants were very rarely disturbed, and they went on improving their farm buildings and steadings. In the parish I come from the tenants built every steading in it up till 1886. But he has now sold the parish to Mr. Findley of Aberlour, the proprietor of the "*Scotsman*" newspaper. One reason I have got no reduction of rent is that I have a large sum to get for the meliorations I mentioned—houses, drains, dykes, wire-fencing, steam-engine, and mill, &c.

51,842-3. That would be a reason for keeping you on?—I do not know, I am sure. I do not think I can stay on this farm unless I got such a reduction that I could live on it.

51,844-6. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What per-centage would induce you to stay?—I should have to sink all my improvements, It would need to be a very small rent. I should not be able to pay half the present rent, if I were to sink the whole of the improvements.

51,847. Do I understand that your rent was reduced permanently 5 per cent.?—Oh no. It was only for one year. It was a bad year, and the other tenants were getting 5 per cent. off. I was very unwilling to accept 5 per cent., but I did it ultimately.

51,848. Will you say what is your rent at present?—127*l.* to the Duke of Fife and my own improvements would come to about 80*l.* a year.

51,849. 127*l.* for a hill farm of 146 acres of arable and 1,200 of hill pasture?—You have to consider the elevation, the farm lies high. It is really a pasture farm.

51,850. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The interest on your improvements you estimate at 80*l.* a year?—Yes.

Average rents.

51,851. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you consider that is the average rent of the district?—Yes, seeing the condition of the farm when I entered it. It was a bad farm, or rather it was two farms, the tenants of which both went out bankrupt. I entered the farm at a valuation of 13 bushels of oats and five bushels of barley, and I can grow now five or six quarters of oats and six quarters of barley. I think I paid a large rent, seeing the condition of the farm.

51,852. What do you put down for the rent of the hill land?—We place it at about 6*d.* an acre. It is not of very great value. It is not grass pasture; it is entirely heather land.

51,853. To get the rent of the arable land you still deduct about 30*l.* a year?—I should say about 40*l.* a year for the hill pasture, leaving about 80*l.* to 90*l.* for the arable land.

51,854. That is about 12*s.* an acre?—Rather more, I should think.

Price of cake and manures.

51,855. You have had some set-off against this fall of prices and increase in the labour bill in the cheapness of cake and manure?—Yes, they are cheaper, but I use very little cake. I feed entirely from my own oats, and from the refuse from the distilleries. There is a distillery within 400 yards of my farm, and I have the refuse of the malt, and a refuse that we call "ale" that is run off from the stills; cattle are fed largely. In fact, when our turnip crop fails we are entirely dependent on the produce of these distilleries. We buy very little cake; but we do buy considerable quantities of artificial manures.

51,856. You have very little, then, to set against the increased cost of the farm?—Very little on my own farm.

Changes of tenants.

51,857. Have there been many changes of tenants in your district?—In the larger class of farms, yes. I made up a table of the changes of tenancy in the larger class of farms in my immediate neighbourhood, that is to say, within four miles of my farm. These larger farms have, in many cases, changed three or four times since I took my lease.

51,858. On the same estate?—Not on the same estate. I speak of the larger farms, and I shall explain what we call "large" farms. Banffshire is a county of small holdings. There are only 100 holdings in the county of Banff over 150*l.* of rental. Ordinary farms range from 50*l.* to 60*l.* A number of the larger farms have changed three or four times within 19 years; and the average reduction upon 14 farms is 30 per cent. That is where tenancy has been changed. The total rental in 1878 of these 14 farms was 3,743*l.*, and in 1894 it was 2,477*l.*

51,859. Are these farms held on lease?—All on lease from the Duke of Fife and the Duke of Richmond and large landowners.

51,860. And the reduction took place on the termination of the lease?—On the change of tenancy six of the tenants of these 14 farms became bankrupt. On three tenants of the Duke of Richmond the reductions were from 33 to 36 per cent.

51,861. (*Mr. Channing.*) All these reductions, I understand, were in cases where there was a change of tenant?—That is so.

51,862. Have there been more changes on the large estates than on the small ones?—I do not think so. I think the tenants have been easier rented on the large estates. The Duke of Richmond is one of the best landlords we have, but even on his farms in a change of tenancy there were reductions of 32 to 36 per cent.

51,863. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When did this occur?—Three of them occurred three years ago, and one four years ago. And there has been a great fall of prices even since then.

51,864. There had been a great fall in prices between the time they took the farm and the time they left?—Yes, as I have said, beef was 84*s.* a cwt.; now it is 60*s.* to 66*s.*

Effect of depression.

51,865-6. (*Lord Cobham.*) Has one of the effects of the depression been a considerable loss of the farmers' capital?—Very much. They have stopped all improvements. The tenants in my district were all improving tenants, adding to the area of their farms and draining their land; but all works of that class have been entirely stopped.

51,867. Is the land going down in condition?—I think it must be going down in condition.

51,868. Do you mean out of cultivation?—Yes. I find from the agricultural returns that in Banffshire there are about 9,000 acres between 1878 and 1893 out of cultivation. That is not, of course, a very large per-centage. It is only about 6 per cent.

51,869. When you say, "Going out of cultivation," Do you mean laid down to grass?—Going back to its natural condition. There are 9,000 acres less on the cultivated area in these 15 years.

51,870. These 9,000 acres would become worthless?—They are worthless now. It is not sown down as permanent pasture. A few cattle and sheep would run over it, but the 9,323 acres represent the difference in the cultivable area since 1882.

Cottages.

51,871. How has the rural population been affected?—We have the greatest difficulty in getting labour. Cottages are very difficult to be had on farms. Many of the married labourers have to live four or five miles away from their farms. I have no cottages on my farms. There are cottages on the estate of Aberlour, belonging to Mr. Findlay. The county is exceedingly in want of houses for labourers.

51,872. Are you able to house a few in your own homestead?—I do not live on my farm, and one of the men lives in the farmhouse. But apart from that I have no houses for labourers. I have compensation for all my buildings on my farm. I made more than one offer to the Duke of Fife's factor to give me compensation in the same way for cottages I might build on the farm, but he would not do that. There is a great lack of accommodation for labourers in our county. It is the greatest grievance that farmers have to contend with. They cannot get skilled labourers, and have to depend on men from the towns who know nothing really about cattle and horses. The class of labourer is deteriorating very much.

51,873. And the supply diminishing?—It is diminishing in this way that we have to pay so much for it. If there was plenty of it we should not have to pay so much for it. I have to complain of the quality of the labour. It is quite distressing. The old nurseries for farm servants and lads, the small holdings, we want them very much. Many of these holdings have been abolished; and we want an increase of accommodation for smaller tenants simply as nurseries for labourers. There is quite an exceptional state of things, however, on the property of Mr Findlay of Aberlour. His factor supplied me with a list of the cottages he has built. The rental of Mr. Findlay's estate, bought nine years ago, was 3,000*l.* He has erected 35 new cottages for farm servants and renewed 12 old cottages. That is 47 cottages in nine years. He has also erected about 20 cottages for workingmen so that Mr. Findlay of Aberlour has actually built 67 cottages in nine years for workmen of this parish on his own estate. The Duke of Fife had never such a thing as a workman's cottage on his property. The tenants were left to do as they liked; the Duke drew the rents. There was not a cottage formerly in the parish built by the landlord.

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51,874. Is this property of the Duke of Fife's now in course of being sold?—It is sold to Mr. Findlay. I think the Duke of Fife has sold out of 14 parishes in Banffshire.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

51,875. Are you satisfied with the present system of tenure under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I am not. I object to the present system of tenure.

Compensation for improvements.

51,876. What is the tenure under which you hold?—I simply hold under a lease. I have no means of compensation for the high state of cultivation in which I leave my farm. I have taken my farm from 13 bushels of oats to 6 quarters and from 5 bushels of barley to 5 or 6 quarters of barley. I have no means of obtaining compensation for that increased fertility. Though I pour on tons of manure per acre, I have no means of recovering it under the Act.

51,877. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have no clause in your lease for manuring?—No.

51,878. Could you not have stipulated for this also?—If I had made stipulations of that kind I should not possibly have got the farm.

51,879. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are there any conditions respecting cultivation during the last two or three years of the lease?—I must cultivate the farm in a certain rotation during the whole of the lease—the seven-shift rotation.

51,880. Is that enforced?—There is very great latitude allowed to tenants, unless they are bad tenants.

51,881. Are you allowed to sell the hay and straw?—I never do sell hay or straw. I cannot sell straw or turnips.

51,882. It is forbidden in the lease?—Yes.

51,883. At the end of the lease you get paid on tillages?—I get paid for my growing crop and grass.

51,884. But your complaint is that you have no compensation for permanent improvements?—Yes, such as those affecting the letting value of the land through cultivating highly.

51,885. How would you meet this grievance? Is it largely felt by tenant farmers in your neighbourhood?—It is largely felt by "improving" tenant farmers. It is not felt at all by tenant farmers who do not improve their farms, because when the time comes for renewal of lease, there is no competition for such farms. He gets it on his own terms. But the tenant farmer who improves his land, he brings, through that very circumstance, a hornet's nest of competitors about his ears.

Cost of arbitration.

51,886. What suggestions have you to make in regard to this?—I suggest that this Act, the Agricultural Holdings Act, should be improved out of existence. Certainly its principle and intention seems to me to be fairly good; but it utterly fails to secure tenants' improvements. In our part of the country the Act has not been very much brought into use, simply because we have a very small class of holdings, and the machinery is so expensive that it runs away with the whole of the benefits of the Act. I could give you an illustration that occurred last year. Five acres were taken of my neighbour's farm—my brother-in-law's farm—for building a distillery. It was to be feud. The compensation that he was awarded amounted to 35*l.* for his grass and artificial manure; but between arbiters and their clerks and their report the expenses of arbitration were 21*l.*, leaving 16*l.*

51,887. How would you amend the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not know, I am sure. All I want is that the improvements of a tenant shall be secured to him.

51,888. Do you consider that the Agricultural Holdings Act has totally failed in that object?—Absolutely; it is worthless.

Counter-claims.

51,889. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you ever tried it?—I have been a valuator on several occasions, and if the tenant has put in his claim, the landlord has put in a counter-claim; and I have advised tenants to abandon their claim rather than go in for an expensive arbitration.

51,890. It is the counter-claim that stands in the way very largely?—Yes.

51,891. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you say there shall be no counter-claim?—No, certainly. If the tenant has deteriorated his farm there should be a counter-claim. But these counter-claims against tenants are often put in merely for the purpose of defeating the Act.

51,892. You think the counter-claims frighten tenants into withdrawing their claims?—It will in this sense, that if he wished to renew his holding, it would be his interest to keep on as good terms as possible with his landlord. He could not keep on such terms if he prosecuted his claim in the face of a counter-claim.

51,893. But in any circumstances, if the tenant makes a claim, and the landlord answers it with a counter-claim, it produces a certain amount of feeling?—Quite so. The Act would not be necessary if all landlords and tenants were reasonable.

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Compensation for improvements.

51,894. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Let us make it quite clear. I understand your position is this, that if you were not particularly anxious not to have a difference with your landlord, and if you were not afraid of the counter-claim, then you would get compensation under the Act for all your improvements?—I do not think so; the Act does not secure to an improving tenant the value of his improvements.

51,895. What stands in your way of getting compensation is fear of quarreling with your landlord, and fear of the counter-claim being given against you?—To some extent, yes; but that should be qualified by this, that the machinery of the present Act is so elaborate and expensive to bring into play, in connexion with our small holdings. It may do very well if the compensation I was to get was 2,000*l.* or 3,000*l.*, then the expenses of the arbitration might be a small per-centage; but where we are talking of claims of 150*l.* or thereabouts, the expenses assume a different character.

51,896. Of course, there can be no counter-claim against you where you have done all the improvements?—I cannot say. There could only be a frivolous claim.

51,897. Is there any chance of a counter-claim being lodged against you?—I should hope not.

51,898. Well, then, the only thing that stands in the way of your getting compensation under the Act is that you do not like to have a difference with your landlord?—Oh, I should have no scruples to make my claim. I speak on behalf of the majority of small tenants; I have a large claim to get wiped off.

51,899. Which you will get if you leave?—Of course I have my bargain in regard to all these improvements.

51,900. (*Mr. Channing.*) That is by special agreement?—Yes.

51,901. (*Captain Thomas.*) But not for the increased fertility of the soil?—No, though, as I have said, I have brought my farm up from 13 to 40 bushels.

51,902. That seems to be your greatest grievance?—Yes; that I cannot get compensation for the fertility of the farm over a course of 19 years. My neighbour who, perhaps, has been a bad farmer gets as much compensation as I can get.

51,903. (*Lord Cobham.*) But there is nothing to prevent you taking as much as you can out of the farm for the last few years?—I could never on a clay farm take out of it what I have put into it in the last few years. It would take another 19 years to exhaust it. That is really a great grievance we have to complain of.

51,904. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Regarding compensation for increased fertility, have you not had compensation in the much better crops you have been growing?—Well, latterly no doubt, but it took a long time to bring it up.

51,905. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was the rent of the farm lower on account of the bad condition of the farm when you took it?—No doubt it was lower. It was lower on this ground, that I undertook to relieve the landlord of what a landlord usually does. But the Duke of Fife has never built a house on his farms if he could get a tenant to do it for him.

51,906. But it was let at a lower rent in consequence of that?—I fancy it was. But I expect to be paid all the same for these improvements.

51,907. (*Lord Cobham.*) But every farmer who puts up this class of improvements is assured of compensation under the Act?—If he gives notice to the landlord and the landlord approves of it, and all that sort of thing.

51,908. (*Captain Thomas.*) What is the scale for compensation for buildings in your district?—There is no scale. It will be paid under arbitration. The Duke of Fife will appoint an arbitrator; I will appoint an arbitrator, and they will appoint an oversman, and the value will be arrived at in that way.

Valuations.

51,909. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are farmers well satisfied with the valuators?—Well the valuation often proceeds on the idea that you must win by hook or crook for the man who employs you. I myself believe in a single valuator. I think a more just decision would be given.

51,910. How would you have valuators appointed?—I would have valuators appointed by the Crown. I should not like to give the sheriff or sheriff-substitute the appointment. A valuator, I should think, ought to be appointed by the Crown and be free from all local influence.

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Compensation for cumulative fertility.

51,911. And you consider that compensation should be given for what you call cumulative fertility?—I do.

51,912. How would you carry that out; would there be a valuation at the incoming of the tenant and one at his outgoing?—Yes, that would require to be made; and it might be scheduled what state the farm was in—whether it was free from weeds and all necessary particulars. Then at the termination of the tenancy this record should be referred to, and a comparison made with it. There are difficulties that might crop up, but on the whole I think that might be done with advantage.

51,913. Is it not the tenant farmer's duty under any agreement, and his interest also, to farm as well as possible?—Yes, it would be his interest if he were to get compensation for his improvements at the end of his lease, but not otherwise.

51,914. I am speaking of good farming, pure and simple?—Yes. I can easily see that provisions would not be necessary at all for a good farmer or a good landlord. But what we have to provide against is bad tenants and bad landlords.

Compensation for deterioration.

51,915. As regards bad tenants you would provide that they should pay for deterioration?—Most certainly. There are some tenants who would simply run down the best farm in five years. Then as to bad tenants at the end of a lease they are generally in a better position than good ones, because no one would compete for their farms. That is our difficulty.

51,916. (*Mr. Clay.*) If he is not hopelessly bad he gets a chance again?—Well, he generally does get his farm again. Whereas his neighbour who has been improving has a host of competitors.

51,917. (*Lord Cobham.*) We generally find that a bad farmer in England is ruined before the end of his 19 years?—I do not mean an absolutely reckless farmer. I mean a farmer who simply goes jogging along and takes things easy. That man may get a good farm, and at the end of his lease it is worse than when he got it. He has no difficulty in getting a renewal because nobody wants it. But if I improve my farm and make it worth three times the money then I run a risk of being ruined by my own improvements. That is what I object to.

51,918. But notwithstanding all these improvements the rent is frequently not maintained?—No, it would not under present circumstances, the value of produce has so much fallen.

51,919. So that if the depression continues what fund is the landlord to give you compensation out of?—Oh, I think the depression is quite as bad for the landlord as for the tenant.

Depression in Banffshire.

51,920. Altogether, you consider that the agricultural depression is very strongly marked in Banffshire?—It is very serious.

51,921. More so than in the rest of Scotland?—I do not know that. It is quite as bad in Aberdeenshire. It is better in the lower district of Morayshire, where they have a better chance. We have had really a series of bad years as well as of bad prices. Bad years do not affect so much the coast farms.

51,922. There is still a considerable competition for farms?—Yes, there was three or four years ago. There is not so much now. You could always get a tenant for a farm up to two years ago; this last year it is not quite so easy, possibly on account of the bad year.

51,923. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Perhaps they are beginning to find out that there is no remedy?—Well I suppose it was thought that things were at the bottom, and would rise. But the price of agricultural produce and cattle is exceedingly low. Then the labour difficulty has got rather worse, and the importation of live cattle has been very much against Banffshire. It reduces the price of live stock and the income of the tenant is very much reduced in consequence.

Importation of foreign cattle.

51,924. What are your opinions on the importation of stock from abroad?—As a breeding country and a feeding country, we do not want Canadian cattle. The outcry for Canadian cattle arises from two or three big farmers who are in a position to make a great noise. Breeding and feeding cattle is the industry of Banffshire, and I do not know that there are thirty or more farmers in the county who want Canadian cattle. We entirely object to our industry being hampered by these restrictions imposed when pleuro-pneumonia is brought into the country from abroad.

51,925. You are not afraid of the importation of disease?—I am very much afraid of the importation of disease. But I object to these store cattle coming in in enormous numbers, bringing disease, and causing prohibitive regulations to be enforced all over the country against the movement of cattle.

51,926. Would you stop it universally?—I would not allow store cattle to come from America at all. We do not want them. It discourages the breeding of cattle in this country.

51,927. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are aware that they do not come in just now?—And that is what we want to have maintained. In our small county we were reduced 1,300 cows in one year from the effects of the risks attendant on store cattle coming in from Canada.

51,928. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you appreciate the objection raised by Norfolk and other non-breeding parts of the country against the stoppage of store cattle?—Well, I do not know the circumstances of Norfolk sufficiently. But all I say is that if they are not breeding and feeding they are not good farmers at all.

51,929. Is it your opinion that breeding can be practised generally?—Yes; I am secretary of our local farmers' club, and we have 21 herds of pedigree polled cattle in my district. I have information here from Sir George Macpherson Grant, who has one of the largest and finest herds with about 240 pedigree cattle on his farm.

51,930. You do not know the difficulties of Norfolk and Suffolk?—I do not, but I should advise them to breed and feed.

51,931. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are speaking of Banffshire, Morayshire, and Aberdeenshire. Breeding and feeding are main industries there also?—Yes.

51,932. Does it extend beyond these counties, so far as you know?—They are not so largely breeders in the lower districts of Morayshire. They buy a good many cattle from Inverness-shire.

51,933. Is there anything to prevent the extension of breeding all over to other parts of Scotland?—Nothing whatever.

51,934. If the store cattle of America were permanently kept out you think breeding would be largely developed?—Certainly; we cannot go on breeding cattle with the continuance of risks from America.

51,935. You are aware that we are free now from pleuro?—Yes, and we are going in for increasing cows at this moment.

Cattle breeding in Banffshire.

51,936. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it the crossed breeds or the polled angus you have in Banffshire?—Chiefly polled Aberdeen angus. There are 24 herds in the upper district of the county, all pedigree cattle. Three are short horn herds and 21 are black-polled cattle, the cattle of the country. The stock bulls from these are distributed all over Scotland and into England. We are practically a county of black-polled cattle. And the commercial stocks of the county are reared from the bulls of these pedigree herds. The prime beef sent up from Banffshire is the result of breeding black-polled bulls with the commercial stock of the county.

51,937. Ordinary mixed cattle?—Yes. There are 24 farmers in the upper district, pedigree breeders.

Tuberculosis.

51,938. (*Lord Cobham.*) In this connexion you wish to say something about tuberculosis?—Yes. Mr. Hope states in his report that tuberculosis is exceedingly prevalent in pedigree herds of cattle, and speaks rather pointedly to the fact, or the alleged fact, that tuberculosis is prevalent in pedigree herds which are closely inbred. Well, we deny it utterly. I have the authority of several of the largest and most important breeders of black-polled stock, Sir George Macpherson Grant, the Dowager Countess of Seafield, and Mr. Findlay, of Aberlour, for stating that it is not the case. Sir George Macpherson Grant has 240 pedigree cattle on his farm, and he invites Mr. Hope to select any animal he chooses from the herd, and if it is affected with tuberculosis he will make him a present of it. The Countess Dowager of Seafield has been making tests for tuberculosis, and in one case they killed a very valuable cow.

51,939–40. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) By the experiment?—No. The experiment showed that possibly the animal was affected with tubercles; she was a two-year-old heifer, but after she was killed there was positively no trace of tuberculosis in her. This cow was the produce of an old cow that died in calving and which was affected with tuberculosis, and the test was made to ascertain whether or not this old cow had transmitted the disease to her calf. But it was not the case. The manager states that he applied the test to his dairy cows, crosses between short horns and Ayrshires, and everyone of them showed signs of being affected

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according to the test, with tuberculosis. But as I say they killed one, and there was nothing the matter with it.

51,941. Then you do not agree with Mr. Hope?—We strongly disagree with Mr. Hope, and we should like to know where Mr. Hope got his evidence; and we should like to know why he made a report of this kind without making more inquiry.

51,942. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The cow was killed not because she was affected by the tuberculine test, but because she was the calf of an old cow that had been affected by tuberculosis?—Yes. As I said they applied the test to the dairy cow, and they killed this particular one, and she was absolutely free from the disease.

51,943. Did the test indicate that she had got disease?—Yes. But they found after she was killed that there was no tuberculosis.

Sale foreign meat.

51,944. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you consider that Scottish farmers lose much by the sale of foreign meat as home produce?—I do. We very much object to having foreign beef marked from Banffshire and Aberdeenshire, and we object to our beef being sold in Smithfield along with foreign meat. I was there last week, and I could not tell the carcase of a sheep from Banffshire and one from New Zealand. I do not think any man could tell the difference between a carcase of mutton grown in New Zealand and one grown in Banffshire.

51,945. If it is equally good why should it not fetch the same price?—I think we should be entitled to protect ourselves against salesmen who sell as best Scotch, foreign beef and mutton.

51,946. You think the buyer should know what he is buying?—Yes.

51,947. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is not that case met by the Trades Merchandise Marks Act?—It has utterly failed. We have agitated; but the Board of Agriculture have said, "Bring up a test case." We, in Banffshire cannot go to London and watch. If the Board of Agriculture was worth anything at all it would put on detectives to do that.

51,948. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have you made application to the Board of Agriculture?—Yes.

51,949. How long since?—Last year. We were agitating last year through our Member of Parliament, and we were told we should have to get up a test case, and make out a case in London.

51,950. (*Mr. Everett.*) Who is your member?—Sir William Wedderburn.

51,951. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If a test case is brought before the Board they will bring a prosecution. Surely it is reasonable that you should take steps to bring a test case before them. If the grievance is very strong, and if you feel assured that a large number of frauds are being committed, it would be easy enough to bring a test case?—It is not easy for a farmers' club in the north of Scotland to do anything of the kind. It would be easier for the Board of Agriculture to employ detectives. It is absolutely worthless to make concessions of that kind to farmers in the North.

51,952. The Board of Agriculture have not unlimited funds?—Well, we have tried repeatedly to get the Board to take up the matter, but we have always been referred to a test case.

51,953. (*Lord Cobham.*) Did you find it impossible to distinguish between New Zealand and Banffshire mutton?—Well, I never saw New Zealand mutton before in my life. I was in the market, and one of the salesmen there asked me to test which was the Banffshire mutton and which the New Zealand. I confess I could not tell to which department it belonged.

51,954. Are you familiar with the taste?—I am not an expert at all. All I can say is that here the mutton looked as good as the other.

51,955. The buyer of course pays less for New Zealand mutton?—That is the wholesale buyer. But it is sent to the butcher's shop and sold at the same price as home mutton. That is what we object to.

51,956. (*Captain Thomas.*) All New Zealand mutton is frozen. Surely it is perfectly easy to tell that from mutton which has not been frozen?—Well, I could not tell it.

51,957. (*Lord Cobham.*) Can you give us the quoted prices of New Zealand and British mutton?—They were selling the New Zealand mutton at 3½*d.* and 4*d.* per lb.

51,958. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you know, of your own knowledge, whether it is possible for any test to be applied between foreign meat and English meat unless of course it has been frozen beforehand?—Well, I should know the difference between a Canadian-fed bullock and a Banffshire-fed bullock.

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51,959. If the carcases were hung up side by side could you tell the difference between a Canadian bullock sent to Glasgow, killed there, and sent to London, and a Banffshire bullock killed in Banffshire and sent to London?—I could tell the carcase of a black polled bullock with my eyes shut.

Railway rates.

51,960. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you consider that foreign competition bears injuriously on the home producer?—Yes, for instance, railway companies give them preferential rates. They can send meat from Canada to London at about the same rate as I can send it from Banffshire. I object to that very much. I think railway companies have no right to make these preferential rates as against the home producer.

51,961. But you can send beef to London at a lower rate per mile than farmers can between you and London?—Yes; I should not be able to hold my farm unless I could do that. I should not be able to pay my rent at all.

51,962. Do you send any by sea?—Yes, we send it by sea to London from Aberdeen, and at a somewhat lower rate than the railway.

51,963. How long does it take to go?—From Saturday to Monday.

51,964. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Can you send it in all weathers?—Not very well. It is not so secure.

51,965. (*Lord Cobham.*) Your position is that Irishmen and Scotchmen should have preferential rates but not the foreigner?—I do not say that; I say we should have fair play. We should have equal rates with the Yankees.

51,966. Well you have a preferential rate as against Northampton. You have a lower mileage rate from Banffshire to London than they have from Northampton?—I do not know that of my own knowledge, but I should think it is very possible, that the south of Scotland farmers by prohibitive rates are kept out of the London market.

Ground game.

51,967. Does the Ground Game Act work satisfactorily in Banffshire?—On some farms surrounded by plantations the tenants complain very much that the rabbits come out from the plantations in the morning and night and destroy the crops. Of course if you fire a gun they all scamper off like a flock of sheep. They feel that it is a considerable grievance that there are no means of protection from plantations. I would suggest that the landlords should be asked to fence the plantations with wire netting. Either that or give the tenants right to protect themselves.

51,967*a*. Do you say that is general or exceptional?—In all parts of the county there is a large quantity of wood for shelter and there are many plantations in Banffshire. But the Ground Game Act has been of great value to farmers.

51,968. Do the tenants often shoot?—They do not exercise that right very much. But the landlord keeps the rabbits down. He has more inducement to keep them down since the passing of the Act. It has been of great value to the farmer, and there has never been any feeling about it between landlord and tenant. The Act has worked exceedingly well, but in any further amendment of it provision must be made to meet the case of plantations.

State loans to tenants.

51,969. Do you think State loans could be advantageously made to the tenant?—Yes. I think they could to the class of tenant that is in the habit of improving their farms and doing their own buildings. They might get advances on the security of these buildings from Government just as well as the landlord.

51,970. Do you think that would be sufficient security to protect the State against loss?—I think it would.

51,971. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How can you give them as security when they belong to somebody else?

51,972. (*Lord Cobham.*) You would pledge the building in security?—Surely.

51,973. Not to the extent of the whole cost?—Possibly three-fourths at the outside.

51,974. Do you think that would be largely taken advantage of in Scotland?—In our part of Scotland it would, for there the tenants really erect the buildings, and do their own drainage.

51,975. It would be necessary then that there should be some State supervision not only at the time of their erection, but to see that the buildings are kept in order?—

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I think that the arbitrator under the amended Agricultural Holdings Act might be named as superintendent.

51,976. The rate of interest would have to be low?—Yes.

51,977. But the loan would have to be repayable before the termination of the lease, would it not?—I do not believe in a lease at all. I believe in a two-years' notice to quit on either side as the most satisfactory tenure of all. We have been losing all our money by leases.

51,978. Then the loan, in your view, should attach to the building and not to the tenant?—Yes. It should be attached to improvements on the farm, and the repayment should be spread over a considerable number of years, in order to keep the rate of interest low. Houses are quite good for 30 years; drains are not.

51,979. That would mean something like 4 per cent.?—Yes, to pay up the principal. Drains would not last for more than 20 years unless they are on heavy land.

51,980. The drainage is generally done by the tenant?—As a rule. All the drainage has been stopped by us for the last few years, except by landlords like Mr. Findlay, who can afford to do it for the tenants.

51,981. (*Mr. Clay.*) Does the tenant supply the tiles?—He supplies everything. In some cases, of course, when a bargain is made, the tenant will cut and fill the drains, and the landlord will supply the tiles. Then he has no compensation to pay.

Rates.

51,982. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you consider that the incidence of local rates should be re-adjusted?—I do not object to the rates. They are not very high with us. I only pay 1*s.* 2*d.* per £ for tenants' rates.

51,983. Have they declined since your lease began?—The poor rate and the school rate are both declining. But what we object to is that in our parish there is a considerable village arising, and the Duke of Fife has feued some 40 acres of land at 8*l.* an acre, and that land is removed from the valuation roll altogether for purposes of local taxation. Yet the Duke or his successor is getting eight times the amount for it that he formerly did.

51,984. How does he escape?—Well, it becomes a ground annual, and is not taxed. This is how it stands. The valuation of that 40 acres formerly say was 40*l.* a year, and we were drawing a yearly assessment upon that 40*l.* But immediately the Duke feus the ground and the value becomes eight times 40, or 320*l.* a year, we get no assessment upon it.

51,985. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) But the houses built on the feu are rated, and to that extent the parish is the gainer?—That is quite true, but the superior escapes scot free without taxation at all.

51,986. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You get increased rates on the additional value of the houses?—Yes.

51,987. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) It is very much increased. The person who feus pays, but the superior escapes all the real taxation?—It is often worse than that, for the feu duty is deducted from the annual value of the house before it is entered on the rolls for assessment purposes. If I paid 6*l.* of feu duty and 24*l.* was the value of the house the 6*l.* would be deducted from the 24*l.*, and 18*l.* entered.

51,988. You do not complain of the taxation but that the burden is put on the wrong shoulder?—Just so.

51,989. (*Mr. Everett.*) 6*l.* is deducted from the value of the house, and to that extent there is a loss to the parish?—Yes. It is a great grievance that the annual feu duty paid to the superior is deducted from the annual value of the house before it is put on the roll for assessment purposes.

51,990. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did I understand you to say that since you became a tenant farmer on the Duke of Fife's estate you purchased some land on that estate?—Yes, a small piece of land.

51,991. To what extent?—I think it amounts to about 10 acres. It is good land for feuing purposes at the railway junction which surrounds it. It was desirable for my purpose to get it. I am Chairman of the Auction Mart Company.

51,992. It was not for agricultural purposes?—Not that bit of land. It is of no value for agricultural purposes.

51,993. When you referred to the Duke of Richmond's estate, may I ask if that is the Glenlivet district?—No. It is in the Mortloch district. They define it as being in Glenlivet, but it is not really so. The Glenlivet district proper is a very solitary district, but I think the Duke of Richmond has a very wide country that he calls "the Glenlivet collection."

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51,994. Do I understand you to say that there have been several cases of bankruptcy among the tenants on that estate?—I can give you one case.

Bankrupt tenants.

51,995. I understood you to say there had been several?—I can give you one illustration on the Duke's property.

51,996. I was confining myself to the Duke's property; and I thought you said there were several?—I can only give you one on the Duke's property.

51,997. When did it take place?—The tenant became bankrupt about 1884 I think.

Reduction of rents.

51,998. You said, I believe, that the reduction of rents upon that estate had been something like 30 per cent.?—The reduction of rent on this particular farm was from 317*l.* to 200*l.*, which is the rent at present paid, and there have been four changes of tenants since then. There is a reduction of rent on that farm of 36¾ per cent.

51,999. Is that a singular exception on that estate?—I think the Duke of Richmond is the best landlord in Scotland.

52,000. That is an exceptional case on the Duke's property?—Yes. One of the tenants wrote me a letter complaining of the Duke's action. When the old tenant failed he was taken as a new tenant and he only kept the farm for four years. He wanted 40*l.* as reduction in the rent, but the Duke would not give it to him; but then the Duke let the farm to the next tenant at 70*l.* reduction.

52,001. As a matter of fact in the Glenlivet district the Duke of Richmond's tenants and their families have been there for a great many years?—That is so.

Official referees.

52,002. (*Mr. Everett.*) You stated that you thought the Crown should appoint the valuator between landlord and tenant, and you object to his being a local man. Now do you think it would be possible to bring into your district say a man from near Edinburgh, who knows nothing of the locality, or the soil, or the district?—No, sir. I think you have misunderstood me. I certainly insist that the valuator shall be a man not only known in the county, but in the immediate district. What I wished to say was that the sheriff of the county should not have the appointment of the man.

52,003. But you said you would not have a local man. You would like to correct that?—I would not have the appointment made locally. I wish a local man appointed, but I would not have the appointment in the hands of the sheriff of the county. I should have him appointed by the Board of Agriculture or the Crown.

Exportation of stock.

52,004. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is the exportation of pedigree stock a source of profit to the Banffshire farmer?—It is now stopped entirely. The Americans have put a prohibitive duty on the importation of stock into that country, and insist on such quarantine regulations that it is impossible without great sacrifices on the part of the purchaser to get stock into the country. At one time it was a very large business.

52,005. At what time would the exportation cease?—I should think it is two or three years. Six or seven years ago we were getting very large prices for pedigree cattle. They were in great demand. I could get 60*l.* for a two-year-old without much pedigree at all.

52,006. Does that apply to Argentina and other countries?—We never sent many to Argentina. It was principally to the United States.

52,007. Then, practically, there is very little exportation of stock now?—It has ceased to exist at all.

Official referees.

52,008. (*Mr. Clay.*) Your idea of the appointment of an official referee is to have men appointed practically acquainted with the agriculture of the district?—Yes. He must be a practical man, and he must be thoroughly aware of the conditions affecting the agriculture of the district, climate, soil, and such like, and what it is likely to produce. I would not take a man from the lower district of my county to be valuator in the upper district. He would probably know nothing of my conditions at all.

52,009. A man above suspicion who would favour neither landlord nor tenant?—Thoroughly. I was saying that the upper district of my county is very different from the lower, and the same quantity of land would not give the same return at all.

52,010. Who would you have to suggest a man of that kind?—I would suggest practical farmers.

52,011. You say you would not have the sheriff; would it be the county council?—I think it should be left to the Crown as I suggested.

52,012. But who is the Crown to apply to?—Possibly it might be done through the county council.

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52,013. If the county council were to suggest the names of a few men and put them before the Board of Agriculture, would that suit you?—Yes. But there is a danger of the county council having the sole appointment in their hands. Possibly two-thirds of the county council have nothing to do with farming at all, and they would appoint men who knew nothing about farming. A large proportion of the county council of Banffshire represent fishing villages; I should never give them power to appoint an arbiter for farm valuations.

52,014. Then who are the people who would suggest men to the Board of Agriculture?—Of course in a good many agricultural counties I should think the county council would be the best body, and the most likely body to appoint the best men. But in a county such as ours I should be slow to give it to the county council, which is dominated to some extent by fishermen.

52,015. Then who would you give it to?—I have some difficulty in suggesting anybody. It might be the agricultural representatives in the county council and not the men drawn from the fishing villages.

52,016. And you would have no objection to have these names sent to the Board of Agriculture?—I approve of that.

52,017. That would be a good safeguard?—Yes.

52,018. Who would pay these men?—I would pay them from national funds, with possibly fees where they had cases of arbitration. But I should pay them, certainly, from the Consolidated Fund, or some national fund. I should not pay them locally.

Importation of foreign cattle.

52,019. As to the breeding of cattle, do you consider that many counties are rather remiss in not keeping up the breeding of cattle?—It must be because we have a clamour from some of the counties in Scotland for store cattle.

52,020. Does not that come from a few individuals?—I understand it comes from a few towns which has a large sum of money invested in cattle wharfs and shedding.

52,021. Like the Dundee Harbour Commissioners?—That is a good illustration.

52,022. The principal cry comes from them?—And some interested parties representing harbour interests.

52,023. And you consider it is only a minority that want the importation of Canadian cattle?—A very insignificant minority of farmers.

52,024. And if they turned their attention to the breeding of cattle there would not be such a dearth of lean cattle to put into the coverts?—Yes, that is so; and we should have a number more of small holdings; because those of us who purchase store cattle in our own country find that the best class of cattle we get from small holdings. They give personal attention to their feeding, and they are the best class of cattle we can get. Big farmers cannot give the same personal attention to the rearing of stock as those small farmers.

52,025. Is it your opinion, from experience, that the fear of imported disease has deterred many small farms, and often large ones, from going more liberally into the rearing of cattle?—No doubt of that whatever.

52,026. And that has been the determination of the country at large?—Yes. To the feeders themselves, because it has increased the price of their stores.

Official referees.

52,027. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In every county in Scotland we have a local authoity dealing with the Contagious Diseases Animals Act. Would that body not be the best to nominate as valuators or arbiters, a number of well-known men in the district?—Yes.

52,028. Because they are men who are naturally interested in agricultural questions?—Quite so.

Buildings erected by tenants.

52,029. Were there any stipulations laid down in your own case with regard to the class of buildings you were to erect—the substantiality of them—or is anything of that kind required in your district?—In my case I submitted—it was quite optional—my plan to the factor for his approval.

52,030. Is that the usual way in which it is carried out?—No.

52,031. Are these buildings of yours of a substantial nature?—They are of a permanent nature; as permanent as buildings can be.

52,032. In these cases the tenant knows he can get value for them when he goes out?—Just so, if stipulated for specially.

Small holdings.

52,033. You speak of the necessity for having nurseries for farm labourers, and you spoke of small holdings. Do you mean the croft, pure and simple, or something larger than that?—What we want is the small farm that can be worked by a single pair of horses, 60 to 70 acres. Any landlord who has farms of that kind can easily have applications for it.

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52,034. And these men, from your experience, do they make a living?—Yes. On a large farm they have to pay for labourers. Here the whole of the family, his sons and his daughters, and his wife and himself work like slaves.

52,035. And is that a desirable position for a man to be in?—It is, I think, they are the happiest people alive.

52,036. Slaves?—They are practically in the position of working 14 to 16 hours a day, but you will find they are the happiest homes in Scotland. They are reared up together, go into the world, and make the best men and women in the country, because of the training received under their father's eye.

52,037. Do you think you could get sufficient men with that inducement to settle down on the land?—I think I could, 40 offers for every vacant farm.

52,038. Although they would make better wages by working for some other persons?—Yes. They have no comfort as farm servants. They are put up in a bothy and herded like cattle. My horseman, for example, who as a married man, has to walk five or six miles once in three weeks to see his wife and family. There is no accommodation on the farm for him, and really men under such conditions have no comfort, and can exercise no supervision over the up-bringing of their families, and that is the way men are leaving the business.

52,039. (*Mr. Clay.*) If the landlord were to build cottages it would be different?—Very different.

52,040. That is the cure?—That is one cure, and small holdings is the other.

Compensation for improvements.

52,041. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have told us that you got, or will get, compensation for improvements under the agreement?—Yes.

52,042. Could not others do the same?—Yes, if they were in the position of dictating terms, but every tenant is not able to make a bargain of that kind.

52,043. Is there some disposition on the part of landowners or agents to refuse to make agreements of that kind?—I find, as a rule, that if I want a farm, and object to the terms or conditions of the lease, I am very likely told, "Well, if you object, do not offer."

52,044. You know of cases then where an agreement has been asked for for this kind of compensation, and where it has been refused?—Oh certainly; it has been refused to myself. I can give you an illustration. My own lease is coming to a close, and the Duke of Fife, or rather his factor, offered me last week a farm that in 1875 I offered 1,000*l.* of a grassum to the tenant for that farm, but he would not accept it. The factor offered me this farm last week at a reduced rent, and I could not accept it.

52,045. Was that because you did not like the terms and conditions of the lease?—I could get that farm now at a reduced rent, and without any grassum or premium whatever.

52,046. In taking that farm you could get terms as regards compensation?—Easy terms.

52,047. If the tenants were to take the same line as you do, they would get compensation by agreement?—This is a farm which would require heavy permanent improvements, but it is in a district that we very much object to; it is in a clay district.

52,048. What I am trying to arrive at is this: what reason is there to prevent tenants from making reasonable arrangements for themselves?—Under the Act?

52,049. With or without the Act. It appears that you are able to do it satisfactorily, and I want to know why any others do not. Is it ignorance, or what?—I do not think so. I think I was able to make a special bargain to get compensation for myself in this way, that the farm I held was in a hopeless condition of deterioration. There was not a building on it. I had to build new houses, and drain the whole land, and there were very few offerers for it.

52,050. You got it practically on your own terms?—I offered a certain rent for it, and I got it. Of course, it was quite clearly seen that I would have to get some compensation.

52,051. (*Mr. Channing.*) What was the date of that?—1876.

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52,052. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you agree to lay out money on it?—I was told that I would have to provide houses for myself. It was originally two farms; both the tenants of which had become bankrupt.

State loans to tenants.

52,053. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You told us that all improvements have been stopped in your district by the farmers?—They have.

52,054. You propose that they should begin them again by the help of the State?—To some extent.

52,055. I do not quite follow what security the tenant farmer would have to offer for such a loan?—He would have the buildings themselves.

52,056. How could buildings erected on land which does not belong to him be offered in security for a loan?—I assume that provision is made in the Act we are seeking giving the tenant a right to the buildings he has himself erected.

Dual ownership.

52,057. In fact the result of what you propose would be to create something like dual ownership?—That is the position in our county already. That is practically the position now. Under this agreement of mine, for example, we have practically arrived at dual ownership. I have about as much interest in the land as the Duke of Fife has.

52,058. Do you think that is a desirable system to try and establish, having regard to the fact of what has occurred in Ireland, and that all parties have been engaged for some years in trying to get rid of it?—I think if landlords would make the necessary improvements themselves no tenant would seek to put out his capital on any landlord's farm if he could get the necessary buildings and improvements to carry on his farm. But if the landlord will not make them I think the tenant should have the option of doing so.

52,059. Then may I take it that the drift of your opinion is this—that you do not think a system approaching to dual ownership is desirable if it can be avoided?—Certainly.

52,060. But sooner than not be in the possession of the necessary improvements you would accept a system which would lead to that?—Quite so.

Bankrupt tenants.

52,061. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I think you said just now there were six tenants bankrupt out of 14. I presume they had been paying rent the whole of the time?—Yes.

52,062. And the reduction of rent—33 per cent.—took place when the tenancy changed?—When the new tenant got the farm.

52,063. Did the old tenants get any reduction?—The old tenants were refused a reduction in several of these cases.

52,064. Although by-and-by at that rent they became bankrupt?—They did.

52,065. You made the remark that farmers were losing money by leases. That is, I presume, because they have to pay the rent they have agreed to pay, notwithstanding that agricultural produce has fallen to an enormous extent?—That is so.

52,066. Would you agree to the security that is afforded by lease, provided that a fair rent could be arrived at?—Yes.

Notice to quit.

52,067. Do you think it would be conducive to good farming if farmers were able to turn out at the end of 12 months' or 2 years' notice?—I think it would make no difference if there was a proper Act to give a tenant value for his improvements on quitting his holding or as a sitting tenant. I am quite prepared to leave my farm on a two years' notice if I get full compensation for all the improvements I have effected, and which added to the letting value of the farm. In fact we have practically arrived at that position now, as every 19 years' lease, without exception, has a break at five years.

Demand for small holdings.

52,068. Is there any difficulty in finding tenants?—Not for small holdings.

52,069. How many competitors would there be for a small farm?—For a small farm with a pair of horses you would get 20 or 30 or 40, according to the desirableness of the holding; for a big farm, such as I have, the landlord would be looking about for tenants.

52,070. On these smaller farms are the factors more fastidious in making conditions and do they more strictly adhere to those which are laid down?—No, I do not think that they are particularly onerous in making conditions. Small tenants have made our part of the country; but they have not always been so well protected as the large tenant in making his bargain with the factor. The small tenants have actually made our county what it is. They have improved the whole area of the farms, erected the buildings themselves, and rents have been increased upon them for their own improvements.

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52,071. Does not that rather point to one fact, that small tenants, in consequence of greater competition for farms, are not able to make so good a bargain with the factor?—The protection they need is not against landlord or factor, but against themselves. They must give competitive rents.

52,072. And the competitive rents are alongside of their own improvements?—Certainly. The landlord says, I can get so-and-so for it, and the tenant has to give that or go.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,073. You think tenants are frequently deterred from taking advantage of the Agricultural Holdings Act, by the fact that the landlord comes in with a heavy counterclaim?—Yes.

52,074. And also from the expensive machinery of the Act?—Quite so.

Ground game.

52,075. In the case of the Ground Game Act a grievance exists where farms are surrounded by covers?—Very much so. The tenant has no means of protecting himself against the rabbits which come out from these plantations.

52,076. Would you advocate the tenant having the right to kill ground game where he liked?—I do not think that the tenant wants to kill the ground game himself. He has enough to do to attend to his work.

52,077. He wants to protect himself against damage?—Yes.

52,078. And if he is not protected from damage he should have the right to do so?—Yes. A Scotch tenant is not like an English one. He does not ride about on a horse with a pack of dogs following at his tail. He is a labourer.

Particulars of witness's farm.

52,079. (*Mr. Channing.*) You took your farm in 1876?—Yes.

52,080. Do I understand that the rent at which you took your arable land then would be about 13*s.* an acre?—Yes.

52,081. What would be the rent of similar land in the district at that time?—1*l.* an acre.

52,082. So that you had your land about 7*s.* an acre cheaper. Was that in respect both of the condition of the land and also of your improvements?—No. But solely from the fact that both the tenants who left these farms went out bankrupt, and had reduced the farms to an utterly non-paying condition.

52,083. You gave as the produce of the farm, 13 bushels of oats and 5 bushels of barley—tell us how that is arrived at in Scotland?—The crop of 1876 was valued to me by valuators appointed by the outgoing and the incoming tenant and they put it at 13 bushels of oats to the acre and five bushels of barley. When I threshed that crop out I did not get anything like the estimate of the valuators and the barley was only 43 lbs. instead of 56 lbs. per bushel.

52,084. What time of the year was it?—In September before the crops were removed from the ground. They were valued on the ground by the valuators.

52,085. You took the farms with the standing crops?—I had to pay for the standing crops.

52,086. This 7*s.* an acre—did you take that allowance as an equivalent for the bad condition of the farm without reference to your improvements?—Oh! it was a poor equivalent. It took 10 or 12 years to get the farm into a paying condition.

52,087. So that you think it would be ample allowance if you assigned the whole of the 7*s.* to the restoration of the condition of the farm?—Well it gave me a lesson never to take a farm run down in condition. I would rather pay a big rent and a big grassum for a farm in good order.

52,088. Then 7*s.* an acre in your opinion was not adequate to pay for the restoration of the land?—Quite inadequate.

52,089. Is it your contention that the rent since then has left you no interest whatever on the outlay you made for permanent improvements?—That is so.

52,090. What does your agreement give you—does it give you merely the remaining value of your improvements at the end of the tenancy?—Quite so. They will value the remaining value of the buildings, drains, fences, &c.

52,091. And nothing whatever for the interest of the money during the 19 years?—Nothing whatever.

52,092. And no sinking fund?—Nothing whatever.

52,093. Where landlords have carried out such improvements themselves have they not charged interest on the money and also something for a sinking fund?—Yes.

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52,094. He charges the tenant?—Who pays up both principal and interest.

Compensation for improvements.

52,095. Your point is that the tenant does not get interest on his money or any repayment on his outlay, and only gets the remaining value of his improvements at the end of his tenancy, whereas the landlord charges interest and a small sum to repay the outlay, and is consequently in a better position than the incoming tenant?—The landlord certainly is in that position when he gets the tenant to pay for the improvement.

52,096. He charges interest on the borrowed money?—Yes, 6½ per cent. The tenant paid up the capital and interest in the course of a 19 years' lease, and then he was charged a larger rent on these improvements in his next lease.

The letting of farms.

52,097. You say most of the farms are let by competition?—Yes. But not so much on the Duke of Richmond's estate.

52,098. I was just going to say that the Duke stated that he did not put up his farms to competition?—It is the exception for him to do so.

52,099. As a rule the other good landlords in Scotland have preferred to go by valuation?—That is so.

52,100. But in the majority of cases it would be by competition?—Certainly, in the majority of cases. All good landlords should see that the tenant is able to live.

Compensation for diminished value of holding.

52,101. You spoke about five acres of land having been taken off your brother-in-law's farm; in your Scotch Act you have no compensation in cases of the resumption of land by the landlord?—No. He could come in and take all the farm, leaving me only five acres, and I would only get a proportionate reduction of rent.

52,102. You have no compensation as in the English Act for diminished value of the rest of the holding?—None whatever He could take 1,200 acres and leave me with five.

52,103. That is a serious blot on your Scotch Act you would wish to see removed?—Yes.

Farming capital.

52,104. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How much capital have you embarked in your farm in improvements and stock?—I should think about 3,000*l.*

52,105. What proportion do they bear to each other, how much has been invested in improvements, and how much in stock?—I should say about 1,200*l.* in permanent improvements.

52,106. And that 1,200*l.* you will get back when you give up the farm?—That was their cost to me, and I will get value for them.

52,107. That will be your claim for improvements?—And the arbiters will settle what I have to get.

52,108. What capital is required for these small farms?—Not quite so much proportionately as for large ones.

52,109. Not quite so much per acre?—A small tenant can go into a farm at 5*l.*, 6*l.*, or 7*l.* an acre.

52,110. How many acres do you say constitutes a small farm?—From 50 to 70 acres.

52,111. And you have many applicants for that class of farm?—Very many.

52,112. They must have put by a lot of money as labourers to have that capital?—Well, themselves and their families. They work together as a family.

52,113. They would want to have 300*l.* or so?—They easily save the money.

52,114. The increase of wages seems to point that the labourer is in a very good condition?—So far as wages are concerned he is in an exceptional position.

Cottages.

52,115. But the want of cottages is a drawback?—Yes.

52,116. With regard to the lack of cottages, is the Housing of the Working Classes Act in force in Scotland?—No.

52,117. Are you sure?—Well, as local authority under the Public Health Act we may pull down every cottage in Banffshire if it is insanitary, but we may not build one—that is, we cannot ask the landlord to build one.

52,118. There is a part of the English Act which enables local authorities, where there is a deficiency of accommodation for working men, to build?—I never heard of it.

52,119. It has never been put in force?—I should have known of it if it had applied to Scotland.

52,120. Would it answer to have such a law in force?—Very much so.

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52,121. In the case you mentioned, where compensation to the extent of 37*l.* was allowed, and the expenses were 21*l.*, what was the claim made by the tenant?—I am not quite certain. I only know the result of the arbitration.

52,122. Did each have to pay his own expenses?—Yes, half-and-half. It was the arbiters' clerks and agents that brought up the bill.

52,123. Are there many farms unlet in your neighbourhood?—Not one.

52,124. And when your lease comes to an end next year, would you keep your farm on at the same rent?—Certainly not.

Compensation to sitting tenant.

52,125. (*Mr. Clay.*) Suppose you renew the lease, will you be paid for your permanent improvements?—That depends upon the bargain.

52,126. If you renew the lease, the presumption is that you will not receive payment?—It puts the tenant in a very awkward position. We have to fix the value of the improvements, and then we have to arrive at what will be the rent for the next term of years. If I were to insist on getting my valuation, then I could not very well stay on the farm.

Prices.

52,127. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You attribute the depression in your part of the country to the fall of prices?—Yes, chiefly of beef and barley. We have cultivated barley very largely. We have 27 distilleries in my neighbourhood, and in 1876 I was getting 36*s.*, and 37*s.*, and 38*s.* a quarter for my barley, which I could deliver in half-an-hour from the farm.

Rates.

52,128. Have you any system of classification for your local rate, or is all property charged the same?—Railways and householders are charged on a different classification from land.

52,129. A higher classification?—Yes, I think so.

52,130. What is land charged at?—I really am not able to say the per-centage of remission.

52,131. But you pay on a lower classification?—I think so.

52,132. And that gives satisfaction?—We do not complain of the rates at all.

Effect of depression.

52,133. (*Captain Thomas.*) You have already said that farming is not a paying business in Banffshire?—It is not.

52,134. Are farmers able to live without losing capital?—They have not been able to do so for a number of years. Some farmers are, of course, in a better position than others. Profits have fluctuated more with the men who buy store cattle whenever they can get them than with those who are breeding and feeding their cattle.

52,135. Has there been any great change in the system of farming?—No, I think not.

Cattle breeding in Banffshire.

52,136. You said Banffshire was well situated for breeding cattle?—Very well situated.

52,137. Does it pay to breed cattle at present prices?—Yes, it does, but it has not been doing so for some years. If a man is feeding and breeding his own cattle it pays him best.

52,138. Does it pay best to breed or feed?—It depends on the farm you hold. If you farm in an upland district, with a wide stretch of land on a small rent, then it is best to be a breeder, but if you are on better land with a small area, then you would feed and possibly breed.

Store cattle.

52,139. What is the average price you get for store cattle?—We would pay for two-year-old black polled cattle about 17*l.* That is the best class.

52,140. And three-year-olds?—We do not keep them. We feed them all off on the grass as two-year-olds if they are not ready for the butcher when the turnip crop is consumed. We feed off all our cattle at 18 months or two years. A calf dropped now will be sent to the London market at Christmas 1896. You will rarely see a three or a four-year-old in the country.

52,141. What profit do you make on an animal for which you have paid 17*l.*?—Well, if it is a good class of beast, and you sell it in the month of November or early in December when the best prices are going before the Christmas glut, you will get 22*l.* or 24*l.* for it.

Sale by live weight.

52,142. Do you sell by weight?—We are introducing that. The cattle are now all passed over the weighbridge, and the purchaser sees the weight recorded on the dial, but we do not sell at so much per cwt.

52,143. (*Mr. Clay.*) Would it be an advantage to a farmer who fed cattle to sell them by live weight?—That

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is my view. Some of the butchers, I believe, did at one time object to the weighbridge; they buy by the eye, but both buyers and sellers are now accepting the guide afforded by the weighbridge.

52,144. Is it not universally the practice in America to sell by live weight?—I believe it is.

52,145. And you would like to see it compulsory here?—I would.

Effect of depression.

52,146. (*Mr. Everett.*) In parts of Banffshire you think there is severe agricultural distress?—Yes.

52,147. And it has been getting worse for the last few years?—Yes. It has not improved.

52,148. Your county adjoins Elgin and Aberdeenshire?—Yes.

52,149. From Elgin we had testimony very different from yours—that the depression had not been severe, and that such depression as there had been was passing away?—You must quite understand that the lower district of Morayshire is like the Lothians, and that they cultivate potatoes largely there. They will have there from 25 to 30 acres of potatoes, whereas we only grow about half an acre for our own use. The cultivation in the lower district of Morayshire is very different from ours, because of the superior climate and the more favourable conditions under which the land is in consequence cultivated.

Bankrupt tenants.

52,150. These bankrupt tenants you speak of were they under lease?—They were all under lease.

52,151. Had they abatements made to them prior to bankruptcy?—Yes, in some cases they had. In all I am not able to say.

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52,152. Do I understand you to say that you fatten the bulk of your beasts on the grass?—I prefer to see them on the grass, because at that season of the year we get the best prices. Next month all the shooting tenants come down to our part of the country, and I can get 5*s.* and 6*s.* a cwt. more then than in London.

Cattle fattening.

52,153. Will your grass fatten them?—It makes the best beef of all.

52,154. Without artificial feeding?—They are fed on distillery grains mixed with crushed oats, and on the refuse "ale" in the fields.

Markets.

52,155. How is the bulk of your meat disposed of?—It is sent to London.

52,156. Do you sell it to people on the spot?—I am within a mile of the only auction mart in the county. The cattle are sent there and there the dealers come and buy.

52,157. Do farmers send meat direct to London?—They do at Christmas time, but they have regretted it the last year or two.

Rates.

52,158. Then as to rates—half the rate is paid by the tenant and half by the landlord?—Yes, it is a very good arrangement. It induces the tenants to assist to keep down the rates.

52,159. What effect has the division of rates on rents in Scotland?—I do not think it has much effect. Where the rates are so low as 1*s.* 2*d.* in the £ I do not think the tenant ever takes it into consideration. If he did of course it would be so much off the rent. But really these small tenants do not consider the rates at all.

The witness then withdrew.

Mr. H. R. B. Peile.

Mr. H. R. B. Peile was called in and examined.

Mr. H. R. B. Peile.

52,160–1. (*Lord Cobham.*) You live in the neighbourhood of Greenock and manage Sir Michael Shaw Stewart's estate?—Yes.

52,162. Your whole time is given to that?—Yes.

52,163. What county is the estate in?—Renfrewshire.

52,164. You are to speak entirely of this district to-day?—Yes.

Cause of depression.

52,165. You come to speak more especially on the causes and remedies of agricultural depression. What do you consider the primary cause of the agricultural depression to be?—I have noted down some remarks here which I should like to read:—"The condition of agriculture in the lower ward of Renfrewshire has been affected alike with all other parts of Scotland in a greater or less degree from one apparent cause, viz., the the importation of agricultural produce, live stock, carcases, and butter. This is the primary cause of the depression. Its effect has been widespreading and it has altered the habits and style of living of the population of the towns. The cheapness of bread enables families in populous places, if not in rural districts, to be fed differently to what formerly was the custom, and the extraordinary cheapness of sugar exported from other countries under a system of high bounties, and the consequent cheapness of fruit-preserves take effect also, by inducing mothers to feed their children on slices of bread covered with sugar or jam. Thus the necessity of keeping the fire alight, and the consequent trouble and expense of cooking porridge or potatoes is obviated, and the demand for oatmeal, milk, and potatoes is materially reduced. The result is that oats, which maintained their price in this country longer than other grains, are now cheaper than they have ever been known to be; the consumption of potatoes is reduced, and they hardly pay the cost of the manure required to grow them successfully; and milk—a commodity which under the former system of household diet was indispensable—is also cut short in consumption by the cheap loaf, cheap sugar, and cheap jam, not to mention the great increase in the use of tea. The dairy districts were longer in feeling the causes of the agricultural depression than other districts, and more particularly those districts which had not recourse from favourable causes to the assistance of the middleman, but the importation of cheese unsettled the cheese-producing districts, and milk from a distance found its way into the towns which had formerly in a great measure been supplied by the farms within short distances, the result being that from the facilities given by the railway companies to long-distance carriage, farmers only eight or ten miles from a town pay as much for the carriage of their milk by rail as those 50 miles away. Milk, therefore, like other farm produce, has been levelled in price in the market, partly by the change in household economy, and partly by the increased facilities given by railways to milk-producing districts at a distance. In so far as the purchase of the animals is concerned, the market price of dairy stock is a matter of considerable importance to an incoming tenant when he enters his farm, as that represents in a great measure his capital, and one man may be more lucky in this respect than another. But in disposing of his cows when their value for milking ceases, they come into competition with animals imported for meat, and then the importation question comes forcibly into effect."

Reduction of rents.

52,166. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is the depression severe in your neighbourhood?—Of course it reached us later than it did others, but the prices of milk and dairy produce have considerably fallen.

52,167. How has that affected rents?—Rents, no doubt, are down. If a farm comes into the market now it does not bring the rent it formerly did.

52,168. How much have they fallen?—10 to 12 per cent. In special cases, more.

52,169. There are still plenty of competitors for farms?—We have fair competition.

52,170. I suppose it is an estate of which the management is very liberal?—Yes. The management is liberal. We do a very great deal in reference to buildings and accommodation generally.

52,171. With a reduction of rental from 10 to 12 per cent. are you able to let farms to good tenants possessed of capital?—Good farms always bring forward a certain amount of tenants. Some, no doubt, are better than others.

52,172. You consider that the fall in rents has met the special causes of depression you have enumerated?—I think that tenants make their own calculations when they enter a farm, and consider carefully what they are able to afford. They take prices into account.

52,173. Do you think the rents are based on present prices, or do you think farmers make terms in the hope of better times?—I think they are based on present prices. I think there are some farmers who compete for farms and hope to get a reduction. But on a generously managed property such a class are not selected as the best tenants.

The Agricultural Holdings Act

52,174. Do you find that the Agricultural Holdings Act is valued by farmers?—I must tell you that, so far as I am concerned, I can only judge of the Agricultural Holdings Act by what I read about it. I have had no experience of the Agricultural Holdings Act myself.

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52,175. Are the agreements under which your tenants hold in substitution of the Agricultural Holdings Act? You state that you have no practical knowledge of the Act? — Simply because we have not had changes of tenants to any great extent. The farms have been descending from father to son.

52,176. When a lease falls in it is generally renewed? —It is generally renewed. We have had no claims under the Act on our estate.

Suggested amendments.

52,177. Have you any strong opinion as to the policy of the suggested amendments of the Act?—I have very strong views indeed.

52,178. Do you think these amendments, as a rule, are in the wrong direction?—I think many of them are.

52,179. What are your views? — I have specially in my paper directed attention to the report of Mr. James Hope, and if I may read now my views in reference to that I shall bring out what I take exception to, and I quote certain portions of Mr. Hope's report to illustrate my argument. I go on to say here:—"The views "advanced for the remedy of agricultural depression by "the amendments suggested on the Agricultural Holdings "(Scotland) Act, 1883, appear to me to be extravagant "and unreasonable. It should not be lost sight of in "considering this matter that since the abolition of "hypothec, landlords are debarred by statute from "demanding any security whatever for the rent stipu- "lated for, which is after all nothing less or more than "the interest of the capital they lend to a tenant to trade "with, and that there is no other commercial enterprise "put under similar restraint; and it would seem to be "very one-sided legislation when the first party to a "contract is debarred from security, and the second party "is to get the whole *corpus* of the first party's estate "as security for what he, the second party, elects to sink "in the first party's property, and that without the latter "being consulted in the matter. It is therefore reason- "able that landlords should emphasise this, and, in the "future amendments of the Act in favour of the tenant, "it is only fair that their interests should be equally "safeguarded. The common law demands that every "man shall cut his coat to his cloth, and if he does not "do so he must take the consequences, but the advocates "for the alteration of the Agricultural Holdings Act "desire to place statutory powers in the hands of the "tenant through the process of arbitration and otherwise "to spend money, his security being the landlord who will "be responsible, and that without any regard as to whether "he can afford it or not. Every conceivable reason for "agricultural depression has been advanced, the remedies "suggested have all, more or less, come to naught, and "the one of all others which remains alive is the Agricul- "tural Holdings Act. It is true that taxation of land has "had some attention as one item of remedy, but even "that is slow to convince, as any relief in this direction "would, in these anti-landlord days, be deemed to be some- "thing in the landlord's pocket, and any remedy having "this effect is condemned in Mr. James Hope's report "(1894 Report, page 8) when dealing with import duties, "where he says, 'The new rents would be based upon "'the increased prices, and thus the benefit of a rise would "'be transferred from the tenant to the landlord in the "'form of an increased rent.' There are four points "which have struck me forcibly in Mr. James Hope's "report and evidence. 1st (1895 Report, page 20).— "The reference to the system adopted in the neighbour- "hood of large towns, especially Edinburgh, as to freedom "of cropping. 2nd (1895 Report, page 40).—The evidence "adduced that certain tenants do, in the latter years of "a lease, manœuvre to get unfair advantages at the land- "lord's expense. 3rd (1895 Report, page 40).—That the "remedy for this is what is termed cumulative fertility. "4th.—That the general view is that the tenant farmers "of the country ought to have the utmost encouragement, "not only in their own interests, but in the *interests of the "nation* to invest their money in developing to the utmost "to the resources of their holdings (1895, page 41)."

Restrictions in leases.

52,180. May I ask, are the restrictions as to cropping strictly maintained on your estate?—We have a rotation of course on the lease, and, as a rule, we expect it to be observed; but these clauses are not rigidly enforced where circumstances warrant and justify a departure from them.

52,181. You exercise your right when damage appears to be done?—Yes.

52,182. (*Captain Thomas.*) Are you a practical farmer? —I am a land agent.

52,183. And not a farmer?—Not a farmer.

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52,184. You have no knowledge of farming, you let farms?—Letting farms is my principal occupation. I have had the management of home farms, and so forth.

52,185. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you manage Sir Michael's home farm?—No, there is an overseer.

Suggested amend- ments.

52,186–7. Then you are not a practical farmer?—I have said so. *Continuing the reading of his paper witness said*:—"In reference to these four points (just alluded to) "it may be asked: 1st. Is it to be supposed that if freedom "of cropping was sanctioned by statute an improved "system of high farming would be adopted throughout "the country? It requires no argument to prove that the "localities in the vicinity of towns are exceptionally "favourably situated, and that to hold up the farms so "situated in them as examples for the length and breadth "of Scotland to follow is straining the fad for free cropping "beyond the limits of reason. 2nd. It is remarkable "that when Mr. Hope found from evidence that tenants "did manœuvre during the latter years of a lease to "take an unfair advantage of the landlord that he had "no safeguard or remedy to suggest to meet such tactics. "3rd. In place of any remedy being suggested the landlords' "dilemma is proposed to be intensified, for he is still "not only to be exposed to these manœuvering tenants, "but he is to have a bill run up against him by the "better-behaved tenant who commences his process some "years earlier as it suits his convenience. 4th. That not "only is the tenant to have every facility at the landlord's "expense to advance his own interests, but *the nation* is "also to share the spoil, and if it is of importance to the "nation to encourage tenants to sink capital, surely it is "of equal importance to encourage landlords to do the "same, which they cannot do if too harassed by legislation. "These considerations have a forcible influence on my "mind in viewing the agitation which is being urged "under the cover of this Act, and a danger exists that "legislation may proceed under panic or undue haste, "and grave injustice arise therefrom to the detriment "of all engaged in agriculture."

52,187–8. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What are your observations based upon?—What the Chamber of Agriculture in Edinburgh have discussed; the proposals that we see in Mr. Hope's report, and the general ideas that have gone forth as to the amendments that should be made upon this Act.

52,189. What you want now is to put before us your opinions or criticisms upon these proposals?—That is so.

52,190. These proposals being contained in Mr. Hope's report?—Some of them are proposals made by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

52,191. (*Lord Cobham.*) Take the suggestion that compensation should be granted in respect of high cultivation—cumulative fertility?—I do not see how that is to be fairly and equitably done between landlord and tenant.

52,192. The proposal is that an inspection of the farm should take place when the incoming tenant takes it, and another when he leaves it?—That is to say, in the first year of the 19 years' lease it would be reported on, and at the end of the 19 years it would be reported on. I think the system would be open to grave abuse. I think Mr. Davidson spoke to that, and pointed out that it would be a difficult question to settle between landlord and tenant unless all rights were carefully safeguarded and made statutory as well as having the statutory power to do so.

52,193. You do not think good farming should be a subject of compensation at all?—I think the tenant when he takes his farm makes his calculation on all these points, and, if he is to be paid for everything, that principle of making up his mind as to what he will have to lay out on a farm when he takes it will be all superseded. Surely when a man takes a farm at a certain rent he must make up his calculation as to what his outlay may be.

52,194. (*Mr. Clay.*) How do you know without practice?—It is what a tenant is always supposed to do. They do not take a thing hap-hazard.

52,195. They make a calculation as to the stock and as to the general run of the farm, but he could do that still?—He has to farm according to the rules of good husbandry, and to manage the farm in a fit and proper manner.

52,196. He might be farming according to the rules of good husbandry without doing much for increased fertility?—That is true.

Improvements by tenants.

52,197. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you a strong objection to the tenant being empowered to force expenditure which you think would be the result of the proposed amendment of

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the Act?—I do think it would be taking away the rights of property altogether. I think the system of arbitration during the currency of a lease would be most arbitrary.

52,198. What would you think would be the effect upon the position of the landlord if the management of his property were practically taken out of his hands?—I think it would be a very disagreeable position to be put in, and one that he should not be called upon to endure. It would be a sort of trusteeship which would never work.

52,199. Do you think the effect would be that the tenants would carry out improvements?—I think it would be a power in the hand of the tenant to force his landlord's hands, which I do not think is fair and reasonable.

52,200. Do you think that under a system of such ownership the landowners would spend little or no capital on their estates?—I think possibly they might not. They would not have the same share in the management of their own estates.

52,201. What interest do you think a landowner gets on the capital outlay on his property?—If he gets his 3 or 4 per cent. he is well off.

52,202. Do you think he gets as much as that?—It depends a little on the estate.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

52,203. Do you wish to add anything else as to the suggested amendments of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I refer here to the works which, I think, should not be taken out of the hand of the proprietor. I should also like to speak of Schedule 3 of the Act for the compensation of artificial manures and feeding stuffs. It has been recognised by law of late that the tenants have been purchasing artificial manures and feeding stuffs which have not had the quality they were represented to have. A law has come into force that analysts appointed by the counties are now at the tenants' request able to check these purchases. I think it would be reasonable that in these claims made against landlords for unexhausted manures and manurial values, which are supposed to be left in the land, they should have a certificate that these articles had been genuine and up to what they were guaranteed.

52,204. Do you consider that under the 19 years' lease system there should be no compensation at all for tenants' outlay?—I think where it is absolutely proved that so much has been left of the manurial value it is fair and reasonable that the tenant should get it back. But then I think the way of arriving at what is left is rather of an indefinite kind; and it certainly cannot absolutely be proved by any data that can brought forward. It is calculated by vouchers produced showing what has been paid for them, but then that is of little good to the landlord if care has not been taken to see that the manures were of genuine quality. That is the risk.

52,205. That is a matter for the valuators themselves. Is there any reason why they should not settle among themselves the principles upon which compensation should be awarded?—They settle it upon the vouchers produced, but they have no guarantee that the manurial value in these vouchers has absolutely been received.

52,206. Do you think that compensation is often unjustly given?—I think there is a fear of it. I do not see that the landlord has any guarantee.

52,207. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think the witness is under a mistake there. Arbiters dealing with cases of this kind have not only the vouchers before them, but the analysis as well?—I do not think the analysis of the merchant is sufficient.

52,208. But we have the Highland Society's vouchers, and vouchers from Dr. Voelcker?—But it is not compulsory to have them.

52,209. (*Lord Cobham.*) You have had no practical experience of the working of the Act yourself?—No, I have not.

52,210. Do you wish to make any other remarks on the subject?—I think it is quite evident from what has been brought out in Mr. Hope's report that it is quite possible for land to be thoroughly exhausted, or to have all in it taken out by the use of worthless artificial manures, and that the landlord may have to pay the tenant for manurial value supposed to be left in the land, and also for unexhausted improvements which are not there.

52,211. Generally you think that there is a great absence of safeguards for the protection of the landlord?—I do.

Co-operation.

52,212. Do you see any remedy for the depression?—No, I do not. I have mentioned that co-operation might be one remedy, by which I mean that a great deal might be saved if farmers co-operated together—the smaller farmers—and bought large quantities under proper guarantees. There might be a considerable saving on the working expenses of the farm.

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52,213. Is that done in Scotland to a great extent?—I I think it is done largely in the neighbourhood of Dundee. I had some little experience of it myself many years ago. But the difficulty is to get farmers to work together.

52,214. Do you think they will ever be got to co-operate in supplying to the market large quantities of produce, so as to get railway rates on a lower scale?—I think they are a difficult class to get to co-operate together. I do not refer so much to railway rates, although I think the railway rates are certainly a great drawback.

52,215. You are speaking more of co-operation in the purchase of artificial manures and feeding stuffs?—Yes.

Labourers.

52,216. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the depression been much felt by the labouring classes in your district?—I am not aware that it has.

52,217. Have the wages gone up or down?—I am not prepared to say; I do not think that they have varied very much of late.

Extent of depression

52,218. And the tenant farmers are not doing badly?—The tenant farmers are doing fairly well, considering the times.

52,219. Then the extent of the depression is measured by this fall of rent of about 10 or 12 per cent.?—I think so.

52,220. That is practically the extent of the depression? I am giving that as a general fall. There are exceptional cases.

52,221. What is the size of the estate for which you act as land agent?—I think we have about 27,000 acres.

52,222. All one estate?—Yes.

Evasive clauses in leases.

52,223. Did you hear the statement made yesterday, that the leases in Scotland nearly always contained provisions over riding the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have not seen that statement.

52,224. Do you agree with the opinion that these covenants in leases are designed to evade the Act?—I do not know. In my experience they are not to evade the Act; they are merely to get fair play.

52,225. But there were some covenants read out yesterday of that nature?—I did not see them.

52,226. Have you got a copy of the leases you grant on your estate?—(*Witness handed in a copy of the form of the lease asked.*)

52,227. Is there anything of the kind I have referred to in them?—I think we have some provision in reference to artificial manures and feeding stuffs, that if necessary, they should be certified by an analyst.

52,228. But you have none in contravention of the Act?—I do not think so.

52,228*a*. And you do not know of any such cases?—No.

52,229. (*Captain Thomas.*) Were these agreements you speak of made before or after the passing of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Since the passing of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,230. You have not contracted out of the Act in any way?—No.

52,231. You have expressed your opinion on certain points, I should like to ask whether these views of yours are shared by your tenants and by the farmers generally in your district?—I cannot tell you that, I have not called round to consult them.

52,232. You are really speaking for yourself?—Yes.

52,233. And not for any of the farmers, and you have not heard them discussing this subject?—No. We have had discussions at agricultural meetings, but I do not profess to speak for anyone but myself.

52,234. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is your opinion of the present Agricultural Holdings Act?—In what respect?

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

52,235. In respect of the compensation for artificial manure under Part 3 of the schedule?—Well, as I have said there should be a check put upon them.

52,236. You think it is too drastic?—I think it is too much in favour of the tenant without a safeguard for the proprietor. I think in connection with these feeding stuffs and artificial manures there should be a security that they are what they are guaranteed to be. That would be fair to the tenant and fair to the landlord also.

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52,237. Can you give any instance of injustice which has been done to the landlord under the present Agricultural Holdings Act?—I told you I had not had experience in it. I am merely judging from what I have read of the efforts to get it amended.

52,238. You are speaking theoretically and not practically?—I have had no practical experience of it.

52,239. You have never had any case in which the landlord had been unjustly dealt with?—I judge from what I have seen, and that there are arbitrators who apparently go on no particular principle.

52,240. Would not these rather point to the fact that the valuators under the Agricultural Holdings Act do not know their business?—I think the idea that there might be a judicial valuator is not a bad one.

52,241. The point is this—you said you thought there was no principle in the award of compensation for artificial manures?—It can only be judged by the amount of money in the voucher.

52,242. Is there no further proof required?—That is what I think ought to be required.

52,243. Is there not? Are vouchers taken as evidence?—I understand so. If there is an analysis it is that given by the manure merchant himself.

52,244. Do you mean to say there is no evidence to prove the appreciation of the manure to the soil?—It can only be taken from what the tenant himself says.

52,245. You say there is no proof of that required by the valuators?—Not that I am aware of.

52,246. One has a difficulty as you have had no practical experience?—I believe the voucher is put before the arbitrator, and he judges according to the amount paid for by the material.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

52,247. What provisions do you consider unreasonable and extravagant in the proposals that have been brought before the Commission?—There is one I have not touched upon that I think is unreasonable, and that is that produce consumed should be put on the same footing as produce purchased.

52,248. Suppose the tenant sells his produce, and with the result of it buys artificial feeding stuffs, you give him compensation?—I quite see the point. But I think that the Act never contemplated that. It is giving too much licence.

52,249. You think the old Act goes too far?—That is just what Mr. Hope thinks also.

52,250. Wherein do you think the old Agricultural Holdings Act goes too far?—I think that the Agricultural Holdings Act goes too far in this point, the produce consumed.

52,251. But still you do not know of any case in which injustice has been done to the landlord?—I think it is an injustice.

52,252. But you do not know any practical case?—I cannot tell you any specific case.

52,253. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you represent the expressed opinion of any resolution passed by any body of agents or awyers in Scotland?—No; simply my own opinion.

52,254. (*Lord Cobham.*) How long have you been agent to Sir Michael Shaw Stewart?—Twenty-two years.

52,255. And during all that time you have had no appeal to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have not.

Position of tenants.

52,256. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The tenants on the estate you manage you think are in fairly comfortable circumstances?—I think so.

52,257. Are they able to meet their rents at the proper time?—We have arrears.

52,258. Have they gone into co-operation in regard to their milk in endeavouring to better their circumstances?—No, I do not think so. I am not aware of any co-operation. They all work to their own hand.

52,259. Are the farms on your estate worked by the tenants with the aid of their families to any great extent?—Where the family works they are in a much better position than where they have to employ farm servants. They are a hard-working class altogether. There is no system of farming calls for harder work than dairying.

52,260. Do you lay down in your leases stipulations as to cropping?—We have it really all under the seven years' course. There is a general cropping clause, but we have never had any occasion to deal with tenants for departing from it.

52,261. When you have farms to let do you advertise them?—I have done so; but very often I let a farm without doing so. I know certain men that I can offer them to.

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Arrears of rent.

52,262. (*Mr. Clay.*) On the estate you manage have you much arrears?—We have suffered from arrears no doubt. I cannot say at the present moment whether we are far back in our arrears or not.

52,263. Would there be two or three years arrears of rent?—Not in all. I may have some farms where they are back two or three years.

52,264. Not more than two or three years?—Really I did not come prepared to answer that. I think I could spot one or two that are exceptionally bad and that have perhaps been treated too leniently.

52,265. Do you consider them too highly rented?—No, I do not consider them too highly rented.

52,266. Where does the deficiency come in, want of capital?—As far as I have seen if they had taken more care they might have made their way better.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,267. You did not finish your paper; but as far as you went I gathered from it that you do not believe in the principle of the 1883 Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not think I went that length.

52,268. And you do not believe in Mr. James Hope's report regarding the amendments required for the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do take exception to them.

52,269. To the whole or to a part?—I have tried to point out those that I have taken exception to. I should not like to give a wide answer. I really think I have dealt specifically with those points I have taken objection to.

52,270. I gathered from your examination that you were giving rather a wholesale condemnation to Mr. Hope's report?—I did not go in for a wholesale condemnation so far as I know; I was speaking to special points.

52,271. What are the special points you condemn?—I have enumerated some of them: produce consumed, cumulative fertility, arbitration during the currency of the lease, expenditure for buildings——

52,272. (*Captain Thomas.*) You know Mr. Hope is a large practical farmer?—I am aware of it.

52,273. (*Mr. Clay.*) And, I suppose, he has gathered these opinions from both landlords and tenants in the different counties he has been through?—I cannot tell you. I rather take it that he did not consult many landlords.

52,274. He had a very large body of the tenantry?—I have not the slightest doubt he had a great many witnesses before him.

Buildings erected by tenants.

52,275. Regarding buildings, you take exception to that?—I do.

52,276. But if the tenant put them up unnecessarily or uselessly he would not get compensation for them?—That may be quite possible, but why should the tenant be allowed to pull about a steading that a landlord has built on a plan applicable to the whole of his property. If a tenant wants accommodation for 20 cows or feeding animals, an arbitrator is to come in and say if the tenant is reasonable in his request, if the landlord will not do it the tenant is to build it himself. But who is to look after it; who is to draw the plan and specifications?

52,277. Who draws your plans and specifications?—I do not see that at all. Here you are going to let the tenant come in and upset the whole elevations and plans of his steading. If he is to build an extra byre; he may build it of brick next to a stone building, or he may cover it with corrugated iron next to slate. There is no limit to what a tenant may do under the proposed amendment.

52,278. Would any wise tenant do a thing of that kind?—I do not know what you call "a wise tenant." If the tenant got the power to do as he liked he would do it.

52,279. But if he did wrong he would get no compensation?—I do not value it absolutely in £ *s. d.* I value it as an interference with the landlord's just rights and powers. I do not think that it is fair and reasonable that a tenant should be allowed to pull about the landlord's buildings.

Draining.

52,280. For instance, the landlord might not be able to drain the land—is it to be left undrained?—But the present Act provides for that.

52,281. The landlord may do it himself, and if he does not it falls back upon the tenant. Have you any objections to the tenant draining?—I think the landlord should have the same power as under the present Act.

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52,282. We want good draining?—I do not approve of your way of getting it.

52,283. Do you not believe that draining is of great value to the land?—I believe in the drainage as provided under the present Act. I think the landlord should be entitled to do it if he likes.

52,284. Is the tenant not a better judge of the draining of land than the landlord?—I do not see that he should be if the land is properly managed. I do not think so at all.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

52,285. Regarding manures, you seem to think that there is a doubt as to the value of manures put into a farm?—Yes; I go upon absolute facts.

52,286. What facts, and who has it been proved by?—By analytical societies, by the Royal Agricultural Society, by the Highland and Agricultural Society it has been proved how much money has been thrown away by purchasing useless artificial manures and feeding stuffs.

52,287. If the tenant purchased these useless artificial manures he would be the loser?—But how is the arbitrator to know it? How is he certain that they are what they are represented to be?

52,288. The evidence is the document that the money has been spent. You have the account for the manure bones, or whatever it may be, and the tenant is bound to supply an analysis by the Highland Society's analyst?—He is not bound. That is my point.

52,289. He has to bring that as evidence?—He is not bound to bring it as evidence.

52,290. The valuator would not give him credit if he did not produce an analyst's report?—I am not aware of that. I want it made compulsory.

52,291. You have had no experience?—I have told you that over and over again. I am speaking from the experience I have gained as a land agent.

52,292. You wish that along with the vouchers there should be a proper analysis put before the arbitrator?—I am arguing that along with the vouchers there should be undoubted evidence that the manures are what they are represented to be.

52,293. You quoted Dr. Voelcker. Have you any evidence that he takes that view?—Well, what I have to say about Dr. Voelcker is this, that at a dinner at the Hotel Métropole, on the 12th December 1894, Dr. Voelcker, making reference to the Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act, is reported to have said:—"That this Act, "which at first so greatly alarmed the manufacturers, was "working satisfactorily, and really operated in the interests "of the honest and reputable producers, while it was only "the dishonest and shady manufacturers who were being "legislatively stamped out from the trade, and he said he "had known cases in which what was called 'damaged or "'roasted nitrate of soda' had been sold, which contained "no nitrate of soda at all, and a so-called 'silicate "manure,' which was nothing more than ground flints, "had been put upon the market at a price of 7*l.* per ton, "and he quoted the better knowledge of the German "average farmer, who had better scientific knowledge "than the British farmer, with the result that the German "never ordered fancy fertilisers of mysterious concoction, "but always asked for exactly what he wanted, and saw "that he got so much phosphates, so much nitrates, and "so on." I say that is proof that in Dr. Voelcker's experience a great amount of useless artificial manures had been put upon the market, and that certain occupiers of land buy them. Now I want that checked when it goes before the arbitrator. I want it made compulsory that the tenant should produce a reliable analysis.

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52,294. (*Mr. Clay.*) I agree with you?—I want it statutory also.

52,295. Do you think that the tenant has been forcing any great expenditure on the landlord by increasing the fertility of the soil by using extra manures?—I do not say that.

52,296. (*Captain Thomas.*) Who pays compensation, the incoming tenant or the landlord, for these artificial manures?—It is the landlord. I do not know of any case when the tenant did so. That is not the system in Scotland. Of course they might make a bargain but I never heard of one.

52,297. Of course it means an increased rent when a farm that has been well manured is relet?—What I understand would be the effect here would be this, if the rent went up that is settled before the claims are settled. When the claims come before the arbitrator the question of the increased rent is brought up as the effect of the tenant's labour, and, no doubt, the price is run up in consequence. If the rent goes down, I am afraid the argument is that if they had not done so much the rent would have been less, so that, again, the landlord has to pay the piper.

The witness then withdrew.

Mr. R. Dickie.

Mr. Robert Dickie called in and examined.

Mr. R. Dickie.

52,298. (*Lord Cobham.*) How long have you been a farmer?—Over 40 years.

Particulars of witness's farm.

52,299. You are the tenant of a mixed farm of 700 acres in Argyllshire, of which one-half is arable and the other pasture?—That is so.

52,300. What stock have you?—My stock consists of 78 milch cows and about 60 young cattle of various ages under three years old, and between 300 and 400 black-faced sheep.

52,301. What labour do you employ?—I employ one dairy maid and two assistants for byre, one shepherd, three ploughmen, two unmarried lads, and in the house a house girl as domestic servant.

Wages.

52,302. What wages are given now?—Married men get about 50*l.* a year.

52,303. (*Mr. Everett.*) Does the wife of the married man give any service also for that money?—Oh, no. That is a married man with a house of his own and who feeds himself. I have, however, always been in the habit, as a dairy farmer, of giving as many of the ploughmen as liked to have it, a cow's grass. It is an inducement to a young man to save if he can have something of that kind of his own. And, of course, on a large dairy farm there are a large number of milkers required, and if you have married men you get assistance from their families.

52,304. (*Lord Cobham.*) What do you give single men?—Single men get 20*l.* to 28*l.*, and they get their board over and above that. Dairymaids get 24*l.* to 28*l.*, and the girl in the house gets 9*l.* to 10*l.* per annum. These figures may be taken as the average wages over the district.

52,305. How would these figures compare with 40 years ago?—They have been gradually going up. When I went to the farm in 1855, the dairymaid got 5*l.* a year with board. That was the highest wages given, and the domestic servant got 4*l.* The single lads who lived in the house would be about 14*l.* a year.

52,306. You say here, dairymaids' wages have increased fully 120 per cent., domestic servants 100 per cent., ploughmen and other farm labourers 50 to 70 per cent.?—That is about it.

Condition of labourers.

52,307. And they have shorter hours of labour now?—Yes.

52,308. Do they work as well as they did then?—There is no improvement on that as far as I can say.

52,309. What is their condition now?—Their condition is much better from a monetary point of view. They have more wages and they have more to spend.

52,310. Do they live in a more comfortable way?—I do not know that. They live in rather a different way. They used to take oatmeal porridge and they have left off that. They go in very much more for tea and live in a more expensive way. But I do not think, as a matter of health and working liability, that they are any better than they were.

52,311. Are they worse for taking tea instead of oatmeal?—I do not think it is good for a family or a working man to live, as it were, on tea. That is my opinion. Of course, it is readier made and saves time in the cooking.

52,312. Are they saving more money?—No, that is not my experience.

Cottages.

52,313. Are you well off for cottages?—We have a good many cottages but they are in bad condition. Last year I got three new cottages built with all sanitary improvements and with water in them. We have been doing what we could to get as many of these as possible, because I think, the country is very much in want of them, that is, for rearing domestic servants and agricultural labourers.

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At one time there were a great many small farms and cottages, but the potato disease in 1845 cleared the country of them. They depended very much on potatoes as an article of food. The cottages these people left were allowed to go down and no new ones were built for many years. Recently the Duke of Argyll has been doing a good deal of building. I am a tenant under him, and I have got two or three new cottages.

52,314. Do the married labourers reside far away from the farm?—Oh, no, not 150 yards from the steading.

Land laid down to grass.

52,315. Has much arable land gone to grass in your neighbourhood?—A very great deal. I can give you some statistics of the position of matters in regard to the population of seven rural parishes of Kintyre, over a period of 60 years. In 1831, in the parish of Southend, the population was 2,120, in 1891, 844. In Killean and Kochnidgie in 1831, 2,866, in 1891, 1,293. In Kilcalmonell, 3,488 in 1831, and in 1890, 890. In Saddell, in 1831, 926, and in 1891, 757.

52,316. (*Lord Cobham.*) Give us the total results, as we do not know the parishes?—Well, it is this: in 1831 the total population of these seven parishes was 13,661, and in 1891, 6,350, a decrease of 7,311.

52,317. You think that this is on account of the farms going into grass?—The people were beat out with bad times, and a great portion of the farms under cultivation were thrown into grass. The people left the place and went into the towns, and abroad.

52,318. Were these farms sown down in grass?—In most cases they were seeded down into grass.

Rural depopulation.

52,319. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is that included in land out of cultivation?—A portion of it was before my time. A good deal of the land has gone out of cultivation in the sense that it has gone into grass. I was going to quote to you in connexion with the last set of figures I gave you as to the rural parishes some figures showing where change had taken place in the two towns in Kintyre, viz., Campbelltown and Tarbert. In Tarbert in 1831 the population was 206; in 1891 it was 2,208. In Campbelltown, in 1831, the population was 6,590; in 1891 it was 8,235. A total increase in these two towns of 3,647. I think that shows the people have gone into the towns from the rural districts. This decrease has gone on gradually from 1831 to 1891.

Potato growing.

52,320. Has the American tariff on potatoes been a main cause of so much land going out of cultivation?—Not at all. It was the potato failure of 1845–46.

52,321. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But the tariff is doing injury, is it not?—It is doing considerable injury in the meantime. It is now 24*s.* a ton; in 1893–94 it was 40*s.*

52,322. Are potatoes exported from Kintyre to America?—In some years they were, but not this year.

52,323. Under the present tariff?—Oh, yes.

Cost of labour.

52,324. (*Lord Cobham.*) The cost of labour generally has gone up?—Yes; tradesmen, such as saddlers, blacksmiths, and joiners, are up 50 per cent., and in some cases more. I might say that a great many of the people who have left the place were millers. There were a good many meal mills before. Now there is no need for them, at least for only a few of them. Blacksmiths, weavers, and tradespeople who were dependent on the residents of the district, of course when the people left they had to leave also.

Rates.

52,325. You say, notwithstanding the reduced profits on farming, rates and taxes have increased?—Yes. There are four new taxes which have been recently imposed: the Public Health Act, the Education Act, the Local Government Act, and the Parish Councils Act.

52,326. Have you to pay sanitary rates?—Yes. Under this new Bill, the Parish Councils Bill, there have been additional taxes put upon us.

52,327. As compared with 10 or 15 years ago, have the rates increased?—These new rates have increased. The other rates have remained very much as they were.

52,328. You divide the rates with the landlord?—Yes. But I consider that is more than the tenant is entitled to do if you take it on a basis of income or means of subsistence, which I consider is the proper basis for rating. What I mean is that the proprietor has a larger income from the farm than the tenant. Take my own case. From the farm I hold the Duke of Argyle has a very much larger income from it than what I have. I pay him 500*l.* a year, but I have nothing like 500*l.* a year of profit. On that account I think that the rate on the tenant ought to be on the basis of income. The tenant should pay rates only on the value of his stock and on his income derived from the farm. People in towns with large incomes pay only on their house-rents. I hold that the basis of all taxation should be on income, or means and substance, from whatever source derived. Land at present is far too heavily rated compared to other sources of income.

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52,329. How do you hold your farm?—I have had it on two leases of 19 years. Last year when the lease was out I did not want a lease at all. But I have got a lease now with breaks every five years.

52,330. At the beginning of a new lease when the rent is fixed the amount of rates paid is considered, is it not?—Of course it is. But during the currency of the lease, if there are new taxes, the half of them has to be paid by the tenant.

52,331. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You cannot call the Education Act rate, which was passed in 1872, a new rate. That was beyond your last lease?—Yes.

52,332. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The Public Health Act was in 1867, was it not?—What I am contending is that the tenants should be rated not equally with the proprietor, but according to their income.

52,333. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Are there any rates the landlord pays entirely?—The county rates.

52,334. These are pretty heavy?—I suppose some of them are.

52,335. These the landlord pays entirely himself?—Up to the passing of the Local Government Act he did. But under that Act if the rates are increased beyond a certain figure half of the increase is borne equally by landlord and tenant.

52,336. But there is a proportion of the rates that the landlord pays himself?—Yes.

Tenure.

52,337. (*Lord Cobham.*) You said you did not want a new lease recently?—No, I wanted to arrange to hold the farm without a lease. In my experience of the past 20 years there have been so many changes and so many reductions that I thought it a very silly thing to bargain for 19 years, particularly seeing the number of cases there have been of people applying for a reduction, and of people who have turned out of the farms from that. I thought it would be better to have a two years' notice to quit and that the tenant shall be compensated by law for any improvements of a permanent nature that he could show if turned out, and that similarly the landlord should get compensation if there had been deterioration.

52,338. But the landlord preferred a lease?—Yes.

52,339. It is the custom of the estate?—I fancy so.

Foreign competition.

52,340. Do you consider the farmers suffer chiefly from foreign competition?—Yes.

"Protection."

52,341. Do you think that this should be met by legislation of a protective character?—Yes, I think it should. The cause of depression is foreign competition to a large extent, aided by a one-sided free trade policy under which all other countries are allowed to send their produce and manufactured goods into this country free of duty; and not only that, the same foreign Governments pay a bounty to their farmers for certain articles they export to Britain in order to enable them to compete with farmers in the United Kingdom. If these articles were dealt with here as in other countries, the Exchequer would be immensely increased and the rates and taxation on the agricultural community could be diminished. I will quote an instance of this one-sided free trade policy. In 1893–4 potatoes in the country were plentiful and cheap and large quantities were exported to America but the tariff was 40*s.* a ton while the potatoes themselves only brought 27*s.* You will see from this that the producer would have got a much greater price for his potatoes had there been no tariff, the same as the Americans get here for their produce. Just in the same way would the producers who send us food from abroad get less for what they sent us if we taxed them here in the same way. So it would not be on the consumer here that the tax fell altogether. In equity I think the farmers here are entitled to get the same treatment as the foreigner gives them.

52,342. How would you deal with that grievance?—Pretty much by taxing them at the same rate as they tax us. I would have free trade all round.

52,343. You mean protection all round?—You would have to begin with that.

52,344. You would tax the foreigner as much as they tax us?—Yes, that is so. I look upon that as the only way to get at them.

52,345. You are speaking the general feeling of the farmers of your district?—I am speaking very much my own; but I find that feeling is getting stronger among farmers and people in towns.

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52,346. That we should go back to some extent to the Corn Laws?—To get Free Trade.

Length of leases.

52,347. Do you think that a 19 years' lease is less advantageous to the farmer now than it was?—I do, for this reason, that so many people have been beat out of their farms for the last 19 years, and because there have been such reductions. I may say that on the Duke of Argyll's estate five or six years ago, he revalued all the farms simply because he found the tenants were going into arrears to a large extent from the depression of the times, and he gave them a reduction of nearly 30 per cent. at that time all over his property. He has a practical factor, and he revalued them, and there was a general reduction of 20 to 30 per cent. That was five years before my lease was out, and I have my new lease with these breaks I mentioned at 40*l.* less again than that reduction.

52,348. Do you thiuk a five years' lease too long?—My objection to a lease altogether is that it is too long to bargain in advance seeing what is taking place. There is nothing more humiliating than for a tenant to go to the factor or landlord on his hands and knees, "greetin'" for a reduction of rent. The fact that this is so, shows that there is something wrong. On the other hand, this could be avoided with a two years' notice to quit. For instance when I took my second lease it was in 1873, and things were in a most inflated state. You had to take the land on lease at the rate that things were going at then; and if things had continued at the 1873 rate I could have done well enough. But things went back. It is very much the same with a proprietor who has to let his farm on a long lease on the prices of a depressed year. He does not get a fair chance either; for before the end of the 19 years, things may be very much better. With a two years' notice to quit, rents could be adjusted according to the times. The landlord would be able to say to the tenant, You are getting better prices and can afford to give me a higher rent; while in depressed years the landlord would have to be content with less rent. The tenant, of course, under such a system would have to be paid for anything he expended in the way of improvements unexhausted.

52,349. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would have a continuous yearly tenancy with two years' notice to quit—is that your idea?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,350. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think the Agricultural Holdings Act sufficiently effective?—No, not exactly. I think the machinery is very cumbrous. I could give an instance. I was appointed a referee under the Agricultural Holdings Act by the sheriff. I had to appoint a lawyer as clerk, and there was a man of business on the proprietor's side and another on the lawyer's side, and the case was arbited and witnesses heard. I told the parties there if they had appointed one or two practical men to settle it it would have been more to their advantage. I think the claim of the tenant was 60*l.*, and the landlord lodged a counter-claim of 120*l.* I looked upon that 120*l.* claim as an attempt pretty much to block the tenant's claim, and I only awarded the landlord 2*l.* 2*s.* In this case the tenant had to put in his claim in the month of December, and the proprietor was allowed until the month of June, and it looked very like, I say, an attempt to block the tenant's claim. What confirms that is that the proprietor did not appeal.

52,351. Do you think if the machinery of the Act was simplified there would be much to find fault with it?—I think that part should be amended where a tenant cannot get compensation unless he has had the landlord's consent. I think it should be left to the referee to say whether it was a beneficial improvement or not.

Compensation for high farming.

52,352. Are you in favour of paying the tenant for improved fertility of his land by high farming?—Certainly. I think there should be compensation given for that. High farming pays itself pretty well as it goes along, you are repaid in good crops; but at the same time when it comes to the end of the lease that is a very different thing. It is very often the case that a man who is a good farmer has to pay on his own improvements under the new lease. If the farm is put into the market and competition invited the rent is increasing, and the tenant is told that he can either take the farm at the increased rent or leave it.

Sale of adulterated products.

52,353. You think that in regard to the sale of agricultural produce further action should be taken to protect the home producer against adulterated and erroneously named articles?—I think so. There has been a great deal of fraud. I believe, from what I have heard, that the Act is right enough, but that it is difficult to carry it out at the present time.

52,354. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is margarine cheese?—It is cheese made with milk from which the cream has been taken and a substitute found for it in animal fat.

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52,355–6. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is that made in England or abroad?—In Scotland—lots of it. There was a case in Glasgow a year or two ago, brought at the instance of the authorities on a report by the city analyst, and it was made out that it was not cheese at all. On the other hand, evidence was led to show that the price charged was not excessive—4*d.* a lb.—and upon that, because the people who bought it were not overcharged, the case was quashed.

State loans.

52,357. Do you advocate State loans for the purpose of agricultural improvements?—Yes, I would, for building better houses for labourers, for example, so as to increase labour in farms and domestic servants. On a great many of these small places where there were steadings it was the custom of the country for the tenant to build the houses. The whole country side met on a certain day—the same as they do yet at hay-stacking—and they build a steading in a day. The proprietor gave them a little lime or wood. But it now comes to be a serious matter for a proprietor to build steadings on land that has been occupied in that sort of way. I suggest the Government shall give loans to proprietors for the purpose of rebuilding these places that are in want of steadings of that sort.

52,358. You do not advocate loans to tenants?—Well, in a case where a proprietor is not willing to make an improvement, the tenant might get the advantage of a loan.

52,359–60. Have you considered what security the tenant could give were he the borrower?—The security would be the houses, I fancy, along with the tenants' security.

Light railways.

52,361. Has anything been done in your district in connection with the extension of light railways?—I have taken the opinion of a good many people of the district. Some advocate it, and some are doubtful as to its success. I am told that in Ireland, where it has been in operation for a number of years, it has done an immense amount of good.

52,362. Who provided these light railways in Ireland?—Oh, the Government.

52,363. You do not think the farmers could provide them out of the rates?—I am afraid it would not be done that way. I was not giving it as a farmer's opinion that light railways would be of great benefit. It was merely the opinion of some people generally.

Dairy instruction.

52,364. Has the county council done much for the improvement of dairy farming?—The county council has been giving a portion of their technical grant for a good many years for that purpose, and that has been very beneficial. We have a dairy school in Kilmarnock to which we send about 70 dairy-maids. The good it does them might be illustrated by this fact, that a girl who went to the school to get instruction took the first prize after she came back at the local cheese show, though before that she had often competed and never got into the prize list. Generally speaking, I have been a member of the committee of the school since it was started. I can say from experience that the school has done an immense amount of good. I think the Government has been rather stingy in giving grants to institutions of that sort, where really a great deal of good is done in improving the quality of produce put upon the market.

Co-operation.

52,365. Have you any co-operative factories or creameries in Kinlyre?—We have not. I am secretary for a co-operative society of farmers which was started about 20 years ago for the purchase of manures. We have nearly 100 members. We get all the manures analysed that come into the district and we took offers for all manures that were required from different manufacturers in England, Ireland, and Scotland. This society has been a remarkable success. We have saved an immense amount of money, and the first year, I think, we got rid of all the bad manure that used to be sent into the district to individual farmers.

52,366. (*Mr. Clay.*) Your analyst very soon drove out the merchant that sold bad manures?—Yes; that is so. Now, dealers of all kinds of high standing are anxious to do business with us.

52,367. That is your only co-operative venture?—Yes.

52,368. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are your objects confined to the purchase of manures or do they extend to other farm requirements?—Nothing but manures.

Dairy produce.

52,369. Do you think that the manufacture of butter could be profitably carried on in co-operative factories?—Well, I cannot speak as to that.

52,370. Have you a market for butter?—It is usually cheese that we make.

52,371. Has that fallen in value?—Very much. When I took my last lease, I could sell cheese at 74*s.* the cwt.; at the present time I do not know that I can get 45*s.*

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52,372. The same quality?—Just the same quality. It is all owing to the fall in prices; and a drop like that is a verg serious thing in a dairy such as I have, where I make from 10 to 12 tons a year.

52,373. What dairy cows do you use?—Ayrshires.

Compensation for permanent improvements.

52,374. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You told us you advocate a yearly tenancy, with two years' notice to quit and compensation to tenants for improvements of a permanent nature. Do you think that a tenant should be allowed to make these improvements without giving notice and receiving the sanction of the landlord?—I think whatever would be beneficial to the farm could not be prejudicial to the proprietor. There is no reason why a proprietor should object to a thing of that sort. It should not be in the proprietor's power to withhold compensation if the referee says it is an improvement. I should leave it entirely to the referee.

52,375. Supposing there was a tenant who let his farm down very much, would you give compensation to the landlord?—Just on the same basis.

52,376. To be awarded by the referee?—In the same way.

52,377. (*Mr. Clay.*) You would not be afraid of the tenant abusing the privilege and over-building?—That is not a likely thing at all.

52,378. If he built anything that was not good for the farm, he would get no compensation?—No. He should be allowed to remove it.

52,379. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Do you think the tenant should get the leave of the referee before he built any permanent structure?—No. I think a man of good practical sense would not be so foolish as to expend money that he did not require.

52,380. Have you never seen or heard of farmers perhaps young men commencing a farm—build, say, unnecessary horse-boxes and different things of that kind?—Well, I have no doubt if they did so they thought them necessary. It might be a matter of opinion whether it was practical to do so.

52,381. You would allow this man to put up an erection on the landlord's property, at his own free will, and just run the risk of getting paid for it at the end of the lease?—Or take it away.

52,382. What state would he leave the ground on which it stood if he took it away?—In the same state as he found it.

52,383. Would the result not be a messing of the place?—I do not think so.

Rural depopulation.

52,384. In your country have not a great many people left through the great improvement in facilities for travelling to Glasgow, for instance, where employment can be so readily got?—That is so to a certain extent.

52,385. A large number of your young men get employment on passenger and other steamers and in yachts, do they not?—I cannot exactly say. In large towns they have been able to better their circumstances than if they had remained on the land. Land has been a semi-starvation business for a good while back.

52,386. Did that reduction given on your estate satisfy the great bulk of the tenants?—It did at the time. There is no proprietor, so far as I know, more popular than the Duke of Argyll.

Counter-claims.

52,387. About the counter-claim you told us of—was the 120*l.* for deterioration of buildings?—Yes.

52,388. And you awarded, after personal inspection, I suppose, 2*l.* 2*s.* for deterioration?—I did.

52,389. Did you know the state of the buildings when the tenant entered the farm?—No, I did not.

52,390. How did you decide, then, whether they had deteriorated or not?—They were new buildings altogether, first-rate buildings. There were some broken panes of glass, but the buildings themselves were good.

52,391. Did the counter-claim give details of the deterioration?—No, it was a slump sum. There was a claim in it made for burning heather some years before. The tenant's children had caused the fire, but the young heather grew up, and it was better than it was before. There was another claim for not cutting thistles; but when we went to the part of the farm complained of we found no thistles, and the place was the cleanest and best of the farm. I had no ground at all to give the landlord compensation. I thought of a guinea, but I afterwards made 2*l.* 2*s.*, though I thought that too much.

52,392. What sort of deterioration would you award 2*l.* 2*s.* for?—Well there were some broken panes of glass, as I have said. The opinion I formed was that the counter-claim was got up for a purpose.

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Malt tax.

52,393. Is there any feeling expressed in your country in regard to the malt tax?—There is this, that since the malt tax was passed the price of barley has gone down most miserably, and an immense amount of foreign barley is imported into Campbelltown for whiskey making purposes?—I used to get 40*s.* a quarter, this year I can only get 21*s.*; about a half.

52,394. Were the samples about the same?—Quite the same. This foreign barley also does not make so good whiskey as home barley. It might be looked at by the country from that point of view also. I am a trustee for one of the distilleries in Campbelltown of which my wife is one of the principal shareholders, and the manager has told me that home grain produces much better whiskey than foreign. The quality is not so good, and they have not the quantity either. I know there is a difficulty about taxing imported grain, they want to get as cheap bread in the towns as possible. But I think that all barley brought in, or grain of other kind, that is to be distilled or brewed should have a tax of 10*s.* a quarter put upon it. That would help the farmer; it would help to give people who drink whiskey, a better quality of liquor. And it would not affect the price of bread stuffs in any way.

52,395. Have you formed any opinion what amount of the fall in barley is due to the repeal of the malt tax?—I have not. But my opinion is that there has been an increased amount of barley coming in since the repeal of the malt tax, owing to an inferior quality of barley being used. As it was on barley of good quality they could afford to pay the tax.

52,396. For distilling and brewing purposes?—Yes.

Importation of foreign cattle.

52,397. Have you formed any views as regards the importation of cattle from other countries?—I think after the amount of money this country has expended in eradicating disease from the country which was imported from abroad, it would be madness to run more risks. In my young days there was no such thing as pleuro-pneumonia. So far as I remember it was introduced from abroad about 1840. And after such sacrifices as have been made to free the country of that disease, and after the great amount of money expended by the Government, now the country is clear it would be a foolish policy to run the risk of having the same thing to do all over again. We do not object to the cattle but we do object to the disease.

52,398. Would you be in favour of making the present prohibition of store stock absolute; you know, I daresay, that the law leaves it with the Board of Agriculture to say whether such cattle shall come into the country or not?—I think the feeling is that if store cattle are kept out a great many more young beasts will be reared in the country both to keep up the stock and to feed. I think the farmers are against the introduction of store cattle.

52,399. There is a proposal made that it shall be made illegal to admit store cattle into the interior of the country, would public opinion favour that proposal?—I think so.

52,400. You say there is a good deal of land gone out of cultivation?—A great deal of land.

Tax on barley.

52,401. Do you think if this tax were put upon barley the effect of it would be to throw land into cultivation again and give more employment?—The tendency would be in that direction.

52,402. Would you begin growing more barley?—Not at present prices. There is a great cry to get people back on the land. In my opinion what has caused people to go off the land is that they cannot live by the cultivation of it. That applies to land of middle class or inferior quality on which a man could not live if he paid no rent at all if he was bound to cultivate it.

52,403. That is to say, in regard to land of the quality you have described, the return at present prices is not sufficient to make it pay even without rent?—Yes, on the best class of land near a town, of course, it is a different thing.

Foreign flour.

52,404. The general drift of your evidence is that there is no real remedy for the depression except a rise of prices?—That is the thing. It is the low prices. A reduction of rent would not be sufficient. Looking at the subject from a national point of view, I do not think it right that the country should be allowed to go out of cultivation, or that we should be so dependent as we are on the foreigner for our bread supplies. I saw it stated recently that in London for every one loaf baked from home flour there are eight

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baked from foreign. I think the Legislature should consider whether some means cannot be adopted whereby the land of our country can be worked at a profit so as to keep people upon it as far as possible.

52,405. (*Mr. Lambert.*) As regards the land that has gone out of cultivation, do you mean that it is growing nothing at all, or that it is laid down in permanent pasture?—The greater part of it no doubt was laid down in permanent pasture, but it has since run wild and grows only coarse grass, sheep and cattle run over it.

Uncultivated land.

52,406. Was it very poor land?—In our district the land is apt to get fogged, and overgrown with water rushes where it is left anytime to itself.

Ground game.

52,407. Have you heard any complaints as to the working of the Ground Game Act of 1880?—The Ground Game Act is one of the best Acts, in my experience, passed by the Legislature. It has done away with a great deal of ill-feeling between gamekeepers and tenants, and it was the case that before it tenants often suffered heavy loss, rather than make complaint. If they did it was "right about face"; they were turned out of their farm. Giving the tenant the joint right with the proprietor had put it in the power of the tenant to protect his crops, and in a great many cases a considerable amount of money had been derived from the sale of the game.

Particulars of witness's farm.

52,408. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You have been a farmer for 43 years; what was the rent of your present farm when you first took it?—500*l.* I may explain that when I took it there was an old steading on it, and I had agreed to drive the material and pay 5 per cent. on the outlay of money, which was fully 1,000*l.* for the new steading. There were about 600*l.* or 700*l.* laid out on draining, and on that I was to pay 6½ per cent. That was in addition to the 500*l.* At the end of the first 19 years' lease I entered, in 1873 or 1874, on a second lease on a rent of 700*l.* Of course it was in the inflated times, and everybody was wanting land at any rent. I am not blaming the proprietor, because he gave me a considerable preference over some of the other offerers.

52,409. What is your rent now?—500*l.*

52,410. It is the same now as it was 40 years ago?—With this difference that on my first lease I paid the interest on the borrowed money.

52,411. It has gone down about 100*l.* in 40 years?—About that, and it will fall more, as of course the steadings are pretty much deteriorated. On the single item of cheese alone I showed the Duke's factor what a difference there was in the prices now as compared with 1873.

52,412. But what I want to know is what was the rent paid by you when you first took the farm?—500*l.* and 100*l.* interest.

52,413. Then there is 100*l.* of difference between now and then?—Yes. I think it was more than 100*l.* Of course wages have got up about 50 per cent.

52,414. What capital did you put into the farm when you went in?—Somewhere about 3,000*l.*

52,415. Have you got 3,000*l.* on it now?—There will be quite as much capital on it now from an increase of stock, the farms being now able to carry more owing to an improved condition of the farm.

52,416. Which were the most prosperous times you had?—From 1872 to 1876 were the inflated times.

52,417. On the whole have you done pretty well upon it?—I have worked 40 years and have not made a shilling. I was as wealthy when I went into the farm as I am to-day.

52,418. And the loss has been mainly during the last few years?—Principally.

52,419. And the result is that the labourers are better off now by 200*l.* a year than they were before?—The labourers are the only class of the three that have to do with the land that has benefitted financially.

52,420. And the owner is worse off by 100*l.*?—That is so.

52,421. And you are no better off than you were 40 years ago?—Yes. I have shown that in one item alone there has been a reduction on the farm produce of 300*l.* or 400*l.* a year, and the labour bill has increased.

52,422. What is the net result?—I could not make a definite statement as to that.

52,423. With regard to rates, you had a classification system in Campbelltown some years ago?—We have so still.

52,424. Has that not been stopped?—No. An attempt was made to do away with an old classification under which tenants of agricultural lands got a reduction of one-fourth. But we protested against it, and we are back again to the one-fourth reduction.

52,425. We were told in London that the owner of the land paid the same as the owner of a house?—That is not the case.

52,426. (*Captain Thomas.*) Did you get a reduction of your rent before the expiry of your lease?—Yes.

52,427. How much?—160*l.* for the last five years of my lease.

52,428. (*Mr. Everett.*) Did you grow wheat at all?—I did for 20 years.

52,429. In what proportion?—I had 20 or 30 acres. But the price fell so low I could not grow it. Besides, the wheat straw was not so good for fodder. I grow barley most now.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. W. Elliot.

Mr. Walter Elliot called in and examined.

52,430. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a tenant farmer at Holleybush, Galashiels?—Yes.

52,431. How long have you farmed?—40 years.

52,432. What is the size of your farm?—It is 600 acres. A mixed farm, nearly all arable; but there is a good deal of it in grass now.

Position of farmers.

52,433. How are the farmers faring in your part of Scotland?—Not very well.

52,434. Are they able to maintain their position and pay their rents?—I think that they mostly do that, so far as I know. On a good many farms rents have fallen lately.

52,435. Have the tenants lost money for some time past?—Yes.

52,436–7. When did the bad times begin? A good many years ago?—Then we had better times; perhaps about 10 years ago. But for two or three years they have fallen back, and gone from bad to worse.

52,438. Are the tenants losing their capital?—No doubt about that.

52,439. But farms are still easily let?—There has been less demand perhaps during the last five years.

52,440. What is the fall in rents?—From 20 to 40 per cent.; and in some cases rather over that.

52,441. Is your land heavy or light?—It is partly clay and partly light.

52,442. You do not consider you have been specially affected?—I do not think so.

Wages.

52,443. How are wages in your district; have they a tendency to rise still?—No. They have not risen within the last two or three years.

52,444. Taking the last 15 years, are they much the same?—Much the same.

52,445. And the labourers are able to purchase much more with the wages they get?—Yes. The more industrious of them are in a very thriving condition.

52,445*a*. Do they live in a much more comfortable way?—Yes.

Small holdings.

52,446. Are many of them becoming small farmers?—Very few in our neighbourhood. The farms are, one would not say large, but in size they are beyond the reach of this class. They would not be able to take them.

52,447. Do they go elsewhere and become small farmers?—They do.

52,448. Do you think small farms should succeed in Scotland?—I think they might, but not too small.

52,449. If there were small farms they would be readily taken up by the well-to-do labourer?—They might.

Cause of depression.

52,450. What, in your opinion, is the cause of the prevailing depression?—Well, there is no doubt foreign competition has a great deal to do with it.

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52,451. That has affected profits and frightened capital from the land?—There is no doubt of it.

52,452. How would you encourage capital to come back to agriculture?—Well, I think there would not be much difficulty in capital coming back provided tenants had security for what they invested in the land.

Reduction of rents.

52,453. You still see the possibility of profits being made even at present prices?—I have no doubt of it, but rents would require to go down still further.

52,454. You consider that with a further re-adjustment of rents profits would be made and capital would come back if properly secured?—I have no doubt of it.

Security for compensation

52,455–6. And that existing farmers are prevented from farming well by the uncertainty that they feel as to the compensation they are likely to get?—No doubt they are to a certain extent. They are inclined to take it out when they come to the end of the lease because they have got no security. The Act gives them something but it is not a great deal.

Applicants for farms.

52,457. Are farmers with capital coming forward to take the places of those who are leaving their farms?—In my neighbourhood—within a radius of 15 or 20 miles—the most of the best farms are all taken up by non-practical men within the last five or six years—men who had fathers before them, but men with plenty of capital.

52,458. That does not seem much like discouragement?—Well, they will, perhaps, be in time more discouraged after they have tried it for 10 years.

Reduction of rents.

52,459–60. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have they secured their farms at a great reduction of rent?—At very considerable reductions, and, of course, that will help them.

52,461. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it a reduction to any greater proportion than the fall in prices?—I do not think so.

52,462. So that, practically, they have not got them any cheaper than they were before?—That may be, but the great bulk of the best farms in our neighbourhood have been taken by young men, non-practical.

52,463. (*Chairman.*) I do not see how agriculture has suffered from the prevailing feeling of uncertainty when there are plenty of good applicants for farms, and you say that existing farmers have held their own?—They are holding their own so far as I am able to judge. I know by my own experience it takes me all my time to hold my own.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,464. You are under the Agricultural Holdings Act, I presume?—Everyone is.

52,465. Are you farming under a lease?—I have a 10 years' lease of the farm I live at. But I have others. I hold from year to year.

52,466. The provisions of the Agricultural Holdings Act you think are very illusory?—They are not satisfactory.

52,467. And the machinery is unsatisfactory?—It is.

The schedules.

52,468. In what way do you consider the Act unsatisfactory?—I think the two first schedules in the Act want to be radically amended or else put out altogether.

52,469. What would you substitute for them?—I am not a lawmaker and do not pretend to be able to draw up Acts.

52,470. What are your objections to the schedules at present?—The first schedule as to putting down permanent pasture or making a water meadow is a very important thing.

52,471. Is your chief objection that the consent of the landlord is required?—If we do not get the consent of the landlord you will not get any compensation.

52,472. Then you think that improvements should be allowed to be made without the consent of the landlord being necessary?—Yes.

52,473. You consider that notice should be given to him?—I think that is quite right.

52,474–5. If the landlord prefers it that he should be able to make the improvements himself?—Surely.

52,476. Supposing the schedules were amended as you suggest, do you think fair compensation would be secured?—Well, I must say I got fair enough compensation for making roads when I left one of my places. I had the consent of the landlord for so doing.

52,477. As to drainage, you think tenants should be allowed to do that without notice?—I think they should if the land is wet, and if the work is properly executed.

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52,478. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How is the landlord to see that it is properly executed if he does not get notice?—I would give him notice.

52,479. But no consent is required for drainage now?—Well I must have been misinformed. I understood you required the consent of the landlord for drainage.

52,480–1. The consent of the landlord is not required for drainage?—Well I was not aware of that.

52,482. Have you any practical experience in the working of the Act?—I have unfortunately.

Appointment of arbiters.

52,483. (*Lord Cobham.*) From your own experience you think the machinery of the Act is unsatisfactory and should be amended?—I think the appointment of arbiters is not very satisfactory, it appears to me that as they are appointed just now they seem to regard it as a duty to look after the party that employs them and not to administer the Act; I think the county council should appoint the arbiter under the Act. It would be a good deal better.

52,484. The county council or the agricultural department, or some independent body?—Yes.

52,485. Is it in consequence of your belief that the arbiters have not been fair in administering the Act?—I myself have felt it in connexion with one farm I had.

52,486. The landowners have got no special power over the arbiters?—No, certainly not, but the arbiters themselves are to blame because, as I said, they seem to me to think that their whole business is to look after the interests of those who employ them instead of administering the Act.

52,487. Do you think that would be cured by the appointment of arbiters by an independent body of men?—I should think so.

52,488. Would they appoint a different class of men?—I do not say that, but you would have a more even decision.

52,489. Are valuators in your district the leading land agents and surveyors?—Part of them are and sometimes farmers are appointed.

52,490–1. Then the valuators are mostly land agents and practical farmers?—Generally.

52,492. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you approve of the settlement of these cases by a single arbiter?—Yes, I think a single arbiter would be best.

52,493. You think he would hold the balance impartially as between both parties?—Yes.

Compensation to the sitting tenant.

52,494. Are you of opinion that the sitting tenant should be compensated for his improvements?—Yes, I am of that opinion.

52,495. How would you carry that out in practice?—It could either be carried out by fixing a proportionate rent or by paying in money.

Leases.

52,496. Suppose a man takes his farm on a nineteen years' lease with a five years' break, you would not entitle him to compensation before the five years elapsed?—Certainly not.

52,497. At the end of that period there would be a re-valuation by the arbiter?—There would be a new agreement to go into at the end of the five years if either party wished.

52,498. There would be no essential difference between a five years' lease and a nineteen years' lease with breaks at five years; but if there was no break the termination of the nineteen years would be the time for compensation?—Yes, I should think at the end of the lease.

52,499. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Breaks would only come in where the landlord or the tenant wanted to take advantage of them, there would be no question raised if neither party wanted a break?—That is so.

52,500. Legally, at the present moment, a tenant can claim compensation at the end of his lease?—Yes.

52,501. There is nothing to prevent him making an agreement for compensation at the end of the lease?—No.

Compensation for improvements.

52,502. I do not know what the exact proposal is which you would make to place the tenant in a better position than he is now?—If the tenant has improved his farm very considerably when he came to the end of his nineteen years' lease he would have to pay rent on his own improvements.

52,503. You mean that he should be compensated for good farming?—I would not compensate a man for good farming. I think every farmer is entitled to be compensated for improved value of his farm, and should get a proportionate rent.

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52,504. The condition of his land should be scheduled at the beginning and end of his tenancy?—Yes.

52,505. (*Mr. Clay.*) The compensation might either be in money or in a lower rent?—Yes. I do not want to pay rent on my own improvements.

52,506. (*Lord Cobham.*) If the contrary was the case and the tenant let the farm down, then he should be fined for that?—Certainly, if he wasted the farm. I think the landlord would be quite justified in not keeping him and in charging him for deterioration.

Clauses in leases.

52,507. Have you any suggestions to make in regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act or tenure of land?—At present, as a rule, leases are drawn in a way no man can understand. I think one clause in a lease is perfectly sufficient—the "Good husbandry" clause; but to bind men down to this, and to that, and to the other thing, a man cannot fulfil half of his lease as it is drawn up in Scotland.

52,508. What do you think a good lease in point of duration?—The usual time is 19 or 21 years. I have had that myself. I would not take a long lease now. I farm the great bulk of my land from year to year.

52,509. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With a 12 months' notice to quit?—Yes.

52,510. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you an agreement?—I have an agreement.

52,511. Do you consider that most agreements have a good many oppressive and vexatious covenants?—Yes.

52,512. And you would reduce all agreements to a simple undertaking to farm well, leaving it to the arbitrators to decide what good farming is?—Yes; I think that would do.

Restrictions.

52,513. Are you kept closely to a given system of cropping?—Yes.

52,514. And if you sold hay or straw, would you be pulled up at once?—I have liberty to sell.

52,515. But you are tied down closely to cropping?—I am not tied down, but most people are.

52,516. Would you give absolute freedom of cropping?—I would.

52,517. Have you not got in Scotland any adventurers who take farms to run them out?—I have no doubt they could be found; but landlords would be foolish to let their land to such men as that.

Yearly agreements.

52,518-9. You prefer to go on from year to year with a one year's notice to quit?—A one year's notice to quit, and to have freedom of cropping and liberty to sell all the produce?—Yes.

52,520. With compensation for cumulated fertility, and at the same time with compensation to the landowners for waste?—Yes.

52,521. Do you think a farmer, farming badly through a long course of years, would be able to pay the landlord damages for letting down the farm?—Yes, if he had the farm well stocked; but surely the landlord might reserve the right to give him notice if he did not farm the land up to the mark.

52,522. You would give the landlord complete freedom to get rid of a bad tenant?—I think that would be very wise.

Restrictions.

52,523. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are you under no agreement to put your farm in a specified course of cultivation towards the end of the tenancy?—On the farm where I stay I am; on the others I am not.

25,524. Do I understand you to say that you are free to farm as you like?—Yes. Well, now that I think of it I cannot take off two white crops in succession without the landlord's permission.

52,525. Is your farm one of the arable farms on lower Gala side, or is it a sheep farm?—It is principally arable, but there is a very considerable portion of it now under grass.

Permanent pasture.

52,526. Would you like to be able to lay down permanent pasture without notice?—If I were to lay down the whole farm I should consult the proprietor.

52,527. You think that it would be better to give the proprietor notice?—If you go into it to a large extent.

52,528. You think that he ought to have a chance of saying how it should be done?—I think that would be right.

Compensation to the sitting tenant.

52,529. About the sitting tenant, I suppose your view is this that when the new rent is fixed the remaining value of the tenant's improvement should be determined?—Certainly.

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52,530. And that he should be allowed a sum down or else a deduction from the total letting value of the farm proportionate to the value of his improvements?—Yes, that is what I mean. I think it would likely be a deduction.

52,531. How would you meet the case of a rent being demanded above the letting value which would be fixed for the tenant's improvement?—I do not see how you could meet it except by agreement of some kind.

52,532. You think that in practice a landlord to anticipate the tenant's claim would not add to the rent beforehand in order to meet it?—He might.

52,533. You do not anticipate that he would?—Farms are generally valued at what they are considered worth at the moment without taking into consideration the tenant's claim, and that is what I want to prevent.

52,534. You mean that the farm is let at its letting value irrespective of whether that letting value is made up of part of the tenant's claim for improvements, and that is what you want to obviate?—Yes.

The schedules.

52,535. You said you would give notice to the landlord and then have a reference. What is your scheme under the first schedule?—If I was not going into a large scheme, I should not think of giving notice to the landlord, but I think it would be quite necessary to give notice if I were to spend a great deal of money.

52,536. In giving notice to the landlord, would you think it right to take a decision by an arbiter or valuator as to whether the improvement contemplated was useful or not?—No, that would be seen at the end of the tenancy.

52,537. You would simply give notice and have the valuation at the end of the tenancy?—You are bound to give the landlord notice.

52,538. You would put all improvements on exactly the same footing as drainage?—Yes.

52,539. And simply give notice to the landlord?—Yes.

Compensation for good farming.

52,540. I understand you to lay a good deal of stress on a specific allowance for the results of continuous good farming?—Yes.

52,541. I think you had some experience of a farm treated in that way in your own neighbourhood—the Corsehope Farm?—I have.

52,542. I will not go into the details of that case, but in your opinion was the compensation awarded adequate for the 10 or 12 years of high farming?—I think it was not adequate. I had a case the same myself, in which I got very inadequate compensation.

52,543. Is it your opinion that continuous high cultivation, thoroughly good feeding of the land with feeding stuffs and so on, does produce a condition of things which ought to be compensated for independently of the narrower estimate of the bill?—There is no doubt of it.

52,544. Is it not true that many of the farms in your neighbourhood did fall greatly in value?—They did.

52,545. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have got a good deal of capital in your farm?—Yes.

Low prices.

52,546. And you farm it well?—I try my best.

52,547. And yet I understood you to say that in these days you find it impossible to make money?—I cannot.

52,548. What is the reason of that? Are the crops not as good as they could be?—We had lately bad seasons, and the crops did not turn out well. Last year was a disappointing season; the crops looked well, but they were not good, and the prices were very low.

52,549. It is because the prices are so low that you do not get a return?—Yes. The price of beef was bad; mutton was a little better.

52,550. Then the reason why you cannot make it pay is that the price is so low; but I understood you to state that the real cause of all the trouble was the want of security; how would better security improve your prices?—You might lay out more money on the land.

52,551. But you told me you were farming it as well as you could do it. Now I understand you are not farming it quite as well as you might?—What I mean by farming it well is that you would make more permanent improvements on it.

52,552. Would you lay out more capital?—Yes.

52,553. But if prices do not enable you to get an adequate return now how would you get any better return unless prices improved?—That might be.

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Appointment of arbiters.

52,554. You complain of decisions, I understand, given under the Act. Is that so?—Yes.

52,555. How are referees appointed now under the Act?—One is appointed by the landlord, one by the tenant, and these two appoint an oversman.

52,556. Do they never agree on a single referee?—Sometimes they do. But I would approve of that.

52,557. You think that would be the best mode of settling this difficulty?—Yes, I think one man would be better.

52,558. Would you make it obligatory that there should not be more than one man?—I do not say that

52,559. What do you propose?—I have no particular proposition to make, but I think one man would be better than three.

52,560. But you do not propose to embody that in the Act of Parliament and say there should be only one man?—I do not say whether I would or not.

52,561. I am trying to get from you in what specific ways you would amend the portions of the Act you complain of. That is what we have got to learn?—Well, I would rather have one man than three.

52,562. But you are not prepared to go so far as to say that there should not be more than one man by law if the parties desire it?—That is rather a compulsory power.

Tenure.

52,563. You hold your farm, I understand, on a yearly tenure with a twelvemonths' notice to quit?—I have more farms than one. The one on which I stay I have on a ten years' lease with eight years to run.

52,564. But you prefer a short tenure?—Yes, my other land is all held on short tenure.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,565. When you have it on short tenure you have twelvemonths' notice to quit. Is that under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have no agreement.

52,566. You hold it under the Act?—Under the Act.

52,567. And yet you think the Act does not give you sufficient compensation?—I do not think it does.

52,568. In what respect does it fail?—It fails in the arbiters.

52,569. It is in the administration of the Act then?—The administration of the Act is worse than the Act itself.

52,570. That is your main complaint—the administration of it?—That is the main complaint.

52,571. And yet you cannot give us any suggestions that you would like to see made law as to how that administration is to be improved?—I am not a lawmaker.

Appointment of arbiters.

52,572. No, but you are a practical farmer, and you might be able to tell us something which we might then be able to put into the shape of a law, what are the particulars in which it is so wrong and where it might be improved?—If you make it one arbiter there would be more justice done to the case.

52,573. That is your main recommendation for the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act, that instead of the present system of arbitration there should never be more than one referee?—I think it would be better.

52,574. But do you think yourself that your recommendation to us should be made absolute by law?—Well, it seems a hard-and-fast line, but I am satisfied in my own mind that one is better than three.

52,575. But you are not prepared that it should be made hard and fast by law?—I do not think I could go that length.

Improvements by tenants.

52,576. I understand you to say that you think the tenant should be allowed to make any improvements he likes without the consent of the landlord?—When they are improvements.

52,577. And to lay out any amount of money upon them?—Yes.

52,578. And the landlord is to be responsible for these in the event of the tenant giving up the farm, and on its being awarded by the referee that they are improvements?—Yes, if they are improvements on the farm.

52,579. And you would make the landlord responsible for them?—He would be.

52,580. Have you ever considered this case: suppose for some reason a tenant having made a large outlay wants to go out of business, and leaves the farm at the end of the lease; the landlord is called upon to pay for this large outlay which has been undertaken without his consent, and he may not have the means of doing so; is not that a hard position for a landlord to be in?—I do not think many people would lay out money on buildings that were not necessary. But I stated in answer to a previous question that the landlord would get notice where the outlay was large.

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52,581. But that would not get him out of the difficulty. What I want you to consider is that under the scheme you propose a landlord might be called upon to meet a very large expenditure of money that he was absolutely unable to do?—Has the landlord not the power to say that the tenant shall take them away?

52,582–3. But that is not your proposal. You suggest that the tenant should be allowed to make any outlay in the way of what he thinks permanent improvements, and that in the event of him leaving the farm the landlord should be called upon to pay compensation for these improvements provided they were awarded to be so. You do not say anything about the tenant being allowed to take them away. Is that an alternative proposal you wish to submit?—I think I stated I would give the proprietor notice if I was going to lay out money to any extent on buildings, and before commencing the buildings.

52,584. (*Mr. Channing.*) The tenant would receive no compensation except for added letting value, would he; so that the landlord would be able to get the added letting value which had been deducted?

52,585. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You see no difficulty of getting the compensation he has to pay, in the added letting value?—No.

52,586. But, as I understand it, in all cases there has been a fall in the letting value, and not an increase. Your proposal would be of no value to a tenant where the rent fell. In that case he would get no compensation?—Oh, yes, he would get compensation.

52,587. I thought he was to have no compensation unless there was an addition to the letting value?—But if the buildings had not been there the rent might have been a great deal less. We have known several farms that fell in value, but if it had not been for the tenant's expenditure they would have been less.

52,588. Well, we will take it on that ground; but even in these circumstances you might be placing a landlord in an awkward position by calling upon him to make a heavy payment it is not possible for him to make. Had he been consulted, knowing his own circumstances best he would not have sanctioned the outlay of the tenant. Have you considered that?—That is not a likely case to arise.

52,589. You cannot deny that it is a perfectly possible case?—But if you give a landlord notice that you are to expend a large sum of money, you would naturally come to an understanding with the landlord about it.

52,590. How would that meet the difficulty I have suggested. It would make no difference to him. You do not propose, I understand, to put him in this position, that he can say, "No." The money, I understand, is to be laid out with or without his consent?—I do not see that there would be much difficulty in the way. I do not think the tenant is likely to spend money which is not to improve the farm.

52,591. But the tenant might make improvements which the landlord was not in the position to afford. You have not considered it from that point?—I have not.

52,592. And it is not a point of view from which you see any difficulty?—I see no difficulty.

52,593. At all events, you have not considered it?—I have not considered how to make it into law.

52,594–5. (*Captain Thomas.*) The landlord could mortgage the farm?—Quite easily.

Restrictions.

52,596. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I understand you to say that you would give all tenants entire freedom of cropping and selling without any safeguard at all?—I do not say no safeguard. I say within the rules of good husbandry.

52,597. Is the only safeguard a landlord would have a year's notice?—Yes.

52,598. In different districts the rules of good husbandry differ, do not they?—They may do. I cannot tell. I thought it was a universal rule to have a good husbandry clause.

52,599. But then who is to decide what good husbandry is?—There would be no difficulty.

52,600. How would you provide for it?—Parties could be put over the farm who would say whether the tenant was farming properly or not.

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52,601. Who is this practical man to be, and how is he to be appointed?—They might agree upon a man.

52,602. Does not that entail that a standing espionage would be going on?—I do not know.

52,603. Is it a desirable position for a landlord and tenant to be in, that year by year the landlord should be constantly spying what the tenant is doing? Does that add to a good position?—It certainly would not. But I farmed land for 40 years and I never saw anybody looking over me. I wish they would come oftener.

52,604. There are farmers and farmers; and what you have to do is to lay down rules to safeguard the interests of all?—That is so.

Improvements by tenants.

52,605. (*Mr. Clay.*) You think it would be an exceptional thing for the tenant to put up extra buildings?—I do.

52,606. Would it not remove the difficulty and ease this matter greatly if, when you give the landlord notice, an official referee is called in to state whether it would be useful to a farm or holding before the improvement was gone into?—Yes, I think that might be done.

52,607. That would be a certain check against an extreme tenant building what was not useful to the holding?—It would.

52,608. There would not be many tenants foolish enough to build what they would not get compensation for?—There would not be many.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

52,609. Regarding the question of compensation to the sitting tenant, do not you think it would be easier for a landlord to deal with a sitting tenant by paying him a small interest on his improvements during the currency of his lease than by paying him a slump sum?—Surely but if he left he would get more for buildings under the Act as at present.

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Compensation for improvements.

52,610. You referred to a case of your own like the Corsehope case; where was it?—It was a farm on Gala Water, called Allanshaws. I got very inadequate compensation. I had the land treated the same way as the Corsehope farm and it is growing grass to-day though it is 25 to 28 years since it was done. Plenty of it was not worth a shilling an acre formerly. It is magnificient pasture to-day.

52,611. What is the rent of it now?—I do not remember. There was a break in the lease, and I think the rent was raised. I proved my case to the satisfaction of the arbiter, but I thought I got very little.

52,612. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did the subsequent tenants keep up the fertility without much outlay?—He has never had any outlay at all. I saw it myself the other year. They let the grass grow so rough, they had to burn it with fire.

52,613. (*Mr. Clay.*) What stock would it keep?—I think it was 30 cattle and 130 sheep extra. Many a time I have put on 60 or 80 cattle extra in the summer time over and above.

52,614. You had kept double the quantity of stock on the farm, but you were allowed very little money for the increased fertility?—I was.

The witness then withdrew.

Mr. Alexander Moreson Gordon called in and examined.

Mr. A. M. Gordon.

52,615. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are the owner of a small agricultural estate in the Garloch?—Yes.

52,616. Have you farmed your property for a considerable number of years?—For the last 25 years. I have farmed about 250 acres of my own land.

52,617. You are well acquainted with local agricultural matters?—In a general way.

52,618. In what capacity?—I am Convener of the County of Aberdeen, Chairman of the Committee of the County Council administering the Contagious Diseases (Animals) Act, Vice-President of the Royal Northern Agricultural Society, and a Director of the Highland and Agricultural Society.

Condition of agriculture.

52,619. What can you tell us with regard to the depression affecting your district?—I have simply to say that the depression seems to be less acute in the north-eastern counties of Scotland than in any other part of the country. So far as I can see there is very little difficulty in letting all good farms, and sometimes even at a considerable rise of rent, even in these present times. Large farms, of course, are always more difficult to let than small farms. But for anything under 100 acres you will find any number of tenants at the present moment.

Characteristics of agriculture.

52,620. What is the prevailing character of the agriculture of the district?—Simply, as a rule, it is the feeding of cattle and of some sheep in the upper districts, for the London and large markets down south.

52,621. What crops are raised?—Oats and turnips, which are consumed on the farm.

Position of landowners.

52,622. As to the owners of land within the last 15 years, have they been materially affected?—In some cases they have, particularly where the land is in any way inferior, or the farms are in bad heart, or the buildings in bad order, they have fallen in amount to one-third of the rent.

52,623. And on better lands?—I think the rent has been fairly well maintained. No doubt the farmer is, to a certain extent, depressed. He does not make the profit that he made in the seventies.

52,624. Is the tenant's capital fairly well maintained?—It is difficult to answer that point. Perhaps I could not.

Stock keeping.

52,625. Judging from the condition of the farms, would you say that the same amount of stock is kept?—I do not think there is any falling off in the amount of stock kept.

52,626. There is no visible indication of any considerable loss of capital?—The only extraneous indication I see is this: for many years farmers in the north have abandoned breeding their own stock and have bought in their cattle. They buy in cattle at two years old, and turn over their money more rapidly than in breeding. That began about the time of the cattle plague in 1866, when, I believe, they got alarmed about the risks of breeding. I put down the giving up of breeding to the fear of disease, and partly to the smaller capital involved in this system of farming.

Mr. A. M. Gordon.

52,627. Where do they buy their cattle?—A good many come from Ireland, some from counties further north, some from Orkney, and a good many were imported from Canada into parts of Aberdeen.

Importation of foreign cattle.

52,628. Do they feel aggrieved by the stoppage of the importation of cattle from Canada?—I do not think most of the people do. There are a few noisy individuals, who say they are aggrieved. They are principally the larger farmers in the vicinity of auction marts.

52,629. Is it your opinion that they had better go back to breeding?—Now that we have got rid of pleuro, I think they will go back to breeding.

Size of farms.

52,630. Have farms been more difficult to let than they were before?—Large farms have been. But Aberdeenshire is a county of small farms—what you would call a small farm. In the eastern division there are a few larger farms; but I doubt whether there is a farm over 500 acres in the whole county.

52,631. What is the average size?—The average would be about 100 acres; what they call a pair-horse farm.

52,632. What is the minimum?—They run down to nothing. They are very mixed in size.

52,633. Have you farms of 15 acres?—Some run down to 5—a cow's keep. They are readily all taken up by the labourers.

52,634. Have the farms been sub-divided to any extent in recent years?—I think not. The tendency is rather to run small farms into larger ones on account of the cost of buildings.

Position of tenants.

52,635. Generally, the occupiers of Aberdeenshire are in receipt of smaller profits; but you do not consider they are crippled in the matter of capital?—There is no outside reason to suppose so; it is very difficult to get at their capital. I observe no difference in their habits. They keep the same number of gigs, the same holidays, and always imbibe a little whiskey on holidays. I do not see much difference.

Position of labourers.

52,636. The position of the farm servant is improved?—It is very materially improved, because the prices of everything have very much fallen, and wages, I will not say they have very much increased, but they have not fallen.

Changes in system of cultivation.

52,637. Has the land been going into grass to any great extent?—No, not in my immediate neighbourhood. There have been, I must say, throughout the county farms turned into sheep runs that used to be cultivated. I think that will be more the case in the future as buildings go down;

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Mr. A. M. Gordon.
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because when a man does not get a fair rent for his land he grudges to put on buildings. Not much land has been taken in since the seventies.

52,638. You have no great change to report in the system of farming in the course of the last 30 years?—Except what I have stated, that there are fewer cattle bred in the county and more bought in.

52,639. The land is worked on the six-course shift?—Yes. The only change I notice is that there is more barley grown after turnips with the grass sown out than there used to be. They find that the land is getting a little sick of oats, and is the better of a change.

52,640. Are there many occupying owners in your district?—Very few.

Subdivision of farms.

52,641. I was referring to the yeoman class of farmers?—In Aberdeenshire, in the Turriff district, an estate belonging to the Duke of Fife was broken up lately, and a great many of the farmers have bought their holdings from the Duke of Fife, and I believe at profitable prices in some instances.

52,642. Profitable to him or to them?—For them; at lower rates than he might otherwise have got for the farms.

52,643. Are they doing pretty well, so far as you know?—Some of them.

52,644. Did they pay money down for the farms?—So much of the purchase money, I believe, remained. It had not all to be paid down.

Expenditure on improvements.

52,645. Have the owners maintained the equipment of their farms?—I think there has been more spent in the last 20 years on the improvement of farms than in former years.

52,646. On buildings and drainage?—Buildings principally; drainage came earlier.

Loans.

52,647. Was the money chiefly borrowed from the Land Improvement Companies?—Very few people deal with the Land Improvement Companies: they are too expensive. You do not go to the Land Improvement Companies unless you are shut tight up.

52,648. Do you think that if the conditions of borrowing were easier more money would be borrowed for the improvement of estates?—I do not think any more would have been borrowed than there has been.

52,649. You think there is enough money forthcoming for the purpose?—There is plenty of money to be got just now if you have security.

Foreign competition.

52,650. Are you feeling the pressure of competition in Aberdeenshire?—That, of course, accounts for the fall in prices. We feel the competition in foreign beef, and there is a good deal of grumbling about the sale of meat in the London market.

Cost of production.

52,651. You have had some compensation in the reduced prices of farm requirements?—Of course, feeding stuffs, cake, and artificial manures, and all these things are lower.

52,652. Is machinery largely used on the larger farms?—To a certain extent.

52,653. Has it materially reduced the labour bill?—I do not think much.

52,654. You think there is no reduction in the amount spent on labour?—I think there has rather been an increase. Every farmer tells you his labour bill is larger.

Bad seasons.

52,655. Have you suffered in recent years from bad seasons?—We suffered in 1892 from a wet harvest. We had some rain and hail in the autumn months of that year. I saw with my own eyes people carting some of the stuff away from the fields in the month of March. They had never been able to get it in in the end of November.

Rural depopulation.

52,656. Is labour becoming more difficult to get?—The rural population is declining and going into the towns.

52,657–8. Do they better themselves there, or do they just prefer the life of the towns?—I do not know. One does not follow them very much. They are all getting so well educated that they prefer any sort of employment to manual labour.

52,659. Wages would have a tendency to increase if this goes on?—I think there are signs of that.

52,660. Do you get the same amount of female labour?—It is getting very scarce. Boys also are much more difficult to get, or children for labour work. Since the Education Act was passed they have all to be at school until they are 13 or 14 years of age.

52,661. Labour, in fact, is getting rather a serious difficulty?—It is.

Mr. A. M. Gordon.
6 June 1895.
Rates.

52,662. Have the rates increased or diminished?—The county rates have increased slightly since the passing of the Local Government Act.

52,663. The tenants pay half the rates, do they not?—There was what they call a statutory rate fixed. That was an average for the last 10 years; that is paid by the owners.

52,664. Taking your own position, are the rates heavier on you now than they were 10 years ago?—Slightly so. The fact of the matter is, everything is going up. Labour is going up to a certain extent. Men do not work the same length of hours. And the road rate, for example, does not go over the same extent of roads without any extravagant expenditure.

52,665. The increase has not been a substantial one?—Farmers tell you it has. I do not see anything very material. I find in 1889–90 the county assessment on owners in the county of Aberdeen was a fraction above 7*d.* in the £, viz., 7·268. In 1889–90, speaking from memory, we spent nearly 12,000*l.* for animals slaughtered under the Contagious Diseases Act. That was the reason why the rate was so high. It actually doubled the owners' rates in the county. In 1890 the owners' rate was 5·440*d.*; in 1891–92 the owners' rate was 5·840*d.*—that was a slight rise. In 1892–93 it was 5·585*d.*, and in 1893 6·165*d.* The occupiers' rates were, 1890–91, 3·415*d.*; 1891–92, 3·905*d.*; 1892–93, 3·655*d.*; 1893–94, 4·195*d.* They have risen in four years about 1*d.* in the £.

52,666. Has the poor rate been stationary?—It fluctuates very much in the various parishes according to classification; I am not prepared to give you the poor rate.

52,667. In your own case has it increased very much?—I think it has been stationary.

52,668. What is the amount of it?—10*d.* in the £. That includes registration.

52,669. Is that divided between the owner and occupier?—With certain deductions—a certain per-centage on houses and so much on land—the usual classification.

52,670–2. In Aberdeenshire you think the local taxation grievance is not a very substantial one?—School rates have increased very much. The total school rate is 7*d.* in the £—3½*d.* on the owner and 3½*d.* on the occupier.

Light railways.

52,673. Is there a strong feeling in favour of light railways in Aberdeenshire?—There is; there has been a good deal of agitation about the matter. I think if the Board of Trade would relax their rules a little, the principal local railway companies would construct light railways themselves.

52,674. As feeders of the main lines?—I was talking to the manager of the Great North of Scotland Railway and that was their view.

Rates.

52,675. Have you any definite solution in the direction of relief; do you think the present incidence of rates unjust?—I think that more burdens are thrown on land than on any other class of property.

52,676–7. Do you see how they might be fairly adjusted?—It is difficult to say how it could be done. But I think legislators might devise the means.

52,678. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) There is a little depression with you?—No doubt. But I say it is less than in other places.

Small holdings.

52,679. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) As regards small farms are they all held as tenancies?—Yes, all tenancies.

52,680. What is the smallest size of farm a man can live on with a wife and family?—You mean to devote his attention exclusively to that place, and do no outside work. Well, it depends very much on the district. In some cases he might do it on 30 or 40 acres.

52,681. Smaller than that a man would want outside employment?—He would have to do some work.

52,682. Are there many at that?—Oh, yes. Many of them in my district club together to do the farm with and keep a horse a-piece.

52,683. (*Chairman.*) Are many small tradesmen?—No.

52,684. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) They are men who would hire themselves for piece-work?—Yes.

52,685. Under 30 or 40 acres they must have some outside work to occupy their time?—Yes.

Freedom of sale and cropping.

52,686. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In regard to that question of freedom of sale and freedom of cultivation—is there any great cry in your county for that?—Probably a little among the worst class of farmers.

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Mr. A. M. Gordon. 6 June 1895.

52,687. Is it your opinion that the interests of the landlord would require to be safe-guarded in some way before granting any such thing?—Certainly. Without some such safeguard many tenants would run out the land. I have known many cases where men took farms for four or five years for the purpose of running them out. They then threw them up, and left them in a bad state.

52,688. Your leases in Aberdeenshire, I suppose, follow the general run of agricultural covenants and have the usual clause, for instance, against indiscriminate cropping?—I fancy so.

52,689. You do not think that it would be wise to do away with such clauses?—I do not believe there should be any interference with individuals making their own bargains.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,690. About the Agricultural Holdings Act—has it been much put into force in your district?—There have been some cases doubtless, but generally claims have been settled privately. The landlord and tenant at the end of the lease have come to some private arrangement.

52,691. Is it usual to agree upon a certain scale of compensation rather than have any question under the Act at the end of the tenancy?—I do not think there is any scale. I never heard of any.

52,692. But you would be against anything being done to prevent such agreements being entered into between landlord and tenant?—Certainly.

Rates.

52,693. (*Mr. Dalton.*) As regards classification of rates, does the classification apply to the half paid by the owner?—Yes, to houses and lands.

52,694. We were informed in London that the classification only applied to the half paid by occupiers, but the last witness said it applied to the half paid by owners as well?—That is so, to the poor rate and the school rate.

52,695. The classification system—does it give satisfaction?—I could not say. There is a great deal of grumbling about it.

52,696. On the part of householders?—There is a good deal of grumbling so far as the collection of the county rates is concerned, on account of the number of assessments that there are made under the Public Health Act. These must be levied in the same way as the rates are levied in each parish.

52,697. There is no complaint on the part of householders that they pay a higher rate than the occupiers of land?—Not that I ever heard of. But I reside entirely in a rural district.

52,698. It is optional for a district to throw it up, I suppose?—Certainly.

52,699. If the householders thought it unfair they could throw it up?—In suburban districts they would. But I have not heard of them doing it.

52,700. Have you made any reduction or remissions to your tenants?—In individual cases.

52,701. Has there been any general reduction? I know people have given general reductions?—I suppose so, but I have not thought it my duty to do so.

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52,702. Your tenants are pretty well satisfied with the reductions given?—I have no difficulty in letting places.

Reduction of rents.

52,703. Do you build for them and keep the buildings in repair and charge interest on the money spent?—That depends on the bargain.

52,704. What is the average rent per acre?—It is very difficult to say. It would run out to 1*l.* an acre. Some people say that the average rental of the county is 23*s.* an acre, but how they make that out I do not understand.

Average rent.

52,705. (*Mr. Everett.*) While you have a system of classification does the farmhouse pay on the household scale or is it included in the assessment of the farm at the reduced scale?—It is taken on the rental of the farm, they do not separate the house.

Assessment to rates.

52,706. Aberdeenshire is mostly under the plough, is it not? You have very little permanent pasture?—Practically none.

52,707. Practically a half of every arable farm lies in temporary grass?—For three years.

52,708. Do you know the average cost per acre for labour on an average Aberdeenshire farm?—I have not calculated that. It would depend very much on the particular crop over the whole relation.

52,709. Of course half your land requires no labour except the labour of mowing?—There is not much mowing. It is all grazed.

Cattle fattening.

52,710. Is it grazed chiefly with cattle?—Chiefly with cattle. There are a few more sheep than there used to be?—In Aberdeenshire alone we have one-sixth of the whole cattle of Scotland.

52,711. And can you fatten your cattle on these temporary pastures in the summer time?—Yes.

52,712. You give them cake?—It is not the general custom, the principal fattening is done on turnips and straw in the early autumn. They are taken in early, about the end of August or the beginning of September, and finished off in October.

52,713. Your turnips must be specially nutritious?—So they say.

52,714. You can fatten cattle on them without cake?—They always get some to finish off with—those who finish them well.

52,715. (*Mr. Channing.*) We have to give cattle cake for about six weeks. We could not fatten on turnips. Your soil must be singularly suitable for nitrogenous constituents?—It may be so; it does not look like it.

Leases.

52,716. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you find tenants more reluctant to take 19 years' leases than formerly?—They ask for mutual breaks at 5 or 10 years. A lease with a mutual break really means a lease for that number of years.

The witness then withdrew.

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One-Hundredth Day.

Friday, 7th June 1895.

PRESENT:

VISCOUNT COBHAM IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLERTON CHANNING, Esq.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

Mr. J. FLOCKHART called and examined.

Mr. J. Flockhart.
7 June 1895.

52,717. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a land agent, and manage several large properties in the Fifeshire district?—Yes, and one in Lanarkshire, and a small estate in Lincolnshire as well.

Reductions in rent.

52,718. What has been the effect of the agricultural depression on the owners of land?—The large proprietors have had to submit to a reduction of from 30 to 35 per cent., consequently some have been obliged to let their mansion houses and live elsewhere, while others have been obliged to reduce their establishments to a minimum.

52,719. When you say 30 or 35 per cent., you mean on the average?—Yes, compared with 20 years ago.

52,720. What would be the maximum reduction?—Possibly 30 per cent. is rather too high for some, and 35 too low for others.

52,721. You would say, perhaps, between 20 and 40 per cent.?—Well, I do not know any cases in which there has not been a reduction of 25 per cent.

52,722. The properties you are connected with are mostly large, I suppose?—Four and five thousand a year, and that sort of thing.

52,723. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The reduction on bad land has been 40 per cent.?—A little more than 35.

Occupying owners.

52,724. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have occupying owners suffered specially, or the reverse?—Not so much as the other proprietors. They have the control of the management of the farm, and have been more economical with regard to outlay on the land, and also with regard to their household arrangements.

52,725. Are they a large class?—No. I should not say a very large class.

Condition of farmers.

52,726. Has the depression been severely felt by the tenant farmers?—It certainly was. Many of them submitted to severe losses on the faith that possibly better times might come, and, unfortunately, a large number were obliged to succumb after their capital was almost exhausted. Now it is quite different. There is a fair demand for farms at reduced rents, and, instead of cropping to the usual extent, a larger proportion has been put on grass, and the tenants appear to do fairly well.

52,727. Permanent reductions of rent were not made?—No, not permanent, and the reductions given were too small.

52,728. A considerable number of farmers had to succumb?—Yes.

52,729. To leave their farms after they had lost their capital?—Yes.

52,730. Do you think that now the reduction of rents has met the requirements of the case and the farmers are doing pretty well?—I do. Any farm in good condition, although large, will readily find a tenant at something like the reductions I have mentioned. There is not the same difficulty in letting farms there was 10 years ago.

52,731. Is there still a considerable number of the old tenants hanging on and recovering their position?—Well, at Leuchars, where there are four large farms, they did not take advantage of the breaks in their leases. Kelmeny is something the same. Yes; I should say a good many.

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52,732. They are altering the system of cultivation to a great extent?—Yes.

52,733. They are reducing the labour bill?—Yes.

Small holders.

52,734. How are the smaller tenants of 100 acres or so doing?—That class of men are thriving. Their household expenses are very limited, and their families, in most cases, assist in the working of the farm. I can give instances where tenants of this class, that is to say, paying rents of three to four hundred pounds, have been increasing their capital; and so soon as they do that, they take another holding. These men are to be trusted, and do not incur any obligation unless they see their way to fulfil it.

52,735. Do you class such men as small farmers?—I do not class them exactly as small farmers. A man with 100 acres can employ two pair of horses. I put them rather in the medium list. The small tenants I refer to are men who do not keep more than one pair of horses, if even that.

52,736. That would be a 70-acre farm or less?—Yes; possibly 60.

52,737. They attend to the rearing of cattle?—That is so. It is the cattle, principally, and the sheep they trust to. But these small tenants with 30 to 60 acres cannot keep a flock of sheep, because their holdings are too small.

52,738. These tenants can afford to pay a better proportionate rent than large farmers?—If they are near a large town or large villages where there is plenty of hiring, this class can thrive fairly well and even pay a larger rent than the large and medium tenant farmers. They get 15*s.* a day for the hire of a pair of horses.

52,739. When an opportunity arises, they let out their own labour and that of their horses advantageously?—Yes; but sometimes they hire too much and lose the season of their own land.

Condition of labourers.

52,740. The wages of agricultural labourers have been well maintained?—Yes.

52,741. And their hours of labour have been reduced?—Yes.

52,742. You would say that the general condition of the agricultural labourer has been decidedly improved?—Yes, certainly; very materially improved. With very few exceptions they are now very comfortably housed, and they never fail to find employment. As a class they are very contented.

Quality of labour.

52,743. Is the quality of the labour they give as good as it was or better?—I think they are more attentive, and keep things in better order than they used to do.

52,744. Are they better educated?—Yes. Their children have now the means of getting a good education, and the necessaries of life can all be had at a very moderate rate, compared with 20 years ago.

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52,745. I think the upshot of what you say about the effect of the depression upon the various agricultural classes is that the brunt of it is now borne by the landowners?—Yes.

Effect of depression.

52,746. Who are still suffering from a very substantial reduction of their incomes?—Yes.

Deteriorated cultivation.

52,747. Is farming land in East Fife maintained under good cultivation?—It is not so well cultivated as it used to be.

52,748. How do you arrive at that conclusion?—There is not the same quantity of manure put into it.

52,749. Is the output of the land reduced?—Yes. But that is not universal. There are some cases where the land is as well farmed as it was 20 years ago. There are other cases where it is very much worse farmed. There is not the same amount of manure put into the land, and I do not think it is so well cultivated on the average as it was 20 years ago.

52,750. If that is the case how can the same quantity of stock be maintained on the land?—Possibly there may be more turnips grown. I do not think that in the high lands of Fifeshire there is the same quantity of potatoes grown, because for a great many years the potatoes were low-priced and did not pay at all.

52,751. It must tell in the course of time on the amount of stock kept?—I think that will now improve in so far as rents have been reduced. A tenant has not the same difficulty in paying his rent now as he had several years ago.

Changes of tenancy.

52,752. Changes of tenancy, which were frequent at one time, have ceased to be so?—There are not nearly so many.

52,753. They are now normal?—They are not nearly so frequent. In some cases a tenant may want to have a larger farm, and leaves a smaller one for that purpose. In the event of the death of a tenant, and his estate being divided among several of a family, then practically the tenancy comes to an end.

Management of estates.

52,754. How are large estates generally managed?—There are a good many in the hands of practically trained factors, but in some cases they are managed by lawyers and chartered accountants.

52,755. Is it more the custom to put estates into the hands of trained factors than it was?—I think there are one or two more, but not many. In fact there are not many of us altogether in East Fife.

Rural depopulation.

52,756. Do you find that the rural labouring population is diminishing?—No. Except where a large portion of the farm may have been laid down to pasture.

52,757. Has that affected the rural population to a considerable extent?—Yes, but otherwise there has been no depopulation. Taking Kilconquhar as an instance, I find that the population has rather increased.

52,758. Where there is a good demand for agricultural labour, it is forthcoming?—Yes.

Condition of labourers.

52,759. Labourers, then, are contented and well-to-do?—There is no doubt about that.

52,760. Living more comfortably and saving money?—Yes.

Foreign competition.

52,761. The cause of the depression in your opinion is foreign competition?—Certainly that is the principal cause.

52,762. Do you consider that to some extent the quality of agricultural produce has fallen off?—No, I do not think so. With the exception of butter, and probably cheese, it does not appear that any other articles are of inferior quality. These two articles might be improved.

52,763. So as to displace a considerable proportion of foreign competition?—Yes.

Danish butter.

52,764. You get a great quantity of Danish butter in Scotland?—Yes, even in the villages.

52,765. Selling at equally good prices as the fresh butter produced on the farm?—Yes, I find that now there is little difference in the price of home and Danish butter, but the latter is preferred. Danish butter is now selling at 1*s.* per lb.

52,766. Is 1*s.* 4*d.* the price charged by the grocer?—Yes; and there is a difficulty in selling the home produce.

52,767. The manufacture must be very inferior to the Danish butter, because the Danish is not fresh?—Yes, it is quite fresh.

52,768. Fresh enough to suit the taste of the customer?—I do not think there is any salt in it, but I am not an authority on that point.

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52,769. I do not think Danish butter can get to Scotland without salt?—I think that is so.

52,770-1. You say it keeps out the local article?—That is so.

52,772. Do you tell the same story about cheese?—Yes. There is a great deal of very poor cheese in Scotland.

52,773. It is depreciated by foreign competition?—Yes.

Co-operation.

52,774. Are the county councils doing anything to improve the manufacture of those articles?—No. We tried to establish a butter and cheese factory in a central position about two years ago, thinking that possibly 10 or 12 farmers would send in their milk. But somehow or other it failed. They would not agree, and we were obliged to let it drop.

52,775. That was a joint stock affair?—Yes. The difficulty was about carting the milk five or six miles.

Technical instruction.

52,776. Have there been no lectures or instruction given?—Yes, certainly, and in our district it did a great deal of good.

52,777. You think there is an improvement in the make of butter and cheese in consequence?—I have it from a regular dairyman that a good deal of information was obtained from these lectures.

Local rates.

52,778. Has the depression in agriculture been increased by any increase of rates and taxes within the last 15 years?—Not so very much. There is no doubt the taxes are pretty heavy, and we have the road rate in addition.

52,779. Do the farmers complain of the highway rates?—I think they preferred the old toll system. It was paying out money in small sums, whereas, now that they have a good few pounds to pay in a lump sum, they rather grudge it.

52,780. You hold the opinion that the support of the poor should be thrown upon the State?—Yes.

52,781. And the maintenance of roads?—No, but the system ought to be changed, because it is a great grievance that all burghs, whether Royal or parliamentary, or police, are exempt from maintaining country roads which they use to a large extent in the way of carting and for pleasure purposes. In most towns you will see carriages driving all round the places, and they cart building material and do not give one farthing to keep up the roads. Lord Elgin said that was not the intention of the Act.

52,782. In your opinion the schools ought to be supported by the Imperial taxation?—Yes. The Government inspector exercises his right to increase accommodation, which ratepayers in some cases resent as being unnecessary and uncalled for, and it appears to me that the charge for school rates ought to be put on the same footing as poor rates. They both press very heavily.

52,783. Is that the opinion of farmers generally throughout Fife?—They would be glad to get anything in the way of diminution of rates.

52,784. Are they prepared to give up local administration?—I do not think they would make any trouble about that, except a small minority.

52,785. You are prepared to see highly centralised administration from London?—I think it would be better, and the management would be cheaper, and it would be an advantage to us to get quit of poor and school rates. I think that these burghs ought to bear a larger proportion of road rates than they do now.

Tenure.

52,786. Is the old system of letting farms on 19 years' leases still popular with tenants?—It is popular with some tenants, but not with others.

52,787. The break is now pretty nearly universal?—Yes.

52,788. At five and seven years?—Yes. In some cases where there is an improved demand there is a break at 10 in a 19 years' lease.

52,789. (*Mr. Everett.*) Can a landlord alter the terms at a break?—He can.

52,790. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It is a break for both parties?—Yes.

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52,791. Each party can terminate the lease?—Yes.

52,792. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think that is a bad system?—Yes. I think the land would be put in better condition if the leases were longer than seven years.

52,793. Do you agree with other witnesses in thinking that with a comparatively short term tenants are afraid of farming high?—Yes. I think that is the tendency.

52,794. You think that would be less likely to be the case under the old 19 years' lease?—Yes. There is no doubt then that they can recoup themselves at the end of the lease for any improvements.

52,795. Did the landowners prefer the old 19 years' leases, and has the pressure for the break at five and seven years come from the tenants?—From the tenants. As a factor I should certainly prefer letting from 14 to 19 years without a break.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,796. Do you consider that the Agricultural Holdings Act bears hardly on the landlord?—Yes, I do, because although the intention of the Act was that the in-coming tenant was to pay the out-going tenant for improvements, the landlord has in most cases to pay all the claims which the latter has—at least, it is so in my experience.

52,797. In the ordinary case of the outgoing and in-coming tenant, is payment made by the landowner and got back so far as he can from the in-coming tenant?—There is only one case in which I knew of an in-going tenant settling with an out-going tenant for improvements under the Act.

52,798. Do you know of a case where the out-going tenant got a substantial sum for improvements, and the in-coming tenant did not recoup the landlord either by increased rent or payment down?—I cannot give a case.

52,799. You have not had very much experience of the workings of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No. In fact, since the passing of the Act, proprietors had to give large abatements, and that was put against any claim under the Holdings Act.

Abatements of rent.

52,800. The abatements of rent were written down as arrears?—The abatement was to clear off any claim under the Holdings Act, and nearly every tenant in the district has got an abatement since the passing of the Act.

52,801. So that in practice that prevented claims being made?—Yes.

52,802. Of course there are no counter-claims in consequence?—No.

52,803. Do you know what the feelings of farmers of your acquaintance are with regard to the Holdings Act? Are they in favour of amendments, and in what direction?—I do not hear tenants say very much about the Holdings Act at all. In any statements I have heard there does not appear to be much grumbling about it. They grumble chiefly about the expense. So long as they have each an agent, with two arbiters, an oversman, and a clerk, heavy expenses cannot be avoided.

Arbitration

52,804. Do you see any objection to the suggestion that there should be only one arbiter nominated by the State or some public body?—No. But the agents will appeal all the same

Compensation.

52,805. You are not averse to the principle of compensation?—Certainly not.

52,806-8. You consider that the Act operates somewhat harshly on the landowners; how would you prevent that? The compensation has to come out of the landlords' pockets in any case?—I believe that is so; but if leases were from 14 to 19 years it would not happen very often, and I see no reason why a landlord should not make an agreement with his tenant what the principle of compensation is to be.

Restrictions in leases.

52,809. Do you think it would not be wise to relax the existing system with regard to cropping?—Certainly there should not be freedom of cropping.

52,810. Would it encourage a low class of tenants to run out farms?—I would not exactly say a low class, but a great many tenants may say, "I take this farm "for five years to make the most of it, not for the "landlord or the general community, but to make the "most of it for myself"; and if he were not bound to a routine of cropping he would run out the farm In Fife district, if the tenant is entitled to have one half of the farm in white crop, and in the higher districts only two-fifths, I do not see what more any tenant can reasonably ask. With freedom of cropping it appears to me that a tenant can make certainly the most of his farm, but it cannot be kept out of view that the may leave his holding at the end of his lease a wilderness.

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52,811. Would not a covenant empowering the landowner to enter and dispossess the tenant meet the case?—It is very difficult to prove.

52,812. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) If he is farming wastefully, you mean?—Yes. I think it would be very difficult to get at the tenant.

52,813. (*Lord Cobham.*) As a matter of practice, do you relax these covenants?—Yes, certainly. I never knew a case where, for instance, a tenant had a field of grass not looking very well, and he asked to get another white crop taken off and applied some manure such as bones—I never knew a case where it was refused at all; and plenty of applications have been made.

52,814. Is there a good market for hay and straw in Fife?—Sometimes. Two years ago hay was as high as 6*l.* 10*s.*, but a number of years before it was 50*s.*

52,815. Is it allowed to be sold?—Yes; hay can always be sold.

52,816. That is the general practice in Scotland?—Yes. There is a clause in the leases that manure is to be returned for the hay, but there is no check or supervision kept.

52,817. Do you think the deterioration of the land you speak of has been caused by selling off the hay and straw?—There is no straw sold; that is prohibited by the leases; and there is no demand, except where there are large mansions. But if a tenant farms well I do not see why he should not sell a proportion of his hay crop.

Low prices.

52,818. You say low prices are the main cause of agricultural depression, and you do not think much improvement can be expected until prices rise?—I believe that is about the whole story.

52,819. Do you see any method of hastening that consummation?—I have some idea how it could be done, but I am afraid it would not be agreed to.

"Protection."

52,820. We would like to hear what your opinions are. Are they protectionist?—So far I do not think there is any chance of improvement unless you tax the foreign barley brought here to make into malt, but I do not refer to other grain.

52,821. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You suggest there should be protective duties?—I am pretty satisfied I will not get them.

52,822. But that is what you would like to see?—I say that if there is an increase in the price of farm produce it will materially help the tenant farmer. I do not give an opinion about protection.

Railway rates.

52,823. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is there any other special grievance to which you can suggest a remedy?—No. There is a good deal of discussion about railway rates. In a good many cases where there is no competition the farmers are overcharged, and where there is plenty of competition I daresay they will not suffer so much.

52,824. Has the upkeep of estates been maintained notwithstanding the great fall in rents?—I think so.

State loans.

52,825. Do you think the granting of State loans at a small rate of interest for the improvement of buildings, drainage, and fencing would still further improve matters?—Yes. There is a large proportion of land either not drained at all or insufficiently drained which might be drained by the aid of such loans if the interest were low, and also there is a considerable extent of land very badly fenced, and if it were better fenced more stock would be kept.

Settled Land Act.

52,826. There is a good deal of money spent under the Settled Land Act for the improvement of estates?—Not for a number of years.

52,827. Under the Settled Land Act is trust money employed for the improvement of estates?—No.

52,828. Probably less money still is being applied for from the private land improvement companies owing to the heavy charge?—Yes, and it is a high charge—about 7 per cent. with expenses.

52,829. That stops the applications?—I see hardly one advertised in Scotland.

52,830. At one time a great deal was done under these Acts?—Yes.

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52,831. A large amount of land still remains in a comparatively unimproved state?—It certainly could be materially improved.

52,832. If money could be got at 4 per cent., much of this land would be drained and otherwise improved?—I do not think, so far as clay land is concerned, much would be done to it, but the other classes of land would be drained to a much larger extent by the aid of loans at 4 per cent.

Loans to tenants.

52,833. Are you in favour of loans to the tenants?—For stocking the farm.

52,834. For the permanent improvement of farms?—Yes.

Technical education.

52,835. Do you think that in Scotland a good deal can yet be done to promote agricultural education?—So far as my experience goes agricultural classes have not been successful at all.

52,836. You have a high opinion of the natural intelligence of the Scotch farmer?—Yes. I believe it is like everything else—a business that has got to be learned. I do not think any education, except in the fields, is very much use. I do not think lecturers teaching agriculture are successful.

52,837. If it could be provided without encroaching on the practical training of farmers, do you not think some scientific training must be advantageous in such a complex business?—I do not mean to say it does any harm, but I do not think it does a great deal of good.

52,838. Perhaps the proper mode of administering the education has not been discovered?—That may be so. I know that in our district the county council had classes in Colensburgh which were fairly well attended in the first year, but proved a failure in the second.

52,839. Some training should be given in the elementary schools to the children of the labouring classes to give them some knowledge of the principles of the business?—That might be done.

52,840. Do you think it would give them a greater interest in their work?—It would be a start at any rate. They would understand when they commenced to work what had been taught in the school.

52,841. But so far as you have seen at present, agricultural education has not done much for agriculture generally?—That is so.

Nationalisation of poor rate.

52,842. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Did I understand you to say that you preferred the poor should be maintained by the State?—Yes.

52,843. How would you distribute the funds to the aged poor?—An inspector could take six or eight or ten parishes in hand.

52,844. You think it should be done by an inspector?—Yes, appointed by the Government.

52,845. But would you have no local control over him?—No. There might or might not be, but like every other Government official if he were properly looked after he would do his duties properly.

52,846. How would he be properly looked after if his employers were in London?—There could be another inspector over the others. Fife, for instance, might be divided into eastern and western districts, with a chief inspector for each district.

52,847. Would not that be having a large number of inspectors?—There is an inspector now in every parish.

52,848. But he is looked after by local people?—Yes. But all the expenses of collection would be saved which is half the expense of the management.

52,849. Collection of what?—Of the rates.

52,850. But the State would have to collect the money somehow?—Certainly.

52,851. Where would the difference come in between the State collecting it and local collections?—A grant from the State funds.

52,852. Do you mean you would have a subvention from the State for local people to distribute?—For inspectors provided by the State to distribute.

52,853. Do you think that would tend in any way to economy?—I think so

52,854. Are not the present boards economical?—We have 10 inspectors doing the work which possibly one could do, and the expense of collection would be saved.

52,855. Is not that the fault of the local boards that they employ ten men to do the work of one?—Parishes will not agree to amalgamate. Each parish appoints its own inspector and collector, else there would be a saving.

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52,856. Do I understand that you advocate this on the ground of economy as regards the distribution of the money? Do you think less money would be spent?—On the ground of economy and fair play as well.

52,857. Where does the fair play come in?—I am of opinion the poor are the property of the State.

52,858. You want to make it a national charge?—Yes.

52,859. That is your principal argument?—Yes. It should be collected and distributed by the Government.

52,860. Then, of course, you would do away with local control?—Yes. The parish councillors might have control so far, though I do not think it is necessary.

Tenure.

52,861. You admit that the desire for the break in the leases came from the tenants?—Yes.

52,862. For what reason was that?—Because they did not like to be tied down to so long a period as 14, 15, or 19 years.

52,863. Was that because they were afraid prices might fall and they would not be able to get a sufficient reduction of rent?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,864. You referred to the fact that the Agricultural Holdings Act bore hardly on the landlord. How do you think it does so?—If the landlord in every case has to pay compensation under the Act, I think it does so.

52,865. But he would only pay compensation for improvements that added to the letting value of the farm?—In my experience that is not sufficiently taken into account.

52,866. But that is not the fault of the Act but of those who administer it. Compensation to the outgoing tenant is estimated by the valuator, is it not?—Unless a private agreement is made. The outgoing tenant must be paid by the proprietor or the incoming tenant.

52,867. Do the valuations award anything more than is fair?—I do not think so.

52,868. I think there can be no hardship on the landlord if he only has to pay what is fair?—Yes, but it is paying a lump sum often.

52,869. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Paying a what?—Paying a lump sum every five or seven years. I do not see how he is recouped.

Competition for farms.

52,870. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is there any competition for farms in East Fife?—Yes.

52,871. Considerable competition?—It depends on the class of the farm.

52,872. Say an average farm of 150 acres?—You will have six or seven men, or if it were exceptionally good, 15 or 16 men.

52,873. Would it not be natural if you had six or seven men making an offer, that you would get the value of the farm, and even the added value that accrued to it by the improvements of the outgoing tenant?—I am very doubtful of that. There is no doubt you would get a fair rent, but I do not see how the landlord, if he is to pay compensation every five or seven years, can be recouped by additional rent.

52,874. But if he gets more rent it must recoup him for his outlay?—The principle is right but the practice is different.

52,875. But you admit the valuing is fair?—Yes. But I am referring to the landlord paying compensation every five or seven years. How is he to be recouped.

52,876. Is he not recouped out of the added rent?—He ought to be, but so far as I know, that is not the practice.

52,877. If there are six men competing for one farm surely it would be lifted to its proper rental?—Of course, I have nothing to say about the rental. It is the payment made by the proprietor for improvements.

52,878. The farms are rented high enough at present?—Some are, some are the reverse. There are

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some farms that might bring an increase of rent and others that would not.

52,879. They are not rented high enough?—I would not like to say that. Still an increased rent might be got on some farms and not on others.

52,880. Have tenants who are farming under leases got the same reduction as those who have changed their farms?—In most cases proprietors have done their very utmost to give abatements to industrious tenants who knew their business.

Restrictions in leases.

52,881. You consider it would be injurious to the landlord if the restrictive covenants were done away with altogether?—I decidedly think so.

52,882. But you say that in a large number of cases they are relaxed?—Yes. But these cases are exceptional, in so far as they only happen where a crop fails.

52,883. Why not leave it to the discretion of the tenant instead of having to go to the factor and ask permission?—Because he might miscrop the farm and deteriorate it very materially.

52,884. If you gave the landlord the right to re-enter and dispossess the deteriorating tenant that would be sufficient to protect the landlord?—It would be a very difficult thing to do, and I do not see how it could be done.

52,885. You can resume possession of a farm now if an agreement is broken?—If an agreement about cropping is broken, that is a matter for compensation.

52,886. Why should not the law be enforced as well as a private agreement? Supposing a law were made to give freedom of cropping provided a tenant did not deteriorate, how could it not be enforced as well as a private agreement?—The expenses of witnesses, and arbiters, and oversman, and all the machinery would be so great it would be quite unworkable.

52,887. But it does not require witnesses to walk over a farm to instruct a valuator if the valuator is a practical man. You, yourself, would be able to go over a farm and say, without outside help, whether a field had been miscropped?—It would be all right if you had a practical man for an oversman.

52,888. Do you ever have any other than practical men?—There is no rule to the contrary.

52,889. Surely there is, at any rate, a fixed understanding between valuators that they should only appoint practical men for oversmen?—In railway cases where land is taken for railway purposes, you have the very best counsel for oversmen. There is no reason why they should not also be employed in these cases.

52,890. Are any other than practical men selected as oversmen?—There have been no cases of the kind you suggested.

52,891. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would not the difficulty be met if you had a specified amount of manurial return agreed upon, and the law laid it down that if a tenant made that specified return of manurial matter the farmer should be allowed freedom of sale and freedom of cropping?—You would require to have a great deal of supervision over the tenant, and the majority of tenants would not approve of that.

52,892. Have you never heard of experiences of continuous white cropping?—It is bound to run out the land. You cannot keep it free of weeds. It is bound to run to a wilderness.

Malt tax.

52,893. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is much barley grown in Fife?—On good land, a sixth of the farm.

52,894. Have you ever considered whether the repeal of the malt tax has affected the price of barley?—Unquestionably, to a material extent.

52,895. Are you of opinion that if the beer duty could be altered in such a way that the tax would be levied, in the future, on the material instead of on the product on which it is now levied, the effect would be beneficial on the prices of English barley?—I could not say as to that, but there is no doubt that barley fell a long way immediately after the malt tax was repealed.

52,895*a*. I gather from the drift of your evidence that unless there should be a change in the price list in the direction of a rise, you do not see any prospect of a material improvement in the agricultural position?—That is so.

52,896. (*Mr. Lambert.*) The agricultural labourer's position is fairly prosperous at the present moment?—Yes.

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Condition of labourers.

52,897. (*Mr. Channing.*) A larger proportion of the land has lately been put down to grass?—Yes, in the higher country. That is to say stiff land 500 feet above sea level.

Land laid down to grass.

52,898. Less labour therefore is employed on the land?—Yes.

Small farmers.

52,899. I observe you say that unless a small farmer can find constant employment on his farm, it is impossible he can make a fair livelihood?—Yes.

52,900. Is that because he finds better employment elsewhere?—Yes, and his horses are standing idle.

52,901. You are speaking then of employment for his horses and not for him?—Well he could go and hoe and improve his land and fences. He can always find employment for himself.

52,902. But can he find employment apart from his own farm?—I do not think so.

52,903. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do not the small holders let their own labour out?—Yes, it is a different thing when it comes to hiring.

52,904. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I ask the question, because in another question referring to the agricultural labourer you say they never fail to find employment. I want to know why there should be a difficulty in the case of the small tenant when there appears to be no difficulty on the part of the agricultural labourer?—The farm labourer is engaged yearly whereas the small farmer only goes when it suits him, that is to say, when he has no work on his own farm, and the full complement of servants having been engaged he is not required.

Employment of labourers.

52,905. Are any agricultural labourers employed by the week or the fortnight?—There are odd or orra men.

52,906. What is an orra man?—He is paid by the week and does all kinds of work.

52,907. Do they get constant employment too?—Yes.

52,908. Why cannot the small tenant get employment as an orra man?—It would only suit him to go one or two days a week and a farmer could not be expected to take him in on these conditions.

52,909. His services cannot be counted on when they are needed?—That is so.

Nationalisation of poor rate.

52,910. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Your chief argument in favour of the poor rates being made a national burden is owing to the fact that in many parishes there are populous places that supply the poor and that the up-keep of the poor falls on the land of that parish?—Yes. That is one reason. As a matter of fair play the poor ought to be the property of the State.

Rating.

52,911. You object to different rating in neighbouring parishes?—Yes, I think it is wrong.

State loans.

52,912. You hold that if loans could be got at 3½ per cent. a good deal of advantage would be taken of it for the purpose of improving the cottage accommodation and the steadings?—Yes.

Penal clauses.

52,913. You have been asked about the penal clauses, and you say the necessity for those is to guard against an inferior class of tenant?—Yes, most men would say I have taken this subject for five years and I want to make money for myself.

52,914. These penal clauses are rarely enforced in your experience? I might say almost never. What is the reason for keeping them there?—As a guard against a bad tenant.

Technical instruction.

52,915. Do not you think something further might be done in a more practical way to aid technical education in agriculture if it were managed differently by county councils than in the past?—I do not see very well what could be done.

52,916. Do not you think that in that part of the country where, as you have told us, home butter did not bring anything like the price of Danish butter, they might have some practical teacher—not to lecture, but to go to the farms and show them improved methods? Would not that be a great gain to the people?—It would be a very great improvement, and that is exactly what is wanted.

52,917. That kind of agricultural education would be a great improvement?—Of course I did not look at it in that way. I thought it meant giving lectures.

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52,918. Another way I take it a good deal might be done would be by having some practical man to explain matters and carry out practical experiments on the different farms in the county?—Yes. That is what I meant. To go to the tenants' farms and teach them how to make butter and cheese.

52,919. In that case you would modify your reply as to technical education being no use. It might be so if properly used?—Yes.

52,920. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you think the parish schoolmaster being trained in the arts of agriculture could impart a good deal of information to the young lads of 15 and 16?—That is exactly what we had that failed, but the young men were older. Some of them were nearly 30. The parish schoolmaster taught the classes.

52,921. I mean in the elementary schools. We have schoolmasters who go to Kensington to take courses in the arts and sciences, and these men might be able to impart the first principles of agriculture to the boys?—The only drawback is that there are very few lads of 15 at the public schools. The agricultural classes leave school as young as possible in order to earn some wages.

52,922. But you seemed to indicate that scientific training would be beneficial if it were properly carried out. The teaching of these things would be of advantage to the youth whenever you could get it?—It could do no harm, and a little good, but without a practical department it was not of much use.

52,923. If you had a college for young farmers with a farm round about where they could see both the scientific and the practical aspects, would it not be a great advantage?—It might be of some advantage, though, in my opinion, not very much, though I may be wrong.

52,924. You have not studied the case so minutely as to give an opinion?—No. It is just what I myself think, and a great many practical farmers besides.

Management of estates.

52,925. You think that practically trained factors are better to manage estates than the lawyer element in Ednir?—I should not like to give an opinion upon that, because I am a practical trained factor myself.

52,926. Is the practical trained factor not better fitted for it than a man living in a town?—I believe we all tell our own story. A lawyer or chartered accountant would no doubt say they look more sharply after the estates.

Ground game.

52,927. Has the Ground Game Act been working well in Fife?—Yes. I think the bulk of the game is in the hands of the proprietors. In a great many cases tenants do not take advantage of their rights if the rabbits are kept down. The only objection is that there are fewer hares than might be.

52,928. Are the rabbits kept sufficiently down under the Ground Game Act by the tenants?—They can do it if they choose, but if proprietors would keep down the rabbits I do not think tenants would go and hunt and shoot hares and rabbits at all.

52,929. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Your district is not a great preserving district?—No.

52,930. (*Mr. Clay.*) Not the same as Perthshire?—No.

Small farmers.

52,931. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have the class which you term the medium class any special mode of cultivation?—No.

52,932. You think the prosperity of this class is due to the tenants themselves and their families working?—Yes. I have two instances just now where men entered the farms they occupy 10 or 12 years ago with little capital, but owing to their own industry and the industry of their families they now want to take farms for their eldest sons, I suppose.

52,933. Did they grow potatoes?—It is only in the low country near the shore where potatoes are grown. Away in the highlands they ought not to be grown.

Fruit culture.

52,934. It does not appear to you that fruit culture could succeed. Does that apply to Scotland or only to the whole of Fife?—In Perthshire on the banks of the Tay, and on the Fife side as well, it has been cultivated to a small extent, but there have been no new trees planted or anything of that kind. I do not think that it would pay to plant an orchard and cultivate it in Fife.

52,935. Is that because of the climate?—Yes, and the low prices for fruit.

52,936. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In many of the old gardens in Fife they cannot grow the old dessert apples they used to grow?—They are certainly not planted, and neither are pears.

52,937. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) There are great opportunities of getting rid of fruit for jam making?—There is sometimes difficulty in selling strawberries. Fruit-growing is very uncertain.

Local rates.

52,938. (*Mr. Dalton.*) As regards the charge of the poor, do you get in Scotland any contribution from the Government towards it?—Yes.

52,939. Any substantial contribution?—Yes.

52,940. What proportion?—We get a half for insane paupers.

52,941. Anything beyond that?—Yes.

52,942. Anything for the salaries of the officers?—For the medical officers only.

52,943. Do you see any objection to combining some parishes for the purpose of poor law administration and having a common rate for the whole?—No. But the parish paying no rate, or a very small one, would object to combine with a parish paying much higher.

52,944. But in England they were compulsorily united. Do you see any objection to that being done in Scotland?—That would require careful looking into. Besides, you have to pension off these officers already in existence, which is a great grievance.

52,945. You say you think the charge for school rates ought to be on the same footing as that for the poor rate. In what respect are they on a different footing at present?—I mean by that that the State ought either to pay the whole expense or a very much larger share of the school rate.

52,946. Do not they pay, in Scotland, a larger proportion of the school expenditure than of the poor expenditure?—Yes; I think they do.

52,947. Do you want a larger subvention for the poor rate?—I think the simpler way would be for the Government just to take over both.

52,948. Entirely?—Yes. With the school rate possibly a larger grant would be fair.

52,949. Do you have any classification of the poor rate in your district?—In some parishes.

52,950. Is it popular or unpopular?—It is five and twenty years ago since that was settled, and there is nothing said about it.

52,951. No objection raised to it?—No.

52,952. It is an advantage to the agricultural land to have it?—Yes.

Co-operation

52,953. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you think that co-operation would be beneficial?—Yes; it would so far as butter and cheese are concerned.

52,954. What was the reason of the failure of the attempt you referred to?—I think the long distance carting. Of course, the place proposed was in a central district.

52,955. Was it a creamery or a factory, or what?—The thing did not go any further. We had some funds subscribed, but we failed to get sufficient to establish either a creamery or a factory.

52,956. It was not taken up?—No; though we tried very hard, and some of the proprietors supported it very heartily.

52,957. Has any information of the great success of agricultural co-operation in Ireland been distributed in Scotland?—No; at least, not in Fife.

State loans.

52,958. At what rate do you suggest State loans might be advantageously made for improvements?—I think that with the low rate of interest on money just now, and deposits in banks only receiving 1 per cent, it should not exceed 3½ per cent. I think the Government might provide it at 3.

52,959. Would you add to that a sinking fund?—If there were a sinking fund, the rate of interest should be 2½, with 1 per cent. added to liquidate the fund advanced.

52,960. Do not you think it would help agriculture if the interest on the sinking fund were slightly higher than 3½ per cent.?—It would be a great advantage to agriculture if an advance could be made at a low rate of interest, whether there was a sinking fund or not.

52,961. What has been the usual rate of interest on sinking funds charged by landlords to tenants in leases for improvements executed by the landlord? We had

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evidence it was 6½ per cent.?—No; 5 per cent. But the landlords themselves pay 4½ per cent. and 2½ to liquidate in 25 years, which is 6¾ and then there are expenses. It costs the landlord 7 per cent.

52,962. Usually most of that is charged to the tenant?—No.

52,963. Previous to the depression?—It was in my early days; but that is a considerable time ago.

52,964. Your idea is, that if these loans were granted at 3½ per cent. they would be reduced to the tenant also?—Clearly, I do not see why the tenant should pay more than the proprietor does.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. Gilchrist.

Mr. JOHN GILCHRIST called in and examined.

52,965. (*Lord Cobham.*) In what way are you associated with agriculture?—I am a farmer, and a lecturer on agricultural and dairy subjects, and I have done some land valuation work.

52,966. How much land do you farm?—It was about 180 acres to begin with; a few acres have been taken off.

52,967. You are a tenant farmer?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

52,968. A year ago, the Glasgow and West of Scotland Agricultural Discussion Society appointed a committee to suggest amendments on the Agricultural Holdings Act, 1883. How was that committee formed?—It was formed of three factors or land agents, three farmers, and one lawyer.

52,969. Have you any objection to give us the names?—No. The three factors were Mr. Peile, factor for Sir Michael Shaw Stewart, Mr. Ralston, factor for Lady Campbell, and Mr. Murray, factor for the Duke of Montrose, I think. The three farmers were Mr. Findlay, Springhill, Mr. Wilson, and myself. The lawyer was Mr. Duncan, of the firm of Russell and Duncan, Glasgow.

52,970. You were appointed chairman?—Yes.

52,971. You made an exhaustive report, which was presented to the society in January last?—Yes.

Compensation for improvements.

52,972. Take the more important suggestions, and state the nature of the alterations proposed?—The first, with regard to clause 2, is merely a verbal alteration; to insert after landlord "or his duly authorised agent "or factor," and substitute for "consent to the making," at the close of the clause, the word "approval." The force of this amendment will be, that compensation under the Act shall be payable in respect of improvements executed before the commencement of this Act, provided the landlord or his duly authorised agent or factor, within one year after the commencement of the Act, has declared in writing his approval of the improvement.

52,973. Then with regard to clause 3?—With regard to the improvements executed after the commencement of the Act it is proposed to alter as follows: "Compen- "sation under this Act shall not be payable in respect "of any improvement specified in the first part of the "schedule hereto, unless (1) the landlord or his duly "authorised agent or factor has consented in writing "to the execution of such improvement; or (2) failing "such consent in writing being obtained, the improve- "ment has, previously to the execution thereof, been "certified under a reference between the landlord and "the tenant, in terms of section 9 of this Act, as "necessary for the efficient and profitable manage- "ment of the holding, having due regard to the "purpose for which such holding was let." That was one of the principal amendments, and two of the committee dissented therefrom.

52,974. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How many did the committee consist of?—Seven.

52,975. (*Mr. Clay.*) Who dissented?—Mr. Peile and Mr. Ralston.

52,976–7. (*Lord Cobham.*) All these improvements in Part I. of the schedule may be executed against the wish of the landlord if the referee approves of them? And if he considers that they are necessary for the efficient and proper management of the holding?—Yes.

52,978. Will you now come to clause 4?—It is merely putting in "factor" after "landlord or his duly autho- "rised agent" in sixth line, and in the last sentence of the first paragraph of the clause altering to read as follows: "In default of any such agreement or under- "taking, and also in the event of the landlord failing "to comply with his undertaking within a reasonable "time (not exceeding six months), the tenant may "execute the improvement himself, and shall in "respect thereof be entitled to compensation under "this Act." We thought it advisable to define a reasonable time.

Basis of compensation.

52,979. Now we will take clause 6?—Dealing with the basis of compensation and deductions from the amount of the tenant's claim in sub-section B., delete the words "according to the rules of good husbandry "or according to the terms of any written contract "specifying such rules," and add to this sub-section, "and that whether or not such sale or removal was "contrary to the rules of good husbandry or the "terms of any written contract specifying such "rules."

52,980. Does that come at the end of the sub-section?—Yes. The clause as it at present stands is ambiguous, and this makes the meaning more clear.

52,981–2. Give us your view of the effect of the alteration?—The clause as it stands does not seem to be particularly clear, as if anything was sold off against the rules of good husbandry no deduction might be claimed for it by the proprietor.

Amount of compensation.

52,983. Then regarding the amount of compensation payable to the tenant?—Heads 1 and 2 stand as they are. Head 3 to be altered as follows: "3. For the "breach of any stipulation of the lease or of any "contract relative to the lease committed by the "tenant (which in the opinion of the arbiter has "injuriously affected the value of the holding)."

52,984. You seem to have acted on the principle throughout that a tenant may commit any breach of contract, but so long as it does not affect the value of the holding he is not to be debarred from compensation?—Yes, as far as the Act gives him liberty. It would not free him under common law.

52,985. Was that unanimously agreed to?—One gentleman did not altogether dissent, but he suggested that the breach of any stipulation here referred to should be restricted to breaches of a trivial nature.

52,986. What alterations do you propose on the procedure under the Act?—We left that the same as in the Act of 1889.

Notice of claim.

52,987. But as regards notice?—Regarding notice of intended claim for "four months" substitute "one month" in respect of the tenant's notice, and delete the words "or within fourteen days thereafter" in respect of the landlord's notice of counter-claim.

52,988. Was it the unanimous opinion that four months operates harshly on the tenant?—Yes.

Clauses 9 and 10.

52,989–90. The clauses 9 and 10?—These clauses are deleted altogether as they are rendered invalid by the amending Act, 1889, which should be incorporated.

Clause 17.

52,991. How do you propose to deal with clause 17?—Relative to the giving of particulars in the award, we propose to alter sub-section C as follows:—The award shall specify "the sum awarded in respect of "each improvement, act, matter, or thing (the arbiter "being entitled to award a larger sum than is claimed "in respect of any particular improvement, act, "matter, or thing, provided the aggregate sum "awarded is not more than the aggregate sum origi- "nally claimed").

52,992. At present the arbiter cannot give more in respect of any one claim than the amount actually claimed?—At present he cannot.

52,993. You call on the tenant to specify the amount of each claim. But you give him more than he claims if it does not exceed the aggregate. What is the reason for that?—The tenant in making out his claim may fail to realise that some item has not been sufficiently claimed for, and in that case the arbiter should have the liberty of giving more for any particular item. It leaves the arbiter a freer hand but does not allow him to give more than the total sum on the claim.

52,994. Would it not be simpler for the tenant to make an aggregate claim and not detailed claims?—

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It would be simpler but all claims should be definitely stated to assist the arbiter.

52,995. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it a common mistake for a tenant to claim less than he is entitled to?—We thought this would have a good effect in keeping down the amount of the claim on the particular items and in doing away with the absurd claims which are sometimes put forward. That was our main reason for dealing with it in that way.

52,996. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are claims sent in by the tenants in Scotland, detailed claims specifying the amount in respect of each thing?—As far as may reasonably be expected.

52,997. In practice they carry out the provision of clause 7?—Yes, in practice.

52,998. They do not very largely in England?—It is supposed by the tenants that according to the Act they must do so.

Counter-claims.

52,999. Do you apply the same rule to the counter-claim?—We did not as a committee deal with the counter-claim, I expect from the spirit of the meeting they considered what was fair to the claim was fair to the counter-claim.

53,000. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do I understand you to say that under sub-section C claims were extravagant, and you want to check the extravagance?—Yes, I want to check the extravagance, because if a tenant knows he cannot get more than he claims on each item, he runs up an extraordinary claim.

53,001. (*Lord Cobham.*) That led to extravagant counter-claims?—Yes.

53,002. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was it on the ground that the counter-claims were not extravagant they were not dealt with by your Committee?—The inference is so far correct because the counter-claims were generally made up according to the first claim sent in, but it did not strike the Committee with regard to that or with regard to allowing the same latitude.

53,003. Probably your view was that the landlord could take care of himself?—I think it was because of the weakness of the tenant in having a claim made out.

53,004. All the members agreed in making this recommendation?—Yes.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Clause 19.

53,005. (*Lord Cobham.*) Then as to clause 19?—It reads "The award shall fix a day not sooner than one "month," and we propose to insert there "and not "later than three months," after the delivery of the award.

Clause 28.

53,006. Your next amendment is on clause 28?—Yes. We wish it altered to read "Notice by landlord to the "tenant under this section shall be sufficient if given "by registered letter."

Clause 30.

53,007. How do you amend clause 30?—Clause 30 to be altered to read "Before the removal of any such "fixture or building the tenant shall pay all rent owing "by him and shall perform (or give satisfaction that "all his other obligations to the landlord in respect to "the holding shall be fulfilled)."

53,008-10. Is "satisfaction" a Scotch term for giving adequate guarantee or security?—Yes, it is left to the proprietor to accept it or not.

53,011. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Does it mean a guarantee to the satisfaction of the landowner?—We thought it better just to say "give satisfaction" without mentioning the landowner.

53,012. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Did you attach much importance to it?—Yes. We thought it might prevent difficulties, and that it would prove very useful.

Clause 35.

53,013. (*Lord Cobham.*) Then as to clause 35?—We considered this clause very ambiguous. It should be shortened so as to read "This Act shall only apply to "a holding that is either wholly agricultural or wholly "pastoral, or a part agricultural, and as to the residue "pastoral, or in whole or in part cultivated as a "market garden."

53,014. That only clears up what you conceive to be the meaning?—Yes.

53,015. Is it the same clause as is in the English Act?—I think so.

53,016. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Anybody who is the servant of the landlord living in a cottage becomes under this a tenant also?—Yes.

Mr. J. Gilchrist. 7 June 1895. Clause 42.

53,017. (*Lord Cobham.*) Under clause 42 you alter the definition of "determination of tenancy." Is this a technicality?—No. In Scotland we had great difficulty over this, because we have so many different determinations of tenancy in the different districts. We want it altered to read "Determination of tenancy "means the termination of a lease by reason of "effluxion of time or from any other cause the date "of the determination of tenancy being considered "the last ish as regards any part of the lands forming "the holding." The difficulty is that sometimes the houses are held after they are freed of the lands, and *vice versâ*.

53,018. And the difficulty was whether the determination depended on the houses or the lands?—Yes. There is a difficulty in some parts of the north of Scotland in knowing what is meant by the Act.

53,019. You insert the word heirs in the definition of landlord or tenant?—Yes.

The schedules.

53,020. How do you propose to deal with the schedule?—We propose to leave the schedules as they are, because, as you see, the amendment to clause 3 deals with that pretty exhaustively—with one exception, that we transfer the laying down of permanent pasture from Part I. of the Schedule to Part III.

53,021. That is to say, as regards laying down grass, it may be done without notice or consent or without the referee coming in?—Yes.

Permanent pasture.

53,022. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is that because laying down permanent pasture has become so much more common of late years and caused depreciation?—No. The main reason is that in Scotland we have 19 years' leases, and during the latter term of the lease, where dairying is carried on especially, old pasture is apt to be broken up, and it would add immensely to the value of the holding if it were not broken up. It was to avoid this as far as possible we proposed this change, and to give encouragement to farmers to leave it in permanent pasture.

53,023. This amendment you propose is to encourage the laying down of permanent pasture. I understood the difficulty was to prevent pasture being broken up?—It is the leaving of the pasture after it is laid down and not breaking it up at the determination of the lease.

53,024. (*Lord Cobham.*) Does not the landlord agree to pay something to the tenant at the end of the lease on condition that he does not break up the grass?—No.

53,025. Is it not in the interest of the landlord to come to such an agreement?—It is in the interest of both parties.

53,026. (*Mr. Clay.*) He seldom does it?—Seldom.

53,027. (*Lord Cobham.*) Would the change you propose make it more easy for a tenant to lay down grass?—It is like this, that where there is a dairy farm with a large extent of pasture near the house it would be better for both that compensation should be paid in order to prevent it being broken up.

53,028. If it is provided for under the Act and not under private agreement?—Yes. If you get compensation for leaving it unbroken you get encouragement to lay it down, and for a dairying district we consider this a great improvement.

Land laid down to grass.

53,029. Do you think that compensation should be provided for by the Act for grass laid down without consent of landlord and that compensation for not ploughing it up should not be left as a matter of private agreement?—Yes. That is so.

53,030. In Part III. you propose to insert the word "horses" before "cattle"?—Yes in Part III. Head 47. There was a difficulty sometimes in "cattle" being made to cover both cattle and horses.

Mortgages.

53,031. Do you have any general recommendations?—We have two. It is the opinion of the committee that a simple mortgage by the landlord over his whole property in favour of the lender should be sufficient protection of the interests of the latter.

State loans for improvement

53,032. It is the opinion of your committee that a great impetus would be given to agriculture if Government would grant facilities to landlords to borrow money for improvements at a cheap rate of interest?—Yes.

53,033. And that no stamp duty should be exigible in regard to any deeds or documents in regard to any portion of the Act?—Yes.

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53,034. Who pays for the stamps at present in Scotland?—Half and half. It is equally divided between landlord and tenant.

53,035. The committee were of opinion that if these amendments could be adopted and became law, agriculture would be greatly benefited?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holding Act.

53,036. Is the Act made much use of in your district?—Very little.

53,037. For what reason?—Because the returns for making use of the Act are practically nil, and tenants find it much better either to take no account of the Act or to try and make an agreement without reference to the Act at all.

53,038. Do they fear the cost of the administration of the Act?—Yes.

53,039. Your committee make no suggestions as to this?—Except that one arbiter should be appointed instead of three.

53,040. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would you make the Act compulsory?—Certainly.

53,041. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What do you mean by compulsory. It is compulsory now, is it not?—I mean in the same way as it is compulsory now, and making it impossible for a proprietor to contract out of it as at present.

Compensation for improvements

53,042. I understand you allow any two parties to come to an agreement between themselves as regards compensation and that that agreement shall hold good and valid provided it did not give less compensation than they would get under the Act?—Yes. In one way. I would agree to that at the end of the lease. At the beginning of the lease it seems to be impossible to have an arrangement that would be satisfactory, as a matter of fact the greatest good of the Act in our part has been to bring about the insertion of clauses giving a little compensation and tenants rather than take advantage of the Act prefer the little that comes to them without trouble. It is difficult to define at the beginning of a lease what would be equivalent to this Act itself.

Substituted agreements.

53,043. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The Committee do not propose to interfere between landlord and tenant making what is considered to be a fair and reasonable agreement in place of acting at the end of the lease under the Act?—That is so, anything held to be reasonable can be substituted for the Act itself, but I would not agree to any agreement being made compulsory on the tenant to accept it instead of the Act.

53,044. (*Mr. Clay.*) If he can prove the agreement is not fair and reasonable he can go to the Act?—Yes.

53,045. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would you give the tenant the option of going out under agreement or under the Act as amended by your suggestions?—I would be quite pleased to do so.

53,046. That would obviate any reference. It would give the tenant his choice and he could please himself?—Yes.

53,047. (*Chairman.*) You are speaking for yourself now and not the committee?—Yes.

Tuberculosis.

53,048. As to tuberculosis you think that some system of diagnosis should be applied?—I think we have come to this, that some system should be enforced in regard to it. I speak specially in regard to large dairying districts such as round Glasgow.

53,049. When should the diagnosis be carried out?—According to any arrangement with regard to time that would be suitable to go over a district.

53,050. You mean a whole district should be tested whether there is reason to suppose there is tuberculosis or not?—Yes.

53,051. You are satisfied with the test yourself?—As far as I have applied it.

53,052. You know of no mistakes that have been made under it?—No, I have been at Ottawa and at the college of Minnesota and saw the cattle treated there and the evidence confirmed me in the evidence I had had with a few experiments on my own stock.

Technical instruction

53,053. Have you been engaged in the practical teaching of dairying recently?—I have.

53,054. Under the county councils?—In the West of Scotland Technical College and in connexion with county councils.

53,055. Do you think there is great room for improvement in dairying?—Yes. Very great room.

Mr. J. Gilchrist. 7 June 1895. Dairying.

53,056. You have been in Denmark, Holland, and Belgium and investigated the system?—Yes. Ten years ago, as secretary of the Bothwell Farmers' Club, I was one of a deputation to Denmark, Holland, and Belgium, which gave a report on the advanced system of dairying in these countries. I was so impressed at that time with the great advantages to be derived from technical education in agriculture and dairying that I have since done everything in my power to further its development.

53,057. On what lines do you propose the instruction should be given?—Each district has to be considered according to its wants, and according to the wishes of its inhabitants—of the practical working people within that district, so that it is very difficult to define a hard and fast way, but to have practical dairying taught pupils have to do actual work and have lectures besides, and, if possible, pass examinations from which they could get a certificate.

53,058. Do you think the milch cow in your district of Scotland could be improved?—I think so.

53,059. What is the prevailing breed of dairy cows in Glasgow and the West of Scotland?—Ayrshires.

53,060. What proportion of butter can be made from your milk?—From 25 to 30 lbs. of milk give a lb. of butter. That is two gallons and a half to a pound of butter.

53,061. That ought to be much improved upon?—The improvement is more in the way of quantity, I think.

53,062. Is the quantity given by the Ayrshire cow unsatisfactory?—By many undersized and scrubby cows it is.

53,063. There is great room for improvement in the yield of milk from the Ayrshire cow?—Yes; I think so.

Danish butter.

53,064. Do you agree with the last witness who said that home-made butter was considerably less in price than imported Danish butter?—No, not in our district. The highest prices are given for the best home-made butter. While Danish fresh is being sold at 1*s.*, the best home-made is fetching from 1*s.* 3*d.* to 1*s.* 5*d.* per lb.

53,065. That reverses the statement we had?—That only applies to certain districts. In some the opposite is the case.

53,066. Does the Danish come into the country under the title of English or Scottish butter?—I do not think so. After people have used it for some time they never think about it.

Dairying.

53,067. Have you any further recommendation to make with regard to the improvement of the dairying industry in Scotland?—It would be advisable to have a mode of examination which would be fair, and examiners acting on the same principle at one place as at another. I may say that in some of the counties in which I have lectured they have great difficulty because of not producing a uniform class of butter. That has given the foreign butter a great hold in those districts and the middleman refuses in some cases to sell the home produce which is a great disadvantage to the home-producer.

Co-operation

53,068. Have you any creameries or factories in your district?—Practically none.

53,069. As long as that is the case you will never have uniformity in the make of butter?—Not so readily.

53,070. Is it your opinion that that is a great advantage possessed by the Danes?—Yes; uniformity.

53,071. Owing to the co-operative system?—Yes, but more to the education which the small dairy farmers have received in producing this butter and making it up.

52,072. More or less at the expense of the State?—Yes.

Permanent pasture.

53,073. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose there is no doubt one of these amendments bringing the permanent pasture from Schedule I. to Schedule III. will be not only of advantage to the tenant but to agriculture at large?—It is in the interest of all parties that it should be done.

53,074. It is more required when arable land is not paying and when sheep, stock, and cattle land is paying?—Yes.

Substituted agreements.

53,075. You would leave a landlord at liberty to make a private agreement provided it was in accordance with the spirit of the Act?—I would, certainly.

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53,076. Are the opinions expressed in those amendments shared by the landlords and tenantry of your district?—They were fully discussed at the meeting of the society, and the Act was subjected to so much ridicule that some members were disposed to think it could not be amended at all.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,077. The costliness of the Act has prevented it being taken advantage of?—Yes. In any cases that have come before me I have uniformly advised farmers to accept a small sum by arrangement rather than go into all the trouble of the Act itself.

53,078. The expense would be remedied by your amendment?—Yes.

53,079. One arbiter you consider would be enough?—Yes.

53,080. Are you of opinion that capital should be brought more largely into play in the land than hitherto?—Yes.

State loans.

53,081. Regarding State loans you think 3½ or 4 per cent. would benefit both landlord and tenant?—Yes. It should be a low per-centage.

53,082. All classes would benefit thereby?—Yes.

Official referees.

53,083. Regarding the appointment of the official referee would it not be well that he should be recommended by a chamber or society and his name sent up for approval to the Agricultural Board in London?—Yes, I would approve of that as a means of simplifying and making decisions more uniform all over. The committee took up that point and then considered the advisability, of such a man being named by the county council, but they were averse to leaving the appointment in the hands of the county councils because of wire-pulling. The name might be suggested by them subject to the approval of the Board of Agriculture or other such Board.

53,084. Have you any other proposal as to naming these men?—No. It might fairly be left with the county councils to suggest them.

53,085. And the Board of Agriculture would be a check?—Yes.

53,086. These men should be throughly practical men engaged in agriculture one way or other?—Yes.

53,087. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Would it not meet the difficulty put forward in some places where there may be a predominance of non-agricultural members on the county council that the county council should relegate it to the local authority committee?—Practically it would be relegated to a committee to do so, but we can hardly leave it with that committee as it must be subject to the recommendation of the county council itself.

53,088. It must be approved of by the county council?—Yes. I do not see any way of getting it to the Board of Agriculture except through the county council.

53,089. Are you familiar with the schemes of compensation that exist on some estates in Scotland?—No, not very familiar.

53,090. You cannot speak to them as being fairly reasonable?—No.

Substituted agreements.

53,091. In your proposal I understand it is open to the tenant or the landlord at the end of the lease to back out of what they both agreed was a reasonable agreement?—I had not thought of the proprietor backing out because he was the suggester of the agreement, and it never occurred to me that the arrangement suggested by him would be one he wanted to back out of. It was only that the tenant might back out of it if it were not in the spirit of the Act.

53,092. But an arrangement of that kind if it is a fair agreement does not emanate from one side?—That is true, but as farmers, we are accustomed to look to the leases as being principally in favour of the proprietor.

53,093. That would simply mean of course that if the least friction arose at the end of the lease it would make utterly useless any attempt to make a fair agreement?—Where friction was brought about or people were stubborn it would have that effect, but I think the good effects would overbalance that, because it would be more costly to get it in any other way. Then, too, the arbiter who considered a fair thing had been put aside, causing expense, would throw the whole expense on the tenant himself.

53,094. You recommended the tenants to accept what was in their agreement rather than go under the Act?—At the end of the lease.

53,095. Were these cases in which the parties had agreed on a specific per-centage?—Nothing was specified in these cases.

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Permanent pasture.

53,096. Do you consider that the provision about laying down permanent pasture was a wise provision to apply to all parts of Scotland?—I think so, though there are some parts where it might not be wise. The arbiter, however, has the power to consider whether it increases the letting value of the holding.

Letting value and compensation.

53,097. Does that mean that if there is not a rise of rent at the conclusion of the tenancy the farmer would get no compensation?—The want of rise in the rent might be due to altogether outside causes.

53,098. Explain what you mean by the increased letting value if the fact is that in the market it does not bring an increased rent?—The increase would be the increased letting value compared with what would have been drawn had the lands been in a worse condition.

53,099. If there is no rent?—In that case it is not lettable and of course no tenant would have it.

53,100. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) If there is no letting value at all there is no compensation?—That is a point I have not considered.

53,101. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Does that arise in Scotland?—I am not aware of it.

53,102. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) There have been cases in England where the land has gone out of cultivation altogether owing to the great fall in prices. You are not accustomed to that in Scotland?—No.

53,103. Where it has occurred as it has occurred in England your proposal would not work?—No. If it is under letting value our Act would give no compensation to the tenant as far as the spirit of the Act goes.

53,104. (*Lord Cobham.*) A tenant would be very unwise if he spent money on land that commanded no rent?—He would be.

53,105. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It might occur that when the improvement was made and authorised by the arbiter it had paid a rent, but that owing to a considerable subsequent fall in prices it might have become valueless?—In that case and with these amendments the risk is altogether the tenant's.

Substituted agreements.

53,106. (*Mr. Lambert.*) The Act would affect no fair and reasonable agreement, because if an agreement were fair and reasonable the tenant would be quite willing to go out under the agreement?—Quite so.

53,107. As I understand it, tenants want it made compulsory so that they can fall back upon it if necessary?—That is so.

Letting value.

53,108. (*Mr. Channing.*) You speak of increase in letting value as due to the tenant. In that do you include the prevention of the decrease of letting value? For instance, supposing land had been let at 20*s.* an acre, and supposing, as in the case Mr. Chaplin referred to, it went down to a nominal value of 1*s.* an acre, a man who had kept his farm up to a rent, say, of 10*s.* or 15*s.* an acre would have contributed something to the value of the farm?—Yes, in that case.

53,109. So that the term increase in letting value as compared with the former rent may in times of depression, when all rents are falling, be a fallacious term?—Yes, when compared with what it has been before but not with what it would have been.

Fair rents.

53,110. As to the determination of a fair and reasonable rent, should that be done at common law or under the Act?—It ought to be under the Act.

53,111. You prefer to have it referred to the arbiter?—Yes.

Notice of claims.

53,112. Are you aware that the Central Chamber of Agriculture in England has recommended that the notices of both landlord and tenant should be given on the same day? Is not that a desirable course?—We thought it desirable in the interest of parties coming to agree that there should be an interval between the tenants' notices being given in and the counter notices. It gives the proprietor a little time to meet and discuss with the tenant before he is actually leaving the holding, and we thought it would be better to have that time to come to an agreement without a reference at all under the Act.

53,113. Have you considered the advantage to the landlord of being able to claim under the Act himself without regard to whether the tenant is claiming or

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not?—Just now the landlord has no claim unless the tenant makes a claim under the Act.

53,114. Do not you wish him to have equal rights?—It was considered, I believe, that he has his advantages at common law.

53,115. You think that is adequate?—I think so.

Interim awards.

53,116. Do you approve of interim awards by the arbiter in the case of one part of the holding given up at one time and another six months later?—No. We thought that would increase the expense.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,117. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you said that the Act in many cases you are aware of has been subjected to a good deal of ridicule?—Yes, amongst practical farmers.

53,118. Does not that proceed from the fact that they are absolutely ignorant of what the Act contains? We had an instance yesterday of a witness who seemed to be under the impression that the consent of the landlord is required for drainage. Is it not really ignorance of the Act that accounts for the abuse thrown on it?—I believe it is partly so, and by people being disgusted by the attempts to get compensation under the Act as it was.

53,119. In some of the earlier cases?—Yes. We have had no cases recently for a good many miles round our place.

Permanent pasture.

53,120. What would be the cost of laying down permanent pasture? What would be the outlay per acre to convert arable land into pasture in your district?—It depends very much on the land, but, giving a rough estimate, from 4*l.* to 6*l.* or 7*l.* per acre.

53,121. You do not propose to place any limit on the tenant. He may convert as much as he likes into pasture?—The limit is just so far as it adds to the letting value.

53,122. It might involve the landlord in heavy responsibility?—For which, of course, he would be receiving increased rent.

Letting value and compensation.

53,123. Or, rather, increased letting value, because he might be called upon to pay this compensation, although there has been a decrease on the rent?—Yes.

53,124. As a matter of fact, would the permanent improvements you contemplate be made by tenants to any extent?—In some cases they would be.

53,125. In these cases there would be no limit to the extent to which improvements of this kind might be made except from the authority of the arbiter?—Yes, the risk devolving on the tenant at the end of the lease.

53,126. You might involve an impoverished landlord in heavy responsibility?—He might require to borrow money.

Mortgages.

53,127. Take the case of a landlord whose estates are mortgaged up to their full value already, and at the end of the lease you call upon him to find a large sum of money for a vast number of improvements made without his consent and against his will. He has not the means of meeting that liability because although you say it is to be only paid on the increased letting value, you admit that there may be an increased letting value, although an actual decrease in the rent. Consequently the landlord has no improved security on which to borrow. Have you considered that position, and is it quite fair and just towards the landlord?—I think so. I do not see that the man who has the mortgage should have this land made more valuable to him, in consequence of improvements made by the tenant.

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53,128. Do you consider it fair to put a man into such a position that he has to become responsible for a great liability it is not in his power to meet?—I have considered that and there is no honest way out of it that I can bring forward.

53,129. Consistent with your proposal?—No. To me the landlord is practically bankrupt.

53,130. You make him so under your proposal. Is that fair?—Yes.

53,131. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is it not in the interests of the community that the land should be cultivated to produce as much as possible?—Yes.

53,132. And where a landlord cannot and will not make improvements himself and will keep other people from doing it, is it not in the interest of the community that the sooner he gets rid of it the better?—Yes.

53,133. If the land were mortgaged up to the value of the farm exclusive of the tenant's improvements, then the landlord would have the additional value which the tenant's improvements gave to the land?—Yes.

53,134. If he had mortgaged it up to the hilt with the tenants' improvements, then he would have been mortgaging what he had done nothing to create?—Yes.

53,135. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I gather it would be perfectly fair in your estimation to involve a man in bankruptcy by imposing on him liabilities entirely against his own will?—I think so, because the bankrupt would have been only the worse had these improvements not been there.

53,136. The improvements you contemplate referring to arbitration are improvements necessary for the purposes for which the holding was let, and were therefore contemplated by the landlord as well as the tenant on entering into the contract of tenancy?—That is so.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Clause 7.

53,137. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In regard to clause 7, you said that the Committee came to the conclusion that the words in regard to giving notice to the landlord "or within 14 days thereafter" should be omitted?—Yes.

53,138. It should be before the determination of the lease?—Yes.

53,139. Is it possible for the landlord to claim for deterioration of buildings before the determination of the lease? Is it not possible that the tenant on removing his things might damage the buildings?—It was considered that in that case the remedy could be had at common law.

53,140. Would that not add to the expenses?—The offending party would have to pay.

53,141. (*Chairman.*) Was it not your object to bring it as much under the Act as possible?—Yes.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. H. Elder.

Mr. Hugh Elder called in and examined.

Mr. H. Elder.

53,142. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you a tenant farmer?—Yes.

53,143. You are President of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,144. In November 1893 it was decided that the directors of the Chamber should bring under the notice of this Commission the views of the Chamber on the subject of agricultural depression generally, and specially the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

53,145. At a conference on the 25th July 1894 the following motion was unanimously passed:—"That the "Agricultural Holdings Act requires thorough amend- "ment in order to secure to the tenant, by simple and "inexpensive procedure, adequate compensation for "improvements effected by him, and remit to the "directors to draw up amendments, and submit them "for approval to the annual meeting of the Chamber "in November"?—That is so.

53,146. And in accordance with that resolution you have to lay before us certain particulars in which the Act should be amended?—Yes.

Consent to improvements.

53,147. Is it the opinion of the Chamber that the provisions affecting the improvements specified in the first part of the schedule to the Act are practically inoperative?—It is.

53,148. In respect that the proprietor has unlimited power to withhold his consent to the execution of such improvements in every case, however necessary they may be, for the proper working of the farm?—Yes. In most cases the proprietors are willing to effect such improvements, but in some cases it is otherwise, and it is to meet cases of that class that it is thought provision requires to be made.

53,149. In the minority of cases the improvements should be effected whether the landlord gives his consent or not?—Yes. Those proprietors who do not do their duty ought to be forced in some way.

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53,150. The Chamber proposes to carry this out by providing that where the proprietor fails to effect necessary improvements the tenant should be allowed to call in a properly qualified arbiter to be appointed by the sheriff, and that compensation should be given for such improvements as are certified by such arbiter to be necessary for the proper working of the farm, having regard to the purpose for which it was let?—Yes.

53,151. Was this amendment unanimously passed at a meeting of the Chamber which was attended by several estate factors?—Yes.

Section 4.

53,152. With regard to section 4 of the Act the Chamber were unanimously of opinion that it restrains the tenants unduly by requiring them to give to the landlord "not less than two 'months'" notice before beginning to execute improvements—drainage improvements specified in the second part of the schedule. The Chamber proposes that one month's notice should be substituted?—Yes; that was the Chamber's opinion.

Section 6.

53,153. The Chamber was also of opinion that two years should be substituted for four years in the following clause of section 6 of the Act:—"Nothing in "this section shall enable a landlord to obtain under "this Act compensation in respect of deterioration by "the tenant or of breach of any stipulation by the "tenant committed or permitted in relation to cultivation or management more than four years before "the determination of the tenancy"?—Yes; it was considered that four years was too long a period to go back.

53,154. (*Mr. Clay.*) How far do the common law rights allow the landlord to go back?—At any time, even at the end of the lease. The landlord has his claim under common law whenever he sees his tenant going wrong.

53,155. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) He cannot go back after he has given a receipt for his rent?—Not generally. I am speaking of the practice, not of the law. A full receipt for the rent is held as a discharge.

53,156. (*Mr. Clay.*) That is the general understanding?—Yes, that is the practice. The landlord's common law rights to pursue the tenant for breach of any stipulation in his lease can be put in force at any time during the course of the lease, and the spirit of recent decisions of the court is that if he fails to do so within a reasonable time he should be held to have lost his right by acquiescence. The Chamber, therefore, were of opinion that the Act at present confers too great a privilege on the landlord, and that the proposed amendment under this section should be given effect to.

53,157. Then the landlord has lost his right if he has not made a claim before the last rent is paid?—There is nothing said about rent here.

53,158. If a man gets a full discharge for rent nothing can be raised?—That is so in my experience.

Section 7.

53,159. (*Lord Cobham.*) The chamber is of opinion that section 7 of the Act, by requiring tenants to give four months' notice prior to the determination of a tenancy of their intention to claim compensation, has the effect of placing the tenants unduly at the mercy of their landlords, because by the simple omission inadvertently to give such notice the tenant's right to claim is entirely lost, even where it can be shown the landlord is not prejudiced by the omission?—That is so, as it is necessary by the Act to get the landlord's consent or to give notice to him before the improvements under the first and second parts of the schedule to the Act are made, the Chamber are of opinion that the getting of such consent, or the giving of such notice, implies intention to claim compensation, and dispenses with the necessity for giving notice of such intention, which should not therefore be required.

53,160. Is it proposed that the tenant should send in his intention to make a claim a fortnight before the determination of the tenancy?—Yes.

53,161. And that the detailed statement should be sent in a fortnight after the determination of the tenancy?—Yes.

53,162. As regards improvements specified in the third part of the schedule, the case is different, because they can be made without the knowledge of the proprietor, to whom it is therefore proper that reasonable notice should be given by the tenant if he intends to make a claim for such improvements. The Chamber are of opinion that the time for giving notice of intention to claim by the tenant, and of intention to make a counter-claim by the landlord, should be a fortnight before the determination of the tenancy?—Yes. And in respect that certain otherwise valid claims have been defeated for want of detailed specification within the requisite time, it is thought that it should be competent in cases where such notice has been duly given for the party giving such notice to send in fully detailed statements within a fortnight after determination of tenancy.

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Security for compensation.

53,163. What suggestion has the Chamber to make with regard to security in respect to compensation to tenants?—The Chamber are of opinion that, as most of the improvements under Parts I. and II. of the schedule will form a permanent enhancement of the value of the estate, and therefore afford increased security to bond holders and other heritably secured creditors, the charge for compensation for these improvements, so far, at least, as they are of a permanent nature, shall rank *before* and not as at present *after* the securities of such bondholders and creditors.

State loans.

53,164. What is the suggestion of the Chamber with regard to Government loans?—The Chamber are of opinion that the Government should give more encouragement than they have hitherto done to the effecting of improvements both by landlords and tenants in the shape of giving greater facilities for borrowing money at a low rate of interest wherewith to effect such improvements. At present improvement loans charged upon estates in the shape of rent charges are required to be repaid (principal and interest) within 25 years. In consequence the annual charge, being at the rate of about 6*l.* 10*s.* per cent., forms a heavy drain upon the estate rental, and this makes it difficult, if not impossible, for the proprietor to effect other needful improvements. If the period for repayment were extended to 40 or 50 years, as in the case of loans obtained by school boards and other public bodies, very considerable relief would be given to the landlord, and it is thought in cases where the tenant effects the improvements he should be allowed the same facilities for borrowing on security on his interest in the improvements.

53,165. It is proposed these loans should take priority of existing mortgages?—Yes.

53,166. And that the security of the tenant for his compensation should also be a prior security to that of other incumbrancers?—Yes.

Compensation for buildings.

53,167. Do you propose to enlarge the schedule which at present provides for compensation for the erection and enlargement of buildings?—Yes. As No. 1 of Part I. to the schedule only expressly provides for the erection and enlargement of buildings, it is considered advisable that that number should include the restoration or renewal of buildings where they require restoration or renewal through no fault of the tenant.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,168. What provision is suggested for compensation for consumption of the produce of the holding on the farm?—The Chamber consider that where the produce of the holding, except straw, turnips, and pasture, is consumed thereon, compensation should be given therefor in the same way as if it had been bought and brought on to the holding.

53,169. That is to say, that tenants should be compensated for corn which is grown on the farm, and given to the stock, including horses on the farm?—That is our opinion. I have been an arbiter sometimes under the old Act, and on some occasions have advised the tenant to sell his own oats and buy others.

53,170. Do you recognise the difficulty of ascertaining the actual amount of the produce of the farm consumed on the farm?—The greeve could keep an account of what the horses consumed.

53,171. The compensation would be assessed on the account produced by the tenant?—There is no other way of getting at it if you consume your own produce. In the cases I spoke of where I acted, purchased corn was substituted for the corn grown on the farm, and there was a voucher in that case.

53,172. An arbiter must go on the report of the tenant. Can they be relied upon to be accurate?—It could be managed. You could get the greeve to keep an account.

53,173. In every class of men there are some black sheep?—Yes.

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53,174. Is the Chamber of opinion that compensation should be given for cumulative fertility or improving the general condition of the land?—Yes.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,175. Is it held by competent lawyers that this was intended to be given by Section 1?—Yes. Some arbiters have allowed for cumulative fertility, while others have not done so. In these circumstances it is necessary to make a more explicit enactment on the point.

53,176. How is the relative condition of the farm on entry and quitting to be compared in estimating the compensation for cumulative fertility?—You could get it valued as to fertility at the commencement and at the end of the lease.

53,177. If that is done, as it often would be, by two different men you think you could arrive at a fair estimate?—If public arbiters were appointed there would be a regular scale of charges. The Chamber's opinion is that cumulative fertility should be encouraged, because it is desirable for the whole nation that the fertility of the land should be increased.

53,178. And compensation should be provided for this cumulative fertility whether the letting value of the land is increased or not?—I pay no attention to the letting value, because letting value rises and falls like other things. At the end of a lease, instead of land rising in rent, it might fall, but the tenant is not to suffer because he has been unfortunate in his way going.

Procedure.

53,179. You are of opinion that to simplify procedure under the Act a set of notices, claims, counter-claims, &c. should be provided as an appendix to the Statute?—Yes.

53,180. And that they might be advantageously distributed by the Board of Agriculture?—Yes.

Restrictions in leases.

53,181. You consider there is not sufficient freedom to the tenant in disposing of the farm produce?—Hardly. We think he might have greater freedom than at present, subject to his providing and applying an equivalent of manurial value in manure or feeding stuffs.

Cost of procedure.

53,182. Has the Act proved to be expensive and cumbrous in its working?—Materially so. I have acted as arbiter and I have found it extremely so, and many farmers prefer to lose their claims rather than take the trouble and risk the consequences of adopting it.

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53,183. Do you think it could be further simplified?—The Chamber are of opinion that all claims and counter-claims should be dealt with by a sole arbiter as provided by the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1889, but they think the procedure in connexion with the application for the appointment of the arbiter should be simplified and cheapened. This might be done by providing a printed form of application to be signed by landlord or tenant, and lodged with the Sheriff Clerk. Some recent claims have been disposed of under the Act in a comparatively simple and inexpensive way, a fact which indicates that much depends on the disposition and temper of the parties and the qualifications of the arbiter they appoint. No strong feeling has been evinced in favour of the appointment of a *small* number of "official" arbiters, the opinion prevailing that local knowledge on the part of the arbiter is of such primary importance as to make it inexpedient to limit the class from whom arbiters may be drawn.

53,184. I think the remainder of your brief—which we will have printed as an appendix—sets forth in detail the amendments which the Chamber consider necessary?—Yes. (*See Appendix VI.*)

The Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

53,185. (*Mr. Clay.*) The Chamber has been from its institution a valuable instrument in furthering the interests of agriculture?—Yes.

53,186. All the reforms they have supported have usually been passed into law?—Yes

53,187. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was the draft Bill of 1884 considered with the same care, and did the recommendations it embodied represent the same amount of opinion as you have laid before us now?—I think so, but my memory fails me, and I cannot give a definite answer.

53,188. (*Captain Thomas.*) How many members are there in your Chamber?—I really cannot give you the number.

53,189. Is it one Chamber?—Yes. One Chamber for the whole of Scotland. We have agricultural societies affiliated to us.

53,190. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Affiliated chambers or societies?—Affiliated societies, and they send delegates to our meetings.

53,191. Is Scotland fairly represented by these delegates?—The delegates are only a new institution, and it is considered such a great success we are going to persevere in that direction.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. Dun.

Mr. JOHN DUN called in and examined.

Mr. J. Dun.

53,192. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You are a wool merchant and tenant farmer?—Up till two years ago I was a tenant farmer.

53,193. A large farm?—About 400 acres arable and 400 hill.

53,194. You are secretary of the Galashiels Farmers' Club?—Yes, and agent for the National Bank.

53,195. Is it a large district covered by the Farmers' Club?—Yes. It has always been considered a prominent club.

Condition of farmers.

53,196. In that district you consider that the tenant farmers have pretty well held their own during the period of depression?—Yes, I do.

53,197. You state that they have not felt the depression like many another district?—They have felt it, but they have not become bankrupt.

53,198. To what do you attribute that?—They have been very well treated by their landlords. On the Stow Estate, Lady Reay was the first to assist her tenantry.

53,199. The landlords have met them by granting reductions?—Until the leases expired, or there was a re-arrangement.

53,200. During the continuation of leases they were also assisted?—Yes.

53,201. When they expired they have been renewed at lower rents?—Yes. On better terms.

53,202. Do you think many tenants in the district have borrowed money to go on with?—Not very many.

Cause of depression.

53,203. You have not told us what you consider the cause of the depression?—Low prices.

53,204. What is that owing to?—Competition from other countries. We are a "free toom" for the whole world.

53,205. Do you think there is less production now in the district than there used to be?—I do.

53,206. What is the cause of that?—A great part of the arable land has been reclaimed within the last 30 years, and too much cropping has exhausted the thin vegetable mould which was the source of its very temporary fertility. We ploughed it and limed it and grew splendid crops, but the vegetable mould is now nearly extinct. We are down to the clay, and, I think, we made a mistake.

53,207. Was it originally stiff clay land?—Part of it was hill land, part low bottom land.

53,208. It was ploughed up then for the first time?—Yes, the first time in the memory of man.

53,209. You think the land is exhausted?—It is.

Changes in system of cultivation.

53,210. What is being done with that land?—It is being rested.

53,211. Laid down to grass?—Yes.

53,212. Will it make pasture?—Yes, if liberally treated.

Wages.

53,213. Have wages of the labourers risen in your neighbourhood?—They have.

53,214. That has been a source of expense to the tenant?—Yes.

53,215. Has that been met by the reduced prices on manures and feeding stuffs?—Yes. I think the one has been a set-off against the other.

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Quality of labour.

53,216. Is the work as good as it used to be by the labourers?—I hardly think so.

53,217. To what do you attribute that?—I think a lot of the best people have left, and I do not think they live on the same food they used to do.

53,218. They do not eat such nutritious food?—They have given up eating oatmeal.

53,219. What do they live on now?—Wheaten bread and tea.

53,220. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What did they drink before instead of tea?—Milk.

53,221. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is that because they cannot afford milk now, or because they cannot get it?—They have acquired a taste for tea and want to be like their neighbours.

Rural depopulation.

53,222. Has the rural population decreased in your district?—It has.

53,223. Have the young people gone away or whole families?—Whole families. We have not so much draining or work like that now.

53,224. They have gone away because they could not get employment?—Yes.

Small holdings.

53,225. Are there any small holdings in your district?—Very few.

53,226. Are they prosperous?—If they have other sources of income. If they have carting, or keep cows, or have a dairy, they get on very well.

53,227. They want something else to live on besides the small holding?—Yes.

53,228. How many acres do you call a small holding?—We have so few at present I cannot call to mind any. There are the burgess acres in Lauder and Gattonside. They had a strip of the hillside there; but these were weavers.

53,229. Had they to be weavers?—They could not live on the land unless they had some other employment.

53,230. Weaving is over?—Yes.

53,230*a*. Do the fishermen hold small holdings?—We do not have any fishermen, but in the north I think the fishermen are better off to be outside a town.

53,231. So that they might help in the agricultural districts?—Yes. They would have more healthy occupations than living in the slums of a fishing village.

53,232. It is more for their health than your pocket. I think if they resided in the agricultural districts you would get labour cheaper?—It was more for the good of the community I was speaking.

Dairying.

53,233. Are there dairies in your district?—Yes.

53,234. In the rural district or the town?—Some large dairies outside, but 25 in the burgh of Galashiels.

53,235. How are they supplied with food?—They buy from the farmers round about, and have fields from the neighbouring proprietors to graze their cows.

53,236. Is not that a good mode for the farmers getting rid of their produce?—It suits them well enough, but if the dairies could get accommodation outside they could do it much more cheaply and healthily.

53,237. The dairy people?—Yes. What I mean is I am in favour of continuing the rural population and of utilising occupations such as that so that they may be able to live in the suburbs of towns.

53,238. Is this from a philanthropic point of view?—As a patriot and a lover of my country.

53,239. As a payer of rates?—I do not think it would affect rates much.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,240. Give me your opinion as regards the Agricultural Holdings Act. Do you wish to see it amended?—I never cared much about it. I am against farming by Act of Parliament; I am more in favour of making my own bargain.

53,241. You prefer making a bargain between landlord and tenant?—Yes. Still I expect we must have it now, and we better have it right.

53,242. How would you amend it?—I would have it amended so that a tenant who treats his land well right up to the end of his lease should be in as good a position to renew his tack as one who by his system of farming renders the land of less value. I am not so much in favour of the schedule system as of general good cultivation and fertilisation. I would also delete the "notice to quit" clauses of the Act, and would include in the "compensation clauses" permanent pasture laid down by a tenant, and all improvements which tend to increase the fertility of the soil, and consequently to raise the market value of the farm.

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Tenure.

53,243. Are you in favour of 19 years' leases?—I am.

53,244. Without any break?—Yes. I think we have now got to a point when we can safely lease a farm for 19 years.

Compensation for improvements

53,245. Without consent of the landlord you would allow a tenant to make this improvement of laying down permanent pasture, and at the end of the 19 years' lease you would have him compensated?—I prefer to arrange with the landlord with regard to compensation, but failing arrangement I would have it so. I prefer private contract.

53,246. Supposing the landlord refused his consent, do you want the tenant to have the power to carry out the permanent improvement?—Yes.

53,247. Might that not become a very heavy charge on the landlord?—It would improve his property very much.

53,248. How can he find the money for it?—I do not know.

Official valuators.

53,249. Are you in favour of the appointment of public valuators?—I am.

53,250. Who should appoint them?—Some popularly elected body, such as the county council.

53,251. Would you have local men?—I would have men known to the district—men whom we could judge to be proper men.

53,252. A local man appointed by the county council?—Yes.

53,253. You would have one arbiter for both?—Yes.

53,254. And so save expense?—I do not know that it would save very much, but he would be responsible and would be a public man. His doings would be open to every one, and the men who appointed him would not be returned unless they appointed good men.

State loans.

53,255. You say that cheap loans to landlords would be a great aid?—I think so, if they are good enough for the advance

53,256. Who is to lend the money?—I would have the Government lend the money.

53,257. At what rate of interest?—I think they will be able to do it shortly at 2½ per cent. as it is an advantage.

53,258. Would you have a sinking fund to pay the debt off?—At 3½ per cent. it would be paid off in 40 years or thereby.

53,259. What would you apply this to?—Drainage, principally.

53,260. The laying down of pasture?—No. I would not apply public money to that.

53,261. Buildings?—We have plenty buildings in our district.

53,262. Would you lend this money to tenants as well as landlords?—I would lend to the landlord in the first instance and make him responsible for it.

53,263. In the first instance you would keep the tenant out of it altogether?—He would pay the landlord the interest on it.

53,264. You expect the tenant to pay interest on it?—Yes.

53,265. But it is to be borrowed on the security of the land of the landlord?—Yes.

Reductions of rent.

53,266. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have rents fallen in your district?—Very much.

53,267. How much?—40 per cent.

53,268. Permanently?—Yes.

53,269. Have there been reductions on leases?—Very liberal reductions.

53,270. At what rate?—On the Stow Estate we got 15 per cent., then 10, then more. I think to the extent of nearly 40 per cent.

Difficulty in letting.

53,271. Is there any difficulty in letting farms?—No.

53,272. Plenty of tenants at the reduction?—Yes. If the farms are not too big.

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Tenure.

53,273. Do tenants like a system of leases, or do they prefer from year to year?—They are varied in their opinions.

53,274. What is generally preferred?—Leases with five years' break are pretty general, and two years' notice.

Condition of farmers.

53,275. Farmers are in a better position to hold their own through a period of depression than in many other districts you say. Why?—Because the land is stocked with their own money.

53,276. They have capital?—Yes.

53,277. Is it due to any special system of cultivation?—Most of our farmers are smart capable men. They cultivate the land under great difficulties. They have to fight against the depreciation of its fertility on account of the decomposition of the vegetable matter.

53,278. In spite of that they have held their own?—Yes, pretty well.

53,279. Do they work themselves or their families?—I do not think a man who has four to ten thousand invested should work with his hands at all. He should supervise.

Size of farms.

53,280. These are the larger holdings?—Yes. They average from 800 to 1,000 and 2,000 acres.

53,281. Are there any smaller ones?—There are very few 100-acre holdings.

53,282. In that case do the tenants work themselves?—Yes.

Large and small farms compared.

53,283. Are they as well off as the others?—They do not look as if they had the same pleasure in life as the others.

53,284. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose the land is greatly improved since you remember?—Yes.

Reductions of rent.

53,285. What proportion of reduction has been made upon the original rent?—Our own farm is more than 50 per cent. down compared with 22 years ago.

53,286. Is that depreciation of produce?—Yes.

53,287. Difficulties of working?—Yes.

Wages.

53,288. The labour question interferes greatly with the rent of the land?—Servants are paid higher wages.

53,289. They are nearly double, are they not?—Yes, women are double. The money part of men's wages is double. The gain is the same as before.

53,290. The gain system has nearly gone out?—I am sorry to say that it has. I would rather see the labourers' ceilings ornamented with a lot of hams than with licensed grocers' calenders.

53,291. Do you think the strength of the population is decreasing?—I think we had better men 40 years ago. I passed through some labourers' cottages yesterday, and saw more pictures than flitches of bacon.

53,292. You say you prefer to make your own private contracts?—Yes.

53,293. Before the Act came in, was there any arrangement for tenants receiving compensation?—No.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,294. The Agricultural Holdings Act made it possible for the tenant getting something?—The only advantage from that legislation is that it helps to bring about what we wish to see—that a man should farm his land up to the end of the lease liberally; that is if he could do it with safety. That is the only thing about the Act I lay stress on at all.

53,295. Is that not of great value to the tenant and the community at large?—Sometimes it is a great loss to the tenant if he has to pay 100*l.* a year more for other 19 years.

53,296. That is what you call a sitting tenant?—Yes. He has got to pay for his improvements. I have noticed in our own district one tenant with his farm run down had no difficulty in taking it again, but the tenant with his farm in a high state of cultivation was not able to renew his lease till within a few months of its expiry. The reason was that plenty men would have given more rent than he was going to give and exhaust the improvements.

53,297. So the good tenant was rather at a disadvantage?—Yes.

53,298. The tenant on the poor land got his rent down and the other did not?—Yes.

53,299. Would you like to see something in the Act to give the tenant proper compensation?—I do not see that we could give him anything down, but if we could so arrange matters that he could take his farm as easily as if he had run his farm down it would be a great advantage to him and to the country.

53,300. It has been laid before us that if the farm were valued the interest of the money laid out on improvements might be allowed him in lieu of the compensation the landlord would have had to pay if he left?—The difficulty there would be carrying forward a valuation for 19 years.

53,301. But the farms are all valued by valuators when the sitting tenant takes them on again?—They have been, but I do not lay much stress on valuation.

53,302. Do not you think the official referee would be a good man to come in between?—Yes.

State loans.

53,303. Do you think the tenant should have money for draining and building at 3½ per cent.?—I have calculated that at 3½ per cent. it would be paid up in 40 years. We would have a good deal of advantage from having more covered courts. If the courts were covered with an opening to the south-west, it would be well spent money. My brother had his courts covered lately—a cheap arrangement of corrugated iron open to the south-west, and he finds it a great advantage.

53,304. Then it would be a great advantage to have these courts put up?—Yes. Even the hens lay better when they get into these courts in the winter.

53,305. The loan of money would be an advantage to both landlord and tenant?—Yes.

Permanent pasture.

53,306. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) One of your proposals is to put permanent pasture into Schedule III. Is there any other item you propose to change?—No.

53,307. Would that be a provision you would apply to the whole of Scotland?—Near towns they would never think of laying down permanent pastures.

Official referees.

53,308. Do I understand you to say that this official referee coming between the sitting tenant and the landlord should have anything to do with the fixing of rent?—I hardly go that length. I do not suppose the official referee would be called in in all cases. We have the fertilisers Act passed the other year and all the tenants have power to have their stuff analysed. It has never been taken advantage of. The referee would now and again be employed but never to a great extent. It would have the effect of making parties agree if there were such a man.

Agreements.

53,309. I judge that you are strongly of opinion that where landlord and tenant can make a fair and reasonable agreement in regard to compensation, it is the best way?—Certainly. The other way is compulsory and the men are often in the dark and do not know what they are doing. I prefer my own to any parliamentary arrangement.

53,310. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is to prevent tenants making such arrangements as you are speaking of by which they would get compensation which would give them that inducement to farm well up to the end of the lease? Is it the neglect of the tenants?—Perhaps the intermediate man is not qualified to discuss these matters. A big firm in Edinburgh does not know the requirements of the district.

53,311. Many of the estates are managed by competent factors with practical knowledge?—Yes.

53,312. Have you got such an agreement?—We never referred to the Agricultural Holdings Act at all.

53,313. Have you a private written agreement?—None.

53,314. Nothing but the lease?—No; I was a tenant up till two years ago—a joint tenant with my brother, and he preferred to go on himself.

53,315. When you held a farm had you no agreement?—None.

53,316. Did you ever ask for one?—Never.

53,317. Supposing you had asked, and represented to your landlord that if you had such an agreement you would treat the farms well up to the end of the lease, would you have had any difficulty?—I think both parties would have considered it unnecessary.

53,318. You were content to go on as you were?—Yes, when the lease expired I saw the factor with regard to money expended on drainage and covering courts, &c. We did not agree the very first day. He said, "But "you have not given notice to quit; you are bound for "another year under the Act." I said "No; and you "will wait a good while before you get it."

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53,319. You said that a great many of the best of the labouring population have gone?—I did not say a great many, but some.

Rural depopulation.

53,320. Is that what has given an impetus to the rise of wages—the movement of the population away from the country?—I think you may take it so. Our manufacturing towns have been very busy. They have made a great claim on the rural population, especially women. We find the country girls are able to learn weaving even faster than town girls.

53,321. Those that are left, in consequence, are getting higher wages?—They cannot help trying to get higher wages with fellows going round stuffing their heads trying to get into Parliament. I think these fellows ought to be brought up for breach of the peace.

Leases.

53,322. You said just now you thought we had got to a point when we might safely embark on 19 years' leases. Is depression less now than it was, or is it a new thing that you consider it safe to take so long a lease?—I do not think we can get any lower.

53,323. You think we have touched bottom now?—Yes.

53,324. Was not that the opinion some years ago, and it has been found out to be wrong?—Yes.

53,325. You think now the time has really come?—Yes. If we get fair play we can hold our own.

"Protection."

53,326. Do you mean if there is no further fall?—I do not think it fair Canada should pay a bounty for butter exported.

53,327. Do you expect to see measures taken by which bounties will be stopped?—Yes. If we get fair play. I would put the same on, on this side.

53,328. Supposing the policy is not adopted here, should you be equally sanguine about 19 years' leases? Do you think bounties will increase?—I do not think they will last long.

Price of wool.

53,329. You are a wool merchant?—Yes.

53,330. Have you been engaged in that business long?—Twenty years.

53,331. There has been a great fall in the price of wool?—Yes.

53,332. What is the main cause?—Foreign competition. People seem to prefer to wear foreign-made wool.

53,333. From where does the chief competition in wool come?—Australia, New Zealand, and South America.

53,334. As far as your experience of the business is concerned, is that competition likely to remain stationary, or increase, or grow less?—I do not think we will get quit of it for a long time. It is their only source of income out in these countries.

53,335. Do you think the competition will get worse?—I think it will continue.

53,336. What has been the fall in the price of wool during the last 25 years?—In 1872 I paid Thomas Gibson 1,110*l.* 11*s.* 3*d.* for his wool, and in 1894 it brought 410*l.*

Fall in prices.

53,337. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I take it that the trouble at the root is the fall of prices?—That is so. The land of our district, of course, is not virgin soil. When we began, one field on a farm grew as much itself as will be sold on the whole farm in two years now.

53,338. That is because it has lost its virgin qualities?—It has lost its vegetable mould.

Rents.

53,339. (*Mr. Lambert.*) When a farm is advertised you say a great many young men of means, who have little prospect of doing much good in towns, are attracted by a country life, and not being dependent on the farm for their living, enter into competition with farmers of experience and outbid them. Does that tend to keep rents at too high a level?—Yes.

53,340. Do you think that rents are at this moment too high?—Some of them are, and the men can never pay.

53,341. Do men in the position of 19 years' leases without a break in the tenancy get a reduction of rent in the same way as men who break their leases or whose leases have expired?—It depends. Sometimes they get ruined.

53,342. Do you know of many cases in which men have been paying rent and have been ruined?—I know of some—not many cases.

53,343. There are some?—Yes.

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53,344. (*Mr. Channing.*) You are in favour of 19 years' leases, but against fixity of tenure. In what sense?—In this way: This Hibernian legislation we have had is all aiming at fixity of tenure. You must offer a fixed rent or a fair rent, and thereby you create a monopoly. Men may be fortunate enough to become farmers to the exclusion of the whole community.

Fixity of tenure.

53,345. Your objection is on behalf of the outsiders who want farms?—What I mean is, that a man may have fixity of tenure who is quite incapable of managing the farm, and his fair rent will be all the lower on account of his bad farming; while a man may be breaking stones by the roadside who could farm the farm better for the whole community, but cannot get in.

53,346. You do not object to it because of the fall in prices?—No; it was the principle.

Compensation for improvements.

53,347. You are in favour of striking the schedules out of the Act, and giving compensation for general improvement?—The word schedule I use to mean the table of compensation. What I mean is, that a good farmer who fertilises and keeps a full staff of men and horses and keeps his land clean may grow better crops with a less outlay of fertilisers than a man with no judgment and training.

53,348. You want to give the tenant the full value?—I want to give a capable man full advantage of continuous good farming.

Notices to quit.

53,349. What do you mean by striking out the notice to quit clauses in the Act?—I have seen harm done by that stupid arrangement. It occurs in this way:—A landlord has his tenantry, with whom he has an agreeable connexion, and the connexion has been continued periodically, on the expiry of the lease, from father to son. He gets this Agricultural Holdings Act notice to quit, and immediately he gets this the landlord says: "I am now in a legal position; I am broken off from "the old friendly position, and we must now work "according to the law." I think that is irksome. I would hold the time specified in the lease as sufficient.

53,350. In giving up the schedules of the Act, do you give the tenant freedom to make any improvement suitable to the holding?—No; I did not mean schedules. When I spoke of schedules, I meant tables of compensation—the rates of exhaustion.

53,351. By schedules, you mean tables agreed on for the exhaustion of different manures and feeding stuffs?—Yes.

Rents.

53,352. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Rents in your district have fallen 40 per cent. What are they now on the average per acre?—They run about 10*s.* an acre.

53,353. Can you say how much of this fall of 40 per cent. is due to the exhaustion of this vegetable mould you mention?—20 per cent.

Wages.

53,354. What are the wages of the labourers?—The best men touch 1*l.* a week, all told.

53,355. They have doubled, I think, of late years?—They are the same gains, but the proportion paid in money is double.

53,356. The old farmers have done well?—They have done better than the adventurers.

Farming capital.

53,357. Have they lost much capital?—I think so. They have lost the interest of their money all the time.

53,358. Among the remedies for the depression, you say lower rent stands first; but the landlord has done as badly as the tenant?—Yes, they have come off badly.

53,359. Partly in consequence of too much cropping, this vegetable mould has been taken off?—I do not know that you can put it in that way. That was the natural result of breaking in on such land. In my opinion, if we had looked further forward we would not have cropped so much; we would have laid it down more to grass before it was exhausted.

53,360. It was a wrong form of cultivation?—Yes.

Unemployed labourers.

53,361. When the land is laid down to grass, you say the farm servants go into the towns and increase the number of the unemployed?—Yes.

53,362. Have you many unemployed in Scotland?—Not so many just now; but I have been on the committee for relieving the unemployed, and we have a great many in winter.

53,363. Able-bodied men?—Yes.

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53,364. (*Captain Thomas.*) What was the rental value of the land before you broke it up?—2*s.* 6*d.* an acre.

Rents.

53,365. After that, you paid how much?—We did not pay any more, but we were at the expense of breaking it up. It was worth, then, four times as much.

53,366. What is it worth now?—It is worth less than 10*s.* It has depreciated a bit.

Small holdings.

53,367. You do not approve of small holdings in that district?—I do not think small holders could live. I am much in favour of small holders, if they could live.

53,368. How many acres do you think would be necessary for a man to live upon and maintain a small family?—I do not think the thing is practicable in our country at all. I do not think he could cultivate enough to live on.

53,369. Therefore there is no demand for small holdings?—The reason is our land is boulder clay and very bad to cultivate. It is not very fertile unless at great expense.

Tenure.

53,370. (*Mr. Everett.*) In the case of the long leases, where a tenant hopes to go on, do not they try to make arrangements for the next one a year or so before the old one goes out?—Yes; they do so if possible.

53,371. In that case you avoid an exhaustion of the farm in the last year if a man knows he is going on?—My cure is that they should try to arrange five years before, and that would get over the whole difficulty. But they might not be able to do it.

53,372. Two years would do?—No. Five years' rotation. You have to put your land into certain breaks. What I wish to suggest is this: under the Agricultural Holdings Act there is provision made for a landlord terminating the tenancy if the tenant is not able to pay the rent. Could not that be made to apply to the tenant who wishes to be quit on account of the fact that he cannot any longer continue?

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53,373. (*Mr. Clay.*) He should have the liberty to go?—If he cannot go on without breaking bulk or selling stock he should be put into the same position as the landlord. There are often cases where they are spending not only their own but their brothers' and sisters' money.

53,374. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You mean a tenant under a lease?—Yes.

53,375. Would it not have the effect that at any time a tenant who had taken a farm under a lease and found it unprofitable to go on would be able to break it without paying his rent?—I should hope not. He would be a dishonest man. I should make it in this way, that if it were clearly proved he could not go on, the landlord should not be in a position to keep him in the holding and ruin him.

53,376. If it could be shown he was not able to pay his rent?—Yes.

53,377. (*Mr. Clay.*) The same state of matters arises when a farmer dies and the trustees are held on to the latter end?—Yes.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. A. Guild.

Mr. Alexander Guild called and examined.

Mr. A. Guild.

53,378. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a member of the firm of Reid and Guild, W.S., Edinburgh?—I am.

53,379. You are the son of a farmer, and lived constantly on a farm until 18 years of age?—Yes.

53,380-1. You have farmed on your own account since 1883, and have been a tenant of a farm in East Lothian of between 400 and 500 acres arable?—Yes. I have farmed in East Lothian since 1891. Previous to that in Forfarshire.

53,382. Has your firm had under its charge a considerable number of landed properties in various counties in Scotland?—Yes; from Berwick to Dumbarton, large and small estates.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,383. You have come here, however, more particularly to speak as to the Agricultural Holdings Act and the amendments that might be introduced into it?—Yes.

53,384. You consider that in principle the Act is a good one?—Yes.

53,385. Have you had experience of its working?—Yes, both as representing the tenant and the landowner in my professional capacity.

53,386. Have you had many cases brought before the referee?—Yes. Unfortunately, some into the court.

53,387. Do you consider the machinery cumbrous and expensive?—Yes, too cumbrous and expensive.

53,388. So much so as to deprive the smaller class of tenants of its advantages?—Yes, and it has a frightening effect on the landlord. I do not like the prospect of entering on an arbitration which may result in a litigation.

53,389. Have you any suggestions to make with regard to simplifying and cheapening procedure?—I have had the advantage of reading a memorandum prepared by Mr. Hope about the simplification of procedure.

Official valuators.

53,390. Can you give us the gist of it?—It is practically the appointment of official valuators, nominated and holding office under the Crown; that these valuators should decide in cases of dispute; and that their decision should be final. I have one suggestion to make. There are cases when, in the interests of both landlord and tenant, the bench should have legal assistance. In the present case the appeal is to the sheriff. I propose, as various counties have been grouped together, that the senior sheriff in the group should sit as chairman of the Court of Appeal.

Board of Agriculture in Scotland.

53,391-2. Do you think that suggestion of Mr. Hope's would be sufficient to bring the Act within reach of the poor litigant?—I do. The fundamental point is that there should be a branch of the Board of Agriculture opened in Scotland; that claims should be sent there, and that the official valuators should take their instructions from it.

53,393. And that the umpires or referees in the first instance should be nominated by the Board of Agriculture?—Each valuator would have his own district, the claims in which would be dealt with by him.

53,394. We will go through the Act shortly. As regards the principle of it, you consider it to be just?—Yes.

Compensation for improvements.

53,395. The principle of giving a general right of compensation to a tenant for improvements on his holding?—Yes, a general right of compensation for money invested and left beneficially to the landlord. It only secures that the capital which a tenant puts into the land, and cannot gather up and take away with him on his removal, should be paid for by the landlord.

53,396. How do you consider the principle of valuation is fixed in the Act?—The principle is "value of the "improvement to an incoming tenant," and I am not sure that it is a right one. It is a very uncertain principle. The incoming tenant does not pay for the unexhausted improvement because he takes the farm as it stands at his entry, and fixes his rent accordingly. The principle should be the value in so far as the letting or market value of the holding has been thereby increased. The result would be that paying for the improvement would cost the landlord nothing as he would get by increase of rent a return for the capital invested by him in taking over the tenant's improvements. In other words the new tenant would be paying in the shape of rent the interest on the improvement expenditure. The benefit to the landlord supposing him to succeed himself should be the principle of valuation.

53,397. That would apply whether the letting value were actually increased or not?—If the letting value has rather diminished, that should be paid for by the out-going tenant.

53,398. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Unless there is an actual increase there should be no compensation at all?—The principle of the present Act is—improvement in so far as valuable to the tenant. I would change the word tenant into landlord.

53,399. (*Lord Cobham.*) Supposing the rent has fallen owing to external causes how will the outgoing tenant stand then?—It would require a careful consideration and comparison of the times on which the rent was fixed with the present times. Rents fixed fifteen years ago have now diminished, so you could not go to that standard. You would take the standard arrived

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at by the valuator. At present unexhausted improvements are largely regulated by the amount of actual expenditure on manures and feeding stuffs by the tenant. That is always a fair criterion and would continue to be a fair means of judging whether the land had been well or badly treated.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,400. You are in favour of cumulative fertility, and continuous high farming being compensated for?—Yes.

53,401. Whether rent at the end of the tenancy is actually increased or not?—Yes. Rent varies with time, but we have no difficulty in disposing of a farm that has been well managed, and well cultivated. If you have a place badly managed and in a dirty condition, it is next to impossible to get a tenant to take it.

53,402. But on the best managed farm assuming there is to be a continuous fall of rents compensation for high farming will accelerate the ruin of the landlord?—I hope not necessarily.

53,403. If rents are falling, he will have no funds out of which to pay compensation?—I am afraid so.

53,404. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You acknowledge it would have the effect Lord Cobham points out?—No. I say the diminution in the rental would not be due to high farming but to external causes.

53,405. But Lord Cobham referred to compensation. What of that?—If by skill and industry and a combination of practical knowledge a farmer hands over his holding to his landlord in a much improved condition, I think it would be conceded the landlord has been thereby benefitted.

53,406. (*Mr. Channing.*) And the estate would be of more value?—Yes. There is no doubt about it.

53,407. (*Mr. Clay.*) Even in bad times?—Yes, I can give you a case in point that happened in my own practice last year. We had a farm in East Lothian rented at 600*l.* We had a non-resident tenant and very bad management and when we came to re-let the farm we could only with difficulty get 300*l.* a year. I attribute a very large proportion of that falling off to deterioration on the part of the tenant.

53,408. (*Lord Cobham.*) You can conceive cases where it would be much better for a landlord to take a reduced rent rather than pay a large sum of money down?—Yes.

Restrictions in leases.

53,409. In Scotland, as a rule, at the present day, where a farm has been well cultivated you do not find there has been a fall of rent in re-letting?—I confine that observation to the Lothians pretty much. It is a fact that highly farmed land has been letting well. In those districts very considerable latitude is allowed in cropping. Round Edinburgh, we have practically no conditions of cropping. I let a farm three miles to the west of Edinburgh last year and got an increase of about 30 per cent.

53,410. You consider that in normal times increase of rent would recoup the landlord for any compensation he has to pay to the tenant?—Yes. And unless he gets value no compensation should be paid.

The schedules.

53,411. In regard to the schedules appended to the Act you think they should be abolished?—They serve no good purpose.

53,412. You think the valuator should have absolute freedom in determining what has been done by the tenant to his farm?—Well, I do not think the tenant should be allowed a free hand in buildings and road making.

53,413. Then you will have some schedules?—I would rather put it in the body of the Act that before works of that kind were taken up the matter should be settled by the official valuators.

53,414. In the matter of necessary building, draining, making of roads, and erection of permanent fences and water supplies you say that provision should be made for the landlord to have the option to execute these improvements himself, charging the tenant a fair rate of interest on such outlay; that you would take out of the schedules, and incorporate it in the Act?—Yes.

53,415. With regard to all other improvements you think no consent on the part of the landlord should be required, and that no schedules are necessary?—That is so.

Clause 6, sub-sections 1 and 2.

53,416. As to Clause 6, Sub-sections 1 and 2?—These should be omitted, as the landlord's rights in regard to rent and taxes are already fully provided for at common law. The introduction of these deductions gives rise to unnecessary confusion.

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Compensation for deterioration.

53,417. You think the landlord's claim for deterioration should not be limited to four years?—Yes. If tenants are to get compensation for all improvements, then on the same grounds the landlord should be fully compensated for any and every deterioration whenever committed.

53,418. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In what way?—His claim is restricted to four years. I should not be inclined to restrict him to that.

53,418*a*. For dilapidation?—Yes.

53,419. (*Lord Cobham.*) That is to say that if a tenant is to be compensated for good farming the landlord should be compensated for bad farming during the whole period?—Yes.

53,420. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) From whom is he to recover compensation?—From the tenant, I hope.

53,421. If the tenant is in a very poor way himself how is the landlord to get compensation?—He is in the same position with his rent. It would make landlords very much more cautious in the class of men they select for tenants.

53,422. At the beginning of the lease?—Yes, you cannot guarantee even in the most prudent selection of a tenant, but the instances in which care has been shown and where a landlord has not had his claims satisfied are very rare indeed.

53,423. Is that so?—Yes, as a matter of practice in Scotland.

Dispossession by landlords.

53,424. Do you give the landlord power to dispossess the tenant?—There is power at common law to order an inspection by the sheriff as to the condition of the farm.

53,425. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would not that be better to be put in the Agricultural Holdings Act as well as the others?—Yes.

53,426. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are these common law provisions found to be workable?—They are not often resorted to.

53,427. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With regard to what the landlord gets, is it in the way of diminution of the claim of the tenant?—No. He gets it in money, I know of no claims which have not been satisfied.

Claims for dilapidations.

53,428. Are landlords' claims for dilapidation greater than tenants'?—Yes, the landlord has a ready means of satisfying himself from the tenants' crop. I had a case the other day where a tenant became bankrupt, and he had to hand over his turnip crop in satisfaction of the rent. It was more than sufficient.

Claims and counter-claims.

53,429-30. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you consider that the periods of the various notices in the Act require alteration?—I think a very great deal of hardship and unnecessary complication has arisen in connexion with notices of claim, I see no object to be gained by notices. It is the first signal for war between landlord and tenant. Let them settle between them in the same way as other questions are settled, either at the time of removal or a short time after.

53,431. Are you speaking of improvements of which no notice has been given?—I am speaking of all claims under the Act.

53,432. The land owner would be perfectly in the dark as to the nature of the claim likely to be made?—Yes. But unfortunately that is precisely the position of the tenant in regard to the landlord. He is kept in the dark until 14 days after the determination of the tenancy.

53,433. With regard to the counter-claim you would have that put on the same basis as the claim?—Yes.

53,434. How long before the determination of the tenancy?—I do not say it need be before the determination of the tenancy. I think the tenant's claim and the landlord's claim should both be lodged in neutral hands within 28 days after the determination of the tenancy. In the case where there is more than one ish in the lease the 28 days should run from the last date of removal. In other words it should run from the day on which the tenant has no longer a legal right to be upon the farm.

53,435. You would repeal the whole of the clauses from 9 to 20?—Yes.

Loans to tenants.

53,436. Are you in favour of the tenant being allowed to borrow on the security of his improvements?—Where a tenant after notice and sanction puts up a building I think it would be perfectly fair he should be entitled to

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assign his right to recover to a lender on the security of these buildings.

53,437. In the case of the consent of the landlord being withheld, he should be referred to the official referee?—Yes.

53,438. And if he approved the building would be put up and the cost charged upon that improvement?—Yes. It would then be converted into a marketable security.

53,439. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is there anything to prevent him borrowing on it now?—Certainly.

53,440. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is it to over-ride that?—Yes.

53,441. What security would there be?—It would depend on the ability of the landlord to meet his obligations.

53,442. It would be no security at all if the landlords were not in a position to meet it?—No.

Mortgaged estates.

53,443. (*Lord Cobham.*) Upon heavily charged trust estates there would be no security at all?—I know of none so seriously burdened that the tenant would ever be in any jeopardy about getting payment of his claims under the Holdings Act. You can barely burden land to that extent in Scotland.

53,444. Where the land is mortgaged already, and the tenant wishes to put up a new cow-byre, for instance, where is the security?—In Scotland you mortgage an estate generally which includes everything upon it but you have always a margin—the right of reversion.

53,445. It would be a second mortgage, in fact?—Yes; in Scotland that is common.

53,446. Do you not know any case of the margin of the first mortgage running off altogether?—I have heard of instances, but not many.

53,447. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Where a rental has fallen, as it has in many cases in England, 75 and 80 per cent., that would occur, and you have no security left?—The question would then have to be considered whether the land was worth the improvement contemplated.

Tenants' improvements.

53,448. (*Lord Cobham.*) Where there is not sufficient to repay the tenant, is he to take possession of the improvement?—He should be allowed to remove it if it be movable.

53,449. In all probability it would be a building?—Yes, and that would not be much value to remove. But still his right of property in it should be preserved entire.

53,450. You do not foresee extraordinary complications between owner and tenant?—No; we do not anticipate any serious complication of that kind.

State loans.

53,451. Do you think the Government might be asked to advance money upon such security?—I take it if the Government were to advance money upon a security of that kind they would wish to be put in the position of getting a first charge.

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53,452. That is, a position of priority?—Yes.

53,453. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is it he is to assign if he borrows money?—His right to recover.

53,454. He might recover such sum as awarded by the valuator?—Yes.

53,455. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How is the lender to know exactly what the landlord's position amounts to?—He would have to take the usual means to ascertain his financial position.

53,456. But you would be lending money to the tenant. How is the banker to be able to ascertain if the landlord is good security?—He would have to take the usual means.

53,457. What are the usual means?—If I were lending to anyone of whom I had no knowledge, I should ask for a reference to his banker.

53,458. That would not bring you to the landlord?—I should consider the landlord my debtor.

53,459. (*Lord Cobham.*) He stands as collateral security?—Real security.

53,460. Can a tenant's claim be pledged at present?—No. It is one of the assets I know no way of pledging. I should refuse to lend upon it.

53,461. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) If the landlord was a party to the transaction you would have no difficulty in ascertaining his position and how far his security was good, but you are now contemplating an improvement made against the will of the landlord. As security for this improvement, the tenant is to have a certain claim upon the buildings against the landlord. If the landlord is not in a position to meet that claim the security is valueless to you to lend money to the tenant. Then you say you will ascertain what the landlord's position is. How can you obtain a sufficient insight into his position unless he gives you facilities?—In Scotland we can know exactly how his landed property stands to a shilling. We can go to the Register House and see how he stands, and we have his valuation roll as to rental.

Notice of claims.

53,462. (*Lord Cobham.*) You think notice would be sufficient by registered letter?—Yes. In the present Act it provides that notice should be given under an almost obsolete statute of 1853. Procedure has been much simplified since then, and it would be an advantage to both if a registered letter constituted notice of determination of tenancy.

53,463–4. By whom should compensation to the way-going tenant be paid?—That is a charge against the landlord.

The Commission adjourned.

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One Hundred and first Day.

Edinburgh, Saturday, 8th June 1895.

PRESENT:

VISCOUNT COBHAM IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. } *Secretaries.*

Mr. ALEXANDER GUILD re-called and further examined.

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53,465. (*Chairman.*) In addition to the specific recommendations which you made yesterday, you have some general suggestions to make?—That is so.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,466. In regard to compensation for home-grown produce consumed on the holding, you think that should be allowed for?—Yes.

53,467. What is the present practice?—The custom just now is for home-grown produce to be used very largely, but no compensation is allowed. I know that in more than one case in my knowledge the Act has been defeated in this way. The tenant has sold his own produce and received an equal quantity from his neighbour, and compensation has been allowed.

53,468. No money passed?—No; I had a case like that, and was allowed compensation. I think it would be better to recognise it openly. If a farmer converts, say, a hundred quarters of barley into meal and gives it to his stock, it is quite just that he should be allowed for it, as much as if he had bought cake.

53,469-70. Do you see any way of verifying the claim?—Yes; last year I had occasion to settle a claim where the tenant held two farms. From the one farm he sold grain to the other to be consumed by sheep. I was then acting for the landlord and I objected to the item. The arbiter held that the certificate of the farmer, counter-signed by his steward, was sufficient evidence to justify him in awarding compensation, and he did so. I think it was hardly sufficient evidence, and that you should require some better evidence, or the barn book. If that book was signed by the farmer at the time the produce was used, and by his chief man, and any false entry made criminal, I think that would be quite a sufficient check.

53,471. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When are these entries and signatures to be made?—On the day the produce is used. There would be no difficulty on large farms in carrying out that principle at present. When grain is taken from the granary or barn it is entered in the book at that moment by the steward or the farmer.

53,472. (*Mr. Clay.*) That question is surrounded by a good deal of difficulty?—It is indeed.

53,473. Would it not be another point to strengthen the farmer's case if he were to give notice to the landlord that he had laid aside a certain quantity of produce?—I think that would be of advantage.

53,474. (*Lord Cobham.*) On what footing would you put this produce?—I think you would have to put it on the ordinary footing of in-bought produce consumed on the holding.

53,475. Would that not necessitate a rather vexatious system of supervision?—That is assuming the possibility of fraud. In the case I referred to I am bound to say that I believe it was an honest enough claim, although I did not think it legally vouched.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,476. Do you agree with the London Chamber of Agriculture that the principle of compensation for cumulative fertility during the currency of a lease should be recognised?—I think that is sound. On the other hand, I consider that any reduction in the condition of the land should be paid for as deterioration by the waygoing tenant, and I do not think the landlord's claim should be circumscribed to a four years' limit. I would put him on precisely the same footing as the tenant.

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53,477. You would adopt the procedure suggested, viz., the scheduling of farms on entry and quitting?—That seems the only plan we could adopt. It is done now with the buildings, fences, and drains, and at the termination of the tenancy it is held to be the measure of the rights of parties on both sides.

Official referees.

53,478. You would put a good deal of work on those arbiters—how do you propose they should be paid?—In the same way as sheriffs' substitute, by the Government.

53,479. Not by the job?—No, I think that would not be a sound policy. On the other hand, I suggest that parties employing them should pay a fixed scale of fees into a fee fund, to be used by the Government.

Penal clauses.

53,480. How do penal clauses in leases work in Scotland?—I think, very unfairly. It is usually a haphazard sum fixed by the lease, which the court holds itself unable to deal with in any way. I think leases should be put on the same footing as other contracts, namely, actual damage.

53,481. You think they have often the effect of deterring the tenant from making just claims?—No, but they often defeat just claims. It is a purely technical provision. In the lease it is provided that if the tenant takes two white crops he shall pay penal rent at the rate of 5*l.* an acre, and the question of damage does not arise.

Freedom of cropping.

53,482. Do you think there should be more freedom of cropping?—I do. In the course of my practise I know that my clients are coming very generally to take that view.

53,483. Whatever may be the length of the lease?—That is not an element. We bind them to leave the farm in a certain rotation, and I think that is quite sufficient. We are trying more and more to be careful in the selection of our tenants.

Compensation for deterioration.

53,484. What would your remedy be if, in the course of a long lease, you found the farmer running out the land?—I would have a claim for compensation. Since yesterday I have refreshed my knowledge, and I find that where a farm is being mis-cropped, the landlord has power to apply to the sheriff for judicial inspection, and he has also power to get an order from the court to put his own manager in and have the farm managed according to the lease or to what the judicial adviser says; so that the landlord has control at once.

53,485. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) His remedy, then, is to farm it himself?—To get it farmed under the sanction of the court, according to the rules of good husbandry.

53,486. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is the lease quashed under these circumstances?—No, it is a sharp penalty put by the court on the tenant.

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53,487. Have you many cases of that kind?—Not many. At present there is one case in Forfarshire and one in Kirkcudbrightshire.

53,488. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Has it ever been done?—Yes. The law books contain several cases of the kind. I can give you authorities besides the two current cases I have mentioned.

53,489. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it ever referred to in the lease?—No, it is part of the common law of the country, and applies to every farm. It is better not to refer to it in leases.

Freedom of sale.

53,490. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think there should be equal freedom in regard to sale of produce as to cropping?—On a good deal of land managed by us, close to Edinburgh, we allow free sale, and that land is in the highest state of cultivation.

53,491-3. All the crops are practically sold off the farm?—Yes, and they grow magnificent crops. The tenant, in his own interest, manages the farm well. We have given great relaxations in the letting of land, and allowed free sale of produce.

Quality of cultivation.

53,494. Is it your opinion that the land of the country has been going back in condition to some extent?—Not in the district where I am daily occupied, round about Edinburgh.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,495. (*Mr. Dalton.*) As the law now stands, with regard to the consumption of produce, is there not great danger, when one of these farmers sells to the other without money passing, that there may be fraud or collusion in fixing the price?—I think there is very great danger, mainly due to the fact that the consumption of home-grown produce is not sanctioned.

53,496. If it was sanctioned how would the price be ascertained?—By the market value of the day.

53,497. In the case you mention was there anything wrong in the price?—No, the market price was fairly stated.

Penal clauses.

53,498. With regard to the penal clauses in leases, would they be open to the same abuse if the penalties were reasonable, instead of being enormously high?—I do not think you could possibly get landlord and tenant to agree upon what would be reasonable damage. It would be very much better to leave it in the same way as if a man got hurt in an accident and claimed compensation for his injuries.

53,499. Are the penalties altogether in excess?—They are just now.

Substituted agreements.

53,500. We have heard evidence of the insertion of clauses in leases to evade the Agricultural Holdings Act, and we are told that is very common—is that your opinion?—Not in the east of Scotland. I have been told that it is common in the west, particularly in Ayrshire.

53,501. Have these clauses any practical effect?—They would, certainly, be enforced against any claim under the Holdings Act.

53,502. (*Mr. Channing.*) They could not be enforced at law, if they overrode the Act?—The Act allows private contracts?

53,503. (*Mr. Dalton.*) One lease which we saw practically overrode the Act?—I do not think that would stand discussion.

53,504. Are these clauses common?—No, not within my knowledge.

53,505. And you have had fair experience?—Yes.

53,506. Then you would not agree that they are common throughout the country?—One is bound to speak of his own knowledge, and of the district with which he is acquainted.

53,507. What district is that?—The three Lothians, Berwickshire, Fife, Stirling, and Dumbarton.

Tenure.

53,508. Do you favour a short statutory lease—some of the leases we have seen are very long and full of covenants?—I think the leases in Scotland are scandalously long, as a rule. We should have them written on one page instead of 10.

53,509. Do you think a short statutory lease desirable?—I think it would be an advantage. The essentials of a lease are very short.

Freedom of cropping.

53,510. (*Mr. Channing.*) What is really meant by freedom of cropping?—Freedom of cropping means this, that you would not be bound to adhere rigidly to a prescribed course.

53,511-2. And you would make it a condition that the farm should be left in a fixed rotation at the end of the tenancy?—Yes, I think that would be quite enough.

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54,513. I put to you a proposal made in the House of Commons in regard to England, and which was approved of by the Chamber of Agriculture, that in the case of stipulations regarding the course of cropping and prohibiting freedom of sale, they should be void as regards both, if the tenant has returned an adequate amount of manure of a suitable kind or given security for it?—That would be quite reasonable; but it is rather a long way to put it.

53,514. If a man goes in for what is technically miscropping, and if he makes an adequate return to cover any results from that change, do you not think he should be held free from any liability?—Certainly. The main object is to maintain the land in a fertile condition.

53,515. If that provision could be introduced into an Act, which would secure the landlord against miscropping as well as free sale, you would not disapprove of it?—No.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,516. With regard to cumulative fertility, as a matter of policy is it not better to restrict the landlord to two years for waste, and make it his interest to take steps during the tenancy to restrain the tenant?—I should like very much to see landlord and tenant put as nearly as possible on the same footing.

53,517. The proofs of actual waste may be more difficult than the proofs of actual cultivation and the results?—Not very much. I lately had a case in which there were alleged claims for mismanagement, and the landlord had a good case, and found no difficulty in proving it.

53,518. If the landlord went back many years, would it not place the tenant in a difficult position in proving the results of deterioration?—I do not think so.

53,519. The demand in England is to cut down the four years to two years?—I may be heretical on that point, but I would like to put landlord and tenant on the same footing.

53,520. Is it your opinion that the best form of Agricultural Holdings Act would be one providing that the tenants should claim for increased fertility and the landlord for decreased fertility?—That would be a very sound principle. It contains the whole principle and bones of an equitable Act.

53,521. Do you think it would be workable?—Yes. I hope that when the time comes round to appoint official valuators that men of a high-class and experience will be appointed, and I am sure they will hold the balance evenly between landlord and tenant.

Erection of buildings.

53,522. With regard to the erection of new buildings, you think the landlord should be consulted beforehand?—Yes, I think so.

53,523. Otherwise, except these first-class improvements, you would leave the tenant a free hand?—Yes, I would; and I believe there would be very little difference between a reasonable landlord and tenant at the beginning of the tenancy as to buildings.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,524. Have you sufficient machinery in your Fiars Courts to strike the value of home-grown produce?—Yes, that is an efficient average, but I think a fair way would be to take the market value of the day.

53,525. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How would you test the quality?—That certainly varies. If need be a sample could be sent to the landlord.

53,526. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you think a system of that kind could be well worked?—Yes, quite well. I know that in a very large proportion of farms south of Edinburgh, towards the Lammermoors, almost the whole of the grain crop is consumed on the land.

53,527. And do they get no compensation?—No; whereas if they sold the grain and bought in cake they would get compensation.

Official referees.

53,528. You think the official valuers should be paid by the State?—Yes.

53,529. And the parties to the case should pay nothing?—Oh, no. I would have a scale of fees fixed by the Board of Agriculture, and these should be paid by both parties into a fee fund.

53,530. A scale of fees by the acreage?—Or it might be on the amount claimed. I think that would be a fair way to prevent an extravagant claim.

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53,531. Would you have a list of arbiters, or one official selected for a district?—I think it would work very much better and be more satisfactory to have one for a district, and that he should give his whole time to it.

53,532. You do not think such an arrangement as that would give dissatisfaction?—You have always the corrective of an appeal.

53,533. You would give an appeal?—Yes.

53,534. To what body?—I would constitute the whole arbiters into a court of appeal. I think four or five arbiters would do very well for the whole of Scotland, and if you had them sitting as a court of appeal, with the addition of a sheriff as legal adviser to them, it would be the means of getting a sound and safe judgment.

53,535. Would you reserve some claims without appeal—appeals would lead to increased costs?—You would then tread on small claimants.

53,536. You would only allow appeals on points of law?—Yes; the right of appeal is pretty well defined at present.

Land registration.

53,537. (*Mr. Lambert.*) About the register of charges on land, is there a register kept of all the mortgages on land?—Yes, and of all the conveyances or deeds affecting it.

53,538. Is it compulsory?—In order to get security to the lender it is.

53,539. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How long has that been the case?—My memory will not carry me back sufficiently far. It has been the system in Scotland for over 200 years.

53,540. (*Mr. Lambert.*) If I wanted to know the charges on any particular estate could I find them out by paying a fee?—Certainly, it is a matter of right.

53,541. Is that objected to very strongly on the part of landowners?—It is very highly approved of.

53,542. There has been no objection to such a course?—Oh, no; we could not do without our system of land registration.

53,543. You find it of immense advantage to the men who want to lend money on land?—Yes, it is their security and protection.

53,544. Is the system of land transfer in Scotland more simple than in England?—I think so. Our deeds are much shorter and more direct in their terms.

53,545. Have you a Land Registry Court in Scotland to register the sales of land?—No.

53,546. So that you do not register the title?—Yes, in the same register that contains the register of mortgages.

53,547. (*Capt. Owen Thomas.*) If the land is not mortgaged, what then?—If there is no mortgage shown on the register, then the land is unencumbered.

53,548. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you enter everything upon the register?—Every charge on the land.

53,549. (*Lord Cobham.*) Does the whole of the land in Scotland come into it?—It is all dealt with in the register house. Our system requires the registration of every deed affecting land permanently. Otherwise the title is not complete.

53,550. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Supposing you had a building area outside Edinburgh, and you sold a small part of ground, say, to an artisan, would that be registered?—Yes.

53,551. And there would be no difficulty about it?—Not the slightest.

53,552. If any one says that difficulties occur, you would say he was misinformed?—We could not sympathise with him at all. Our registration system is so thorough that there would be a very strong uprising if it were attempted to be done away with.

53,553. Do frauds ever occur through a man pretending to have a security which he has not?—Oh, no, our registrars take care of that.

Competition for farms.

53,554. Is there a good competition for farms in your district?—Yes, in the Lothians there has been a good competition in the past two years. Outside the Lothians competition is not so keen, except for good arable farms.

Freedom of cropping.

53,555. You imagine that if the tenants had partial freedom of cropping and freedom of sale, the landlords would exercise greater discretion in the selection of tenants?—I think they would, and that they would get better rents. I have advised my landlord clients to give it.

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53,556. And it does not injure the landlords?—On the contrary, we find that land round about Edinburgh, with freedom of cropping and free sale, is in the very highest state of cultivation.

53,557. Is it very costly to take steps to prevent the deterioration of the soil?—Not at all.

53,558. Supposing an agreement is made confining the tenant to a certain rotation, and he breaks it, how do you make him keep it?—By applying to the sheriff to appoint a judicial manager to compel him to adhere to his bargain.

53,559. So that if those provisions were embodied in an Act of Parliament it would be as easy to enforce them as an agreement?—I see no difficulty.

Freedom of sale.

53,560. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I gather from you that it is the case that freedom of sale is common now where farms are close to large towns?—Yes.

53,561. Would it be equally advantageous to make it universal by law where farms are away from the towns?—It might not be equally convenient, but it would be a large concession. For outlying farms many opportunities for selling hay, straw, and turnips present themselves, of which the tenant cannot avail himself.

53,562. The two classes of farmers are on a different footing?—Yes.

53,563. Does it not rather come to this, that where it is of advantage to both parties concerned, freedom of sale is general now?—No. I have clients, whose instructions I am bound to obey, and who stand rigidly by the terms of the lease, and will not allow the sale of hay, straw, or turnips.

53,564. Even against your advice?—Yes; they consider a wrong would be done.

Competition for farms.

53,565. You say that the competition in the Lothians has been very fair for the last two years?—Yes.

53,566. And previous to that?—Until two years ago there was not the keenness which exists to-day.

53,567. What has occurred to restore greater confidence?—We have all tried to discover it and cannot explain it. I think it is a leap in the dark. There is nothing in the agricultural outlook to justify the increase of rent that has taken place within the last two years.

53,568. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it not because there is plenty of capital lying idle?—Partly so. We have stopped sending capital abroad. For years we poured our invested funds into the Australian banks, but we have tired of that. The sons of our farmers were also sent abroad, but when things got bad there that was stopped.

53,569. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Apart from these reasons, there are no other grounds on which you can account for the rise in rents and the increased demand for farms?—No. In one or two cases within my own knowledge, I have got increased rents through relaxing conditions as to cropping and sale.

53,570. And, I presume, from men whom you considered reliable, and who would not injure the farm?—From men of capital and character.

Official referees.

53,571. You think four or five valuators would be sufficient for the whole of Scotland?—I think so.

Changes of tenancy.

53,572. How many changes of tenancy occur, on an average, in the course of a year?—I am sorry I could not give an approximate estimate.

53,573. How many occur on the estates with which you are connected?—Very few. I have only one farm this year which I am going to put into the market.

53,574. How many will there be in a county?—Well, take East Lothian, on one estate all the four tenants have been changed, and there is another one I know of, making five in all. These would be all the changes in that county this year.

53,575. There are fewer cases, I suppose, where there are long leases than where farms are held on a yearly tenancy?—In Scotland we do not know much about a yearly tenancy.

53,576. It has occurred to me that the work in Scotland would be too much for four or five valuers?—I think they could easily overtake it if they got three or four counties each.

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Scheduling the condition of farms.

53,577. You said you would leave it to the valuator to say whether fertility had increased or decreased. Supposing it was the end of a 19 years' lease and the valuer had not seen the farm at the beginning, how is he to arrive at a comparison of the condition of the farm?—My suggestion presupposed an examination of the farm at the beginning of the tenancy.

53,578. By the same man?—Not necessarily, but such a report could be available at the end of the tenancy, and should be a very valuable guide. There are always avenues open for obtaining reliable information.

53,579. You think, as regards any future proceedings, that it is very desirable there should be a written record of the condition of the farm?—I do.

53,580. And you would leave that to the official valuators?—Yes.

53,581. Where should the record be kept?—In the Board of Agriculture, but it should be left open for inspection.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,582. When you talk of compensation for the consumption of home-grown produce, is that limited to corn?—Not necessarily.

53,583. You would give compensation for all the home-grown produce consumed?—Well, in East Lothian, for example, a very large portion of the rent is made by the growing of hay. Instead of selling that hay the farmer keeps it at home and consumes it, and he should be allowed for it.

53,584. The manurial value of corn is estimated very small?—According to tables it is not very high.

53,585. Are there estimates of the manurial value of all other home-grown produce?—I know there is for straw, as well as for hay.

53,586. And for turnips?—Yes.

53,587. Your guarantee against fraud is to be the testimony of the person interested and perhaps his foreman?—Yes, and if necessary the sending of notice, or, if need be, a sample, to the landlord.

53,588. But the book containing the entries of this home-grown produce is to be signed every day?—Yes.

53,589. And how would it be possible to send that to the landlord or his agent every day?—Well, I am a busy man in Edinburgh, and I manage personally upwards of a thousand arable acres. I do that on Saturday afternoons, and my feeding stuffs are given out weekly. I know many farmers who do exactly the same thing, and there is nothing to hinder an honest entry being made and notice given to the landlord.

53,590. How often are the feeding stuffs given out?—My practice is to give them out every week or every fortnight.

53,591. The guarantee that they have been consumed is to rest upon the testimony of the farmer or his foreman?—Yes, with this condition, that any false entry should be made a criminal offence.

53,592. On a large farm would the farmer or his bailiff be able to see every day that on every part of the farm the produce was actually consumed on the farm?—There would be no difficulty about that. The bailiff on his usual rounds would see that it was consumed.

53,593. But there would be no guarantee that it would be consumed by the stock?—Well, if it was given out and not consumed by the stock it must be stolen by the servants, and I have more confidence in our farm servants than to believe that.

53,594. If the farmer would not have sold the produce in the ordinary way, would you give him compensation for consuming it?—No, I think that would be carrying the principle a little too far.

53,595. It might be that from difficulties of transport a great deal of the produce would not be sold in the case of a farm near a town. Would that not make a great distinction?—I think a great deal of the difficulty has arisen chiefly through the consumption of grain.

53,596. I suppose it has been the case in Scotland as elsewhere, that there has been a greater consumption of home-grown grain on the farm since the fall in prices?—Yes, I believe so, south of the Lothians. In East Lothian we sell all our grain and get very good prices for it.

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Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,597-8. (*Lord Cobham.*) If a man is paid for the consumption of his home-grown produce and purchased manures and feeding stuffs, and also for the cumulative fertility of his farm, would he not be paid twice over for the same thing?—No, I do not think so. Cumulative fertility is a little different from applying feeding stuffs. In cumulative fertility you should include everything that could be held to be good and progressive farming, such as cleanliness.

53,599. But you must take care to exclude from compensation so much of the cumulative fertility which is brought about by the consumption of cake, or manure, which has already been compensated for?—In the most notable case we have had in Scotland—the Corsehope case—a specific sum was allowed in respect of the long and continuous use of feeding stuffs.

Official referees.

53,600. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) The official valuators are not to be farmers?—They might be farmers, but I think they should not be free to act as arbiters. They should mainly give their time to the duties devolving on them under the Act.

53,601. Their salaries would require to be considerable?—I think so.

53,602. And you think four or five men would be ample for the whole of Scotland?—Yes; I think the fewer you have the better men you will get and the better you will be able to pay them.

Counter-claims.

53,603. You think that 28 days after the termination of a tenancy the counter-claim should be put in?—Yes.

53,604. And there should also be a fixed time in which these matters should be disposed of?—Yes; but the present time limit is just short enough. I think it is 28 days after the arbiter is appointed.

53,605. That would cause the whole of these claims and counter-claims to be dealt with by these officials all over Scotland within a month?—Oh, no. My point is that these claims and counter-claims should be put in within 28 days after the termination of the tenancy. It is a matter for consideration what longer time is required for disposing of them.

53,606. But there must be a limit to the time. I should say two months would be sufficient.

53,607. And these valuers could do all the work in that time?—Yes, because in each district a man would not have more than five or six claims, which he could deal with in a week.

53,608. (*Mr. Clay.*) At present the arbiter is allowed that length of time?—Yes.

53,609. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Would the lodging of the claim and counter-claim at the same time not be apt to make the parties take a leap in the dark?—Not if it was an honest claim.

53,610. But you must take men as you have them?—My experience shows me that in the present practice, where a farmer lodges a claim four months before the end of his tenancy, all the ingenuity of the advisers of the landlord is put into force to rake up a counter-claim to meet it.

Penal clauses.

53,611. Are these penal clauses put in force to any extent in your district?—Always where we have a claim to meet under the Agricultural Holdings Act. But otherwise they are not enforced.

53,612. Are they founded upon good husbandry?—The penal clauses are a relic of the first lease, drawn by a very eminent man named Cockburn, and we have stuck to them ever since.

Freedom of cropping.

53,613. You think freedom of cropping maintains the fertility of the land?—Yes. I do as I like on farms managed by me for clients farming their own lands, and I do not reduce the fertility.

53,614. In these times, when a tenant wants to do as he pleases and goes to the agent for permission, is it generally refused or granted?—Very often granted, unless there are strong reasons to the contrary.

Claims and counter-claims.

53,615. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do these claims and counter-claims cause friction?—A good many people have represented to me that it is an aid to a landlord in letting his farm if a claim has been lodged. My opinion is that a claim has the opposite effect.

53,616. A witness said that claims should be given in six months before?—I think that would be a retrograde step, and I say so as representing landlords.

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53,617. But is it possible for a landlord to give in a claim for dilapidation of buildings six months before? —Certainly not. You do not consider the landlord's claim till the term of expiry has come.

53,618. And as regards the tenant, the later part of his claim is made up of the feeding stuffs for stock that have to be sold?—Yes, between August and November.

53,619. Have you known of rent being raised on the sitting tenant because of the extra condition of the farm?—I have known cases where that was done.

53,620. To a large extent?—To a considerable extent.

53,621. And it comes to this, that the sitting tenant has had his farm valued by a land agent, and he is told that if he cannot pay such and such a rent, they can get another man who will?—Yes, "pay the rent or go."

53,622. What remedy have you for that?—I think that in the case of a sitting tenant who negotiates for a renewal of his lease, due consideration should be made for the claim that would have to be met if he were going away. Last term I had a tenant who sent in a claim. We could not agree upon the rent. I advertised the farm, but rather than compensate the sitting tenant I accepted a rent 50*l.* less from him than I was offered by another tenant.

53,623. I put this case to you. A farm is valued on the increased fertility made by the sitting tenant. After that is done the tenant gives a rough sketch of his claim amounting to, say, 600*l.* Would the landlord deduct 6 or 7 per cent. on that sum from the rent, and accept a rent reduced by 36*l.* rather than pay the compensation?—No doubt it would pay the landlord to accept 6 or 7 per cent. less rather than launch out a capital sum of 600*l.*

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,624. You said, regarding this ticklish question of the consumption of home produce, that the checks of the books of the tenant and his steward would be sufficient, and that a sample might be sent to the factor. How would that be done?—It could be quite simply done. We sell all our grain by sample, and it could be consumed by sample in the same way.

53,625. So that there would be no difficulty if all these safeguards were put in force?—None.

53,626. In many cases at present do farmers consume the whole corn on the farm?—That is so.

53,627. So that the value would be easily ascertained by taking the whole crop grown, except what is consumed by the horses?—Yes.

53,628. If a man grows 100 acres of oats at five quarters an acre, he would consume the whole thing on the farm except what was consumed by the horses?—Yes.

53,629. There would be no difficulty about a court of appeal?—None. And you would get something like uniformity in the awards, which is not the case at present.

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The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,630. You would like to see an Agricultural Holdings Act framed on the lines of the report which has been presented by the sub-Commissioner, Mr. Hope?—I would. I think it is a most admirable report.

Reductions in rent.

53,631. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What has been the average fall of rents on the acreage under your management?—In one case I have lost 50 per cent. On the neighbouring farm I have gained 20 per cent.

53,632. What is the difference in your rentals, taking the years between 1880 and 1895?—I will supply that information.

53,633. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you supply it for any other parts of the country than East Lothian?—Yes, I will give typical estates where I have had personal experience. (*See* Appendix A. VIII.)

53,634. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are there any materials for arriving at a general average for the Lothians?—No, I do not think that could be supplied.

Large and small farms compared.

53,635–6. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have large or small farms been most affected by the fall in prices?—I think it has been very equally divided. The small holder has this advantage, that he does a large portion of the work by his own family, and he does not give them a fixed wage, and therefore he gets the benefit of their labour.

53,637. Do you think the tenants on your estates have lost capital?—There is no doubt about that.

53,638. You cannot say to what extent?—No, I have no means of ascertaining that, but I know they have lost; and many rents are not now paid with the same punctuality as previously.

Condition of labourers.

53,639. What is the condition of the labourers on your estates?—It has improved. They are well paid, well-housed, and well cared for, and the relations between master and tenant are of the most cordial kind.

Permanent pasture.

53,640. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In your brief you say that the tenant may make improvements, including the laying down of permanent pasture. Would you allow the tenant to do that without the consent of his landlord, and then let him claim compensation at the finish of his lease?—Land well laid down to permanent pasture is always an advantage.

53,641. But a very heavy claim might come upon the landlord for compensation?—I do not think the claim would exceed the benefit conferred on the landlord. I do not think there would be any hardship about that.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. W. H. Gibson.

Mr. Walter H. Gibson called in and examined.

Mr. W. H. Gibson.

53,642. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are a tenant farmer in East Lothian?—Yes.

53,643. What is the size of your farm?—426 acres.

53,644. Since when have you held it?—Since 1886.

53,645. Have you had any other experience in farming?—Yes; since 1876 I have assisted my father, who has been tenant of 540 acres in Roxburghshire, and who, previous to 1876, and for some years subsequently, was also tenant of 745 acres in Mid-Lothian, and 830 acres in Selkirkshire.

Bimetallism.

53,646. You come before us as representing the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture to support the petition of the Chamber of 27th June 1894, in favour of international bimetallism?—I do.

53,647. Have you got a copy of that petition?—Yes; the resolution passed at the meeting was as follows:—"That the Chamber is of opinion that the acute depression of agriculture in this country is in large measure due to the appreciation of gold, consequent upon the monetary change which occurred in the year 1872; and resolves to petition Parliament to take immediate steps to secure by international agreement the remonetisation of silver upon a bimetallic basis, which, in the Chamber's opinion, would go far to remedy the evil."

Agriculture since 1877.

53,648. What has been the condition of agriculture since your experience began in assisting your father in 1876?—My experience is that agriculture has been almost continuously in a chronic state of depression since 1877.

53,649. Is that shown by a considerable fall in the rental?—There has been a very great fall in rental.

Reductions of rent.

53,650. What was the rental of the farms with which you are acquainted in 1876 and 1895?—The rental of the farm of 540 acres in Roxburghshire in 1876–77, was 1,865*l.*; of the farm of 745 acres in Mid-Lothian, 818*l.*; and of the farm of 830 acres in Selkirkshire, 1,018*l.* The total rental of these three farms was at that time 3,701*l.*

53,651. What is it now?—For 1894–95 the Roxburghshire farm is rented at 1,000*l.*, the Mid-Lothian farm at 420*l.*, and the Selkirkshire farm at 650*l.*, making a total for the three farms of 2,070*l.* That shows a fall of rental of 1,631*l.*, or 44 per cent.

Cause of depression.

53,652. Do you agree with the evidence given by almost every witness, that the chief cause of the depression has been the fall in prices of farm produce?—That is my firm belief.

53,653. Do you attribute it partly to foreign competition or over-production?—I should say it is partly owing to foreign competition.

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53,654. And not to over-production?—I could not say so, though you may have had over-production in certain commodities.

53,655. As far as you are acquainted with the subject, do you find that agricultural depression prevails in other countries?—My belief is, that over the greater part of the civilised world there is depression in agriculture at the present time.

53,656. The fall in the prices of produce has not been limited to agricultural produce?—No, there is a fall in the general level of prices of all kinds of commodities.

53,657. In addition to foreign competition, to what other cause do you trace the depression?—I trace the main cause to the monetary change which has taken place since 1873.

The currency changes 1873–4.

53,658. You are speaking of the great monetary changes which occurred on the continent and in the United States of America during 1873 and 1874?—Yes.

53,659. What do you think has been the consequence of those changes?—I believe the consequence has been that gold has had a greater call upon it, owing to the increased demand for gold as the standard money of these nations.

53,660. Since the mints were closed for silver there has been a greater demand for gold for the work it had to do?—Yes.

53,661. Do you agree with the opinion that has been expressed that there has been considerable divergence between the two metals?—Yes, and it is my opinion that gold has appreciated compared with commodities.

53,662. And that the old relative value has altered very greatly?—Yes, very greatly within the last 20 years.

Increase of money and rise in prices.

53,663. Is it your opinion that when the volume of legal tender money has been increased prices have generally risen and agriculture and commerce have flourished?—I believe so.

53,664. Does the contrary effect hold good, that when supplies of money have been diminishing agriculture and commerce have at all times been depressed?—From my own experience and what I have read that seems to be the result.

53,665. Have you read the evidence given by Mr. Everett on this subject?—Yes.

53,666. Are you familiar with the illustrations he gave in support of his views?—I very much agree with them.

53,667. He gave a good many quotations from historians and others?—Yes, and I concur with him generally.

Remonetisation of silver.

53,668. What you point to as a remedy is that some arrangement should be come to by which there would be a reversion to the system which prevailed before the years you have spoken of?—Yes.

Views of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

53,669. And that represents the wish of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture as embodied in their petition of 1894?—Yes.

53,670. Did the Chamber also present a petition in 1889?—Yes, this resolution was passed by the Chamber on the 13th November, 1888:—"That Mr. Cross be "heartily thanked for his report; that Mr. Everett be "thanked for his address; and that the meeting remit "this question to the directors to consider the report "of the Royal Commission, and with instructions to "take action for the removal of the disadvantages "under which agriculture suffers owing to the depreciation of silver, and to take all steps, by petition to "Parliament and otherwise, to secure the remonetisation of silver by international agreement."

International conference.

53,671. What do you propose in order to accomplish this—that the English Government should approach foreign nations with a view to an international conference?—Yes, I wish them to approach leading commercial nations to arrange that the monetary standard for the whole world should be joint silver and gold.

53,672. Are you influenced in your views as to the evils which have resulted from the present state of things by the numerous commissions and committees recently appointed by Parliament to inquire into the condition of agriculture and of trade and of the unemployed?—These commissions are strong evidence that the Government realise there is something very far wrong, and that something should be done to remedy the present state of matters.

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53,673. Do you attribute any part of the depression in agriculture to the competition with silver-using countries?—I believe we have a great competition with silver-using countries which prevents prices rising. If prices were rising in gold I believe it would increase the production from these countries under present conditions.

Competition with silver-using countries.

53,674. Do you think that the fact of their possessing an appreciative currency, like the rupee in India and the paper currency in Argentina, enables them to send their produce here cheaper than would otherwise be the case?—I believe that is so. Their expenses being paid in silver are very greatly reduced. The Indian grower, so long as he gets the same number of rupees for his wheat, is as well paid as he was 20 years ago when the price was much greater in the gold-using country than it is now.

53,675. And the capacity for wheat production in India is very great?—Yes. If the price were rising the competition would be very much greater.

53,676. Have the exports of wheat from India not fallen off very much latterly?—I believe that is so. But the fact is wheat has fallen more than silver has fallen compared with gold.

International conference.

53,677. What is your opinion of the probability of foreign nations being at all willing to join in any arrangement of this kind?—From recent events upon the Continent and in America I believe the prospects are very much brighter now for an agreement between the leading commercial nations if an international conference were called together.

Agricultural depression and the monetary changes 1873–4.

53,678. Do I understand that it is the view of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, as well as your own view, that very much of the depression from which we are suffering at the present time is to be traced to these great monetary changes of 20 years ago?—That is our belief.

53,679. They wish you to represent that to us?—Yes, I have been asked to speak to that petition which was sent up by the Chamber.

53,680. Is that view of the case supported at all by predictions which were made before these changes occurred—that general depression and trouble would be the consequence of the change?—Yes, many predictions were made before the great change in prices took place.

53,681. Can you refer to any one in particular?—I can refer to Mr. Ernest Seyd, who in 1871 said:—"It is a great mistake to suppose that the adoption of "the gold valuation by other States besides England "will be beneficial. It will only lead to the destruction "of the monetary equilibrium hitherto existing, and "cause a fall in the value of silver, from which England's trade and the Indian silver valuation will "suffer more than all other interests, grevious as the "general decline of prosperity all over the world will "be. The strong doctrinism existing in England as "regards the gold valuation is so blind that when the "time of depression sets in there will be this special "feature—the economical authorities of the country "will refuse to listen to the cause here foreshadowed; "every possible attempt will be made to prove that the "decline of commerce is due to all sorts of causes and "irreconciliable matters. The workman and his strikes "will be the first convenient target, then speculation "and over-trading will have their turn. Many other "allegations will be made totally irrelevant to the real "issue, but satisfactory to the moralising tendency of "financial writers. The great danger of the time will "then be that among all this confusion and strife "England's supremacy in commerce and manufactures "may go backwards to an extent which cannot be "redressed when the real cause becomes recognised "and the natural remedy is applied." I have also quotations from Baron Rothschild, Lord Beaconsfield, Mr. Goschen at the Paris Conference and at Manchester, and Dr. Giffen, who, in a paper on "Recent Changes in Prices and Incomes," read before the Royal Statistical Society on 18th December, 1888, said:—"Where debts "increase fast, and where in addition, as in the case of "France, there is no rapid increase of population, the "problems involved in the appreciation of money may "at any time become serious. I should look for "troublous times, for instance, both for some of our "Australasian Colonies, and for a country like the "Argentine Republic, even if the appreciation does

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"not grow more serious than it has been. That the "pile of debts has to be paid, principal and interest, in "appreciating money, even if individual money in- "comes do not diminish, is a most serious consideration. "The increase of the wealth of such borrowers ought to "be enormous to enable them to bear safely the debts "they are incurring."

53,682. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Your Chamber earnestly desires that such measures should be taken that may lead, if possible, to another international conference to deal with this question?—That is our earnest desire.

53,683. Do they anticipate that it would give great relief to the present depression?—I believe it would, by preventing the continuous fall in prices.

53,684. It is also their view, I suppose, that as long as this fall in prices continues, especially if it should continue to be progressive in the future as in the past, they do not see any prospect of bringing about an improvement in the condition?—We see very little prospect of a permanent improvement. There may be a slight rise for a time, but within the last 20 years we have occasionally had our hopes raised by an increase in prices, but shortly afterwards they have fallen lower and lower. I believe that will be the case from the present time.

53,685. Is it your opinion, or within the knowledge of the Chamber and members of the district they represent, that these views are gaining ground among the farmers of Scotland?—I think so, very greatly.

53,686. And they attach serious importance to them?—Yes.

53,687. Since when have these views prevailed?—The first petition by the Chamber was in 1889.

53,688. The depression in Scotland is not nearly so severe, generally speaking, as in England?—I believe that is the case.

53,689. And yet the farmers in Scotland appear to have turned more attention to this subject than the farmers in England, is that in consequence of their superior intelligence?—I cannot say whether they have given much greater attention to it than the English farmers.

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53,690. Is there anything further you would like to say on this question?—With regard to the rise in prices at the beginning of this century, and the subsequent great fall in prices, I feel inclined to give greater weight than Mr. Everett did to the increase of paper money by other nations as well as our own, which was issued in the early years of the century, and then to the great decrease in the supplies of money which took place from 1810 to about 1830. I rather think Mr. Everett did not lay so much stress as I do on the great decrease in the supplies of standard money, silver and gold. There was a very great decrease during the time of the Revolution in South America, and the volume of silver and gold supplied for the use of the world fell from about eight millions to five millions sterling per annum. The great drop in prices was, perhaps, more attributable to that than to the contraction of paper money in this country alone. The great increase in the volume of standard money in the second half of the century, and the consequent prosperity, and then the terrible depression which has taken place in agriculture and in trade generally since 1873 warn us that these conditions are very likely to continue if the immense quantity of silver should be demonetised entirely.

The rise and fall of prices, 1810-30.

53,691. (*Chairman.*) Are the reasons which you have given us in favour of bimetallism those which have influenced farmers generally in taking up the line they have done in the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture?—I believe so.

Views of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

53,692. Was the resolution of the Chamber arrived at with practical unanimity, or was there a division?—At the last meeting there was an amendment proposed by those who said they had not studied the question sufficiently to express an opinion upon it, and they suggested that the resolution should be delayed.

53,693. Can you give us the numbers voting?—I think about 17 to 9; but the amendment was for delay and was not in direct opposition to the resolution.

53,694. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Was there any direct opposition?—Some of the speakers put forward arguments opposing our views, but no such amendment was proposed.

Witness handed in a number of quotations from historians and economists supplementary to his evidence. See Appendix A. IX.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. Drew.

Mr. James Drew called in and examined.

Mr. J. Drew.

Estates under management.

53,695. (*Lord Cobham.*) You have been factor on the Galloway estates for the last 30 years?—I have.

53,696. What is the acreage of these estates?—80,000 acres.

53,697. Comprising what kind of land?—Various classes of land, embracing higher lying sheep walks, and sharp turnip land, with a small quantity of wheat-growing land, and a limited portion devoted to dairying.

53,698. What is the present rental?—About 28,000*l.*

53,699. Has that fallen to any considerable extent?—Yes, about 20 per cent.

53,700. For the last 16 years you have felt the depression more or less severely?—We have.

Cause of depression. Over-production.

53,701. To what do you ascribe it?—At first to bad seasons, but gradually to foreign competition. The tendency of prices must be downward while the world's productions continue to exceed the world's requirements.

53,702. Have you studied the question of over-production, or are you assuming it?—We see it. This country, which has a vast population compared with its area, is a large purchasing country.

53,703. Do you consider that the over-production of the ordinary staples of consumption, such as wheat, is still going on?—I do.

53,704. What class of farm has suffered most?—The wheat-growing farms.

53,705. The fall in the value of wheat having been greater than in other products?—Yes, it is down practically to zero, and it is now impossible to grow wheat at a profit at present prices.

Strikes.

53,706. What other factor has contributed to the depression?—Dull trade, and I think strikes have also affected it. In our part of the country we find that when trade is brisk on the Clyde and in the large manufacturing centres we have an assurance of better prices than when trade is dull.

53,707-10. Because there is an increased power of spending among the artisans?—The power of spending has been seriously crippled by strikes. The last strike in the coal trade in Scotland, which paralysed the coal and iron industries, had a very serious effect on our cheese industries.

Prices of cattle and sheep.

53,711. Have you any further causes of the depression to point to?—A short time ago we had a very serious fall in the price of sheep and cattle, which we attributed to the inability of the Englishmen to come forward and buy because of the great drought that had taken place, but this year we are very well satisfied with the prices to which stock have risen.

53,712. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Are they still showing a tendency to rise, or are they stationary?—The tendency is to rise.

53,713. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you attribute that to the decrease of foreign imports?—Partly. The imports of cattle have gone down, and the price of beef has increased, while the price of mutton is everything that could be desired, if it is maintained.

53,714. Do ocean freights still keep a low level?—Yes; but I hope that in time the shipowners of the country will not be so thoroughly disinterested as to carry on their trade at a loss. The home producer has also had to incur greater expense in sending his produce to market in the great centres of consumption.

53,715. Has that element of cost increased of late years?—I do not think so; but it has been increased in comparison with the cost of ocean freights.

Competition in dairy produce.

53,716. Have the dairy farmers stood the strain comparatively well?—Yes, till this year, when the prospects are not so bright as they have been.

53,717. What is the cause of that?—It is owing to the enormous imports of both cheese and butter.

53,718. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have they reduced the price of the home-made articles?—Most seriously.

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53,719. (*Lord Cobham.*) Can your farmers not compete successfully with the foreigners in regard to the quality of the butter?—We make the very best butter. We have the largest creameries in the country, but the fall in butter has been so great that the price of the raw material at the creameries has been reduced almost to vanishing point.

53,720. What price do you get for the best butter, as compared with the price of Danish?—I cannot give you the relative prices, but I should think this year the price will be down at least 30 per cent. for the best butter. All that our creameries are offering for milk is 4*d.* per gallon, and it has also to bear the cost of transport.

53,721. Have the creameries been a great advantage to the farmer?—They were a considerable advantage at first, but with the enormous fall that has taken place in the price of the raw material the people are beginning to change their views on the subject.

53,722. Are they selling more milk?—Our ports being closed to foreign cattle, we are going in more for breeding.

Importation of foreign cattle.

53,723. Your farmers are opposed to the introduction of live cattle from abroad?—All our farmers are opposed to it.

53,724. Is the breeding of cattle largely on the increase?—Yes.

53,725. And with good results?—With very satisfactory results.

53,726. Particularly during the present time?—Yes, I speak of the present time.

Reduction in rents.

53,727. What has been the fall in rents generally in your part of the country?—I put it at 20 per cent. all over, varying according to the different classes of land.

53,728. At that reduction, can farms be easily let?—I have had no difficulty in letting farms.

Permanent pasture.

53,729. Is there more land laid down to grass than used to be the case?—We have had no appreciable change in the management, but I am one of those in favour of increasing the area laid down to permanent pasture.

Labour.

53,730. Is labour abundant in your district?—We have a sparse population, but there is sufficient labour, and all hands are fully employed.

Prices of manures.

53,731. Has the fall in prices for farm produce been at all met by the fall in the price of manures and feeding stuffs?—The fall in the prices of manures and feeding stuffs has helped farmers considerably.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,732. Have you anything to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have had some experience of it, and I have had no difficulty in adjusting terms mutually. I have also had experience, not as an arbiter, but as an oversman in carrying out the Act, and I think the complaints against it are more imaginary than real. If the Act is fairly administered, there need be no difficulty in arriving at satisfactory conclusions.

Official referees.

53,733-4. Are you in favour of officially appointed arbiters acting solely?—I am in favour of the appointment by some central body of official valuators, so as to have uniformity of decisions; but I do not agree with a previous witness, Mr. Guild, that it would be possible to map out Scotland into four or five districts, and assign a valuator to each. You must have regard to the localities, and the valuator should have some knowledge of the local circumstances. I do not think the East Lothian farmers would have confidence in a Galloway valuator, and it would be the same with us.

53,735. (*Mr. Clay.*) You are in favour of a single arbiter?—Yes.

53,736. You do not require three arbiters to do what one man can do?—No, and it would save expense.

35,737. And you would keep lawyers out as far as possible?—Yes.

35,738. (*Lord Cobham.*) As far as you know, there is no desire to find fault with the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Not in my country.

Farming capital.

53,739. Are farmers making profits now at the reduced rents?—No, I do not think so. But all sections of the community have had to suffer. The man who has his money invested in property has had to take a smaller return, and farmers must do the same. But to say that farmers are going on in smooth water, I do not believe it, except in isolated cases. This year, however, our stock farmers are very well pleased.

53,740. Has there been a considerable loss of farming capital?—I think there has been a very considerable shrinkage.

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53,741. How is that shown?—In diminished bank deposits, and in the reduction of the capital value of stock from what it was in the great years from 1874 to 1879.

Condition of cultivation.

53,742. Has there been any change in the condition of the land?—I do not think there is any very great change. We have endeavoured to maintain the fertility by assisting our farmers with free manures. That has been a very favourite method of giving deductions.

53,743-4. You think that has made up for the effects of the reduction of stock on the land?—I do not think there has been any reduction in the head of stock, but only in their capital value.

State loans.

53,745. Have you anything in the way of remedies to suggest?—I have no heroic remedies. Good steady trade, with freedom from strikes, ought to have a beneficial effect, and, in time, the probable advance in ocean freights ought to help the home producer. But there are two ways in which the Government could give powerful aid to the owners and occupiers of land—first, by the granting of State loans for the purpose of carrying on agricultural improvements, such as the erection of buildings and drainage, at the current low rates of interest, the repayment of the principal being spread over, say, 40 years. This would be a great boon, and need not cost the Government anything, for the due payment of the interest and the repayment of the instalments of principal would become a first charge upon the land.

53,746. You mean that the loans should be to the proprietors?—Yes. I have never yet been able to see how the central Government could, with proper security, give loans to occupying farmers. I believe there is some such system in America, but I have doubts as to its propriety. But if given to the landlords the repayment of principal and interest would become a first charge on the land.

Burdens on the land.

53,747. Would not the other mortgagees object?—I think not, because the value of the estate would be enhanced by the improvements. There is another thing that calls for immediate redress, and that is the reduction of the burdens on land. At present land has not only to bear its full share of Imperial taxation, but also the whole cost of local government, education, maintenance and repair of roads, poor-law administration, the care of lunatics, police, and all the other items of county and parish government, except a small allowance by the Government for lunatics, the repair of roads, and the half of the pay and clothing of the police, and grants for education and medical relief. It is only reasonable and fair that as land now bears its full share of Imperial taxation, all classes of property—personal, as well as fixed—should contribute, according to their respective amounts, towards the cost of local government and local administration.

53,748. Would you shift the whole of the burden to the Imperial Exchequer or re-apportion it?—I am not prepared to say how it should be done—whether by way of increased grants or by some system under which the Government would directly carry on the management of lunatics and pay the whole of the police, or not, I could not say.

53,749. Would you recommend the abandonment of local administration?—I do not think it would be possible to carry on the whole local affairs without local administration; nor do I think it would be desirable that the Government should carry on all local affairs without local administration.

53,750. So that there must be some local taxation?—Certainly.

53,751. You advocate a reduction rather than a complete transfer of the burdens?—I cannot see how a complete transfer could be effected.

53,752. Are your farmers in favour of any stronger remedies than those you suggest?—Well, I have considerable acquaintance with the farmers. There are a few of them who think you can restore farming prosperity by artificial means; but I have no great faith in their views, and do not pay very much attention to them. Some think you can produce a revolution in farming by some extraordinary changes in the Agricultural Holdings Act, but I have never been able to see how that can be brought about.

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State loans.

53,753. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You wish to see the State lend money to the landlords at a cheaper rate for improvements. Is there a want of agricultural improvements in your district?—A considerable amount is going on.

53,754. But more are wanted?—We have been keeping well up, but cannot provide the money at such rates as the Government can, with safety to themselves, do.

Permanent pasture.

53,755. You wish to see a larger area laid down to grass—do you look upon that as a tenant's or a landlord's question?—As a joint question I think the tenant has too long to wait in an ordinary time for all the advantages from permanent pasture, and he should have some encouragement from the landlord.

53,756. You wish the landlord to help him?—Yes.

53,757. Would you allow the tenant to lay down permanent pasture without the consent of the landlord?—No, but I have never known any instance in which that consent has been withheld.

Importation of foreign cattle.

53,758. Has your district in former years suffered from cattle disease?—We have had a pretty complete immunity from disease, because we were one of the first counties that went in for the system of compulsory slaughter. When pleuro-pneumonia broke out with us we took immediate steps to stamp out the whole stock.

53,759. You believe that the more farmers breed their own stock the better?—Certainly.

53,760. And you think that, taking Great Britain altogether, stock sufficient for the wants of the people could be raised without foreign imports?—I think so.

53,761. Another objection to the importation of foreign cattle is the risk of disease?—Yes, it paralyses the hands of the home producer, who is afraid to move in case disease comes in, and he is swamped by the enormous production.

Creameries.

53,762. As regards your creameries, are they on the co-operative principle?—They are private joint stock companies.

53,763. And they may come to grief?—Unless they can raise the price of milk above fourpence per gallon I can hold out very little prospect of their success.

53,764. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do the farmers take back the skim milk?—Some of them, but we hope, with an immunity from foreign imports, that we will be able to separate our own milk and use the skim milk for the feeding of stock.

53,765. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And that will be of advantage to the landlord in keeping up the fertility of the land?—Yes. The theory at present is that everything that goes to the creamery gives nothing for the land.

53,766. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do the farmers take shares in the creamery?—Not many. But there is one creamery established by a body of farmers.

53,767. How is it paying?—I am afraid it has not been a great success. The older creameries have up to recently been very successful by taking up the making of margarine, which gave them large profits.

The letting of farms.

53,768. You have no difficulty in letting your farms?—None. We have a pretty good reputation for treating tenants fairly, and I have had no difficulty in getting tenants.

53,769. Does that apply to other estates?—Yes. None of the proprietors have any difficulty in letting their land.

Reduced price of manures.

53,770. You spoke of a reduction of 20 per cent.—does that include manures?—No.

53,771. Manures would be an additional reduction?—Yes.

53,772. Has that been generally given?—No, only in isolated cases.

53,773. What would it amount to—five per cent.?—In some cases.

53,774. Will you supply the rentals in decades for 1875, 1885, and 1895?—Yes, I will put in a statement. *The witness subsequently furnished the following statement:—*

RENTAL of the Estates of The Right Hon. The Earl of Galloway, K.T., situated in the County of Wigtown and Stewartry of Kirkcudbright, for the Years ending 11th November, 1874, 1884, and 1894.

		£	s.	d.
1.	Year to 11th November 1874 -	30,784	0	5
2.	" " 1884 -	32,090	12	3
3.	" " 1894 -	27,725	2	3

Certified correct, JAMES DREW.

Condition of labourers.

53,775. You said all classes had suffered by the depression in agriculture?—Except the labouring class. The price of food which they consume is very low, and they are in receipt of good wages.

53,776. Were they ever in a better position?—Never.

53,777. Have you plenty of houses on your estate?—Yes.

53,778. And plenty of labourers?—Sufficient for our work.

Butter-making.

53,779. Is your butter of good quality?—The very finest.

53,780. So that no additional education or technical teaching is necessary in your district?—We have gone in for the systematic teaching of cheese-making for many years.

53,781. Has it improved your quality of cheese?—Yes, it has made it more uniform.

53,782. The want of uniformity is the fault in butter-making?—Yes.

53,783. Is technical teaching necessary for the private butter-makers?—Yes; we did try it. The county technical education committee promoted a system of teaching in butter-making, but we were rather disappointed at the want of interest taken in it.

53,784. Will that state of matters not improve later on, as they see the necessity for it?—I should hope so. But very little butter is made with us.

Large and small farmers compared.

53,785. Is there any difference in the prosperity of small farmers as compared with large farmers?—I do not think so. The small holder is a man able to do with a very small wage bill, and he does not so very much feel the pinch of reduced prices. And in the general run of cases the small holder works his farm with his own family.

53,786. What is the extent of these small holdings?—On the Galloway estate we have no small holdings. On Lord Stair's estate there is a considerable body of small holders, but as a rule there are not many in Wigtownshire.

53,787. And they are more prosperous because they manage their farms with their families?—Yes.

53,788. (*Mr. Clay.*) Your estates in Galloway are all managed by practical men?—Yes.

The letting of farms.

53,789. And there has been no difficulty in making arrangements with the tenants?—None.

53,790. Do you know that the practice of several estates in Scotland is to advertise the farm and let it by tender?—I have no knowledge of it beyond what I see in the newspapers. We have sometimes what is called an "open" farm, where the tenant dies and leaves no one to carry on the farm. In such a case recently the representatives of the late tenant asked me if I would allow them to quit. I said, "by all means," and I advertised the farm and let it within a week after it had been given up, without by any means taking the highest offerer.

53,791. Was it moderately rented before?—We had largely reduced the rent, and got back very much what was the reduction.

Tenure.

53,792. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Are your farms let on lease or on a yearly tenancy?—We have all kinds. If a tenant wants a lease he can get it, or he can go on from year to year, or with a two-years' notice.

53,793. What is the usual length of the lease?—19 years.

Price of cattle.

53,794. (*Mr. Clay.*) Has the farmer been getting good remuneration for fat cattle, considering the price of lean stock?—No, he has not. As a rule, our cattle are all fed on roots, and when the root season is over they are turned into the fat market. There might be a fall in prices at that time, and the farmer would have to submit to it.

53,795. Is yours a feeding or a breeding country?—Feeding.

53,796. Do you not think that farmers in Scotland have been remiss in not breeding more cattle?—I do.

Permanent pasture.

53,797. You never refused your tenants permission to lay down more grass?—Never.

53,798. It is a good principle to go upon?—Very.

53,799. And would you not allow the tenant to lay down grass on his sole responsibility?—I do not think any tenant would be in a position to lay it down on his own responsibility in the general run of cases, because I do not think the farming capital of the country is over abundant. It is rather limited; and a man who wishes to lay down his land in pasture must do it well, or it is better in its original state. A large outlay is

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involved in the improvement, and there is no immediate return from it. Everyone knows that for an increased yield there must be high manurial applications.

State loans.

53,800. Is it not more important now that more grass should be laid down, when cereals are not doing so well?—I think so.

53,801. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You attach great weight to the Government giving advances at a cheap rate to landlords?—I do.

53,802. That question is important in view of the fact that land drained 30 or 40 years ago may soon want it again?—That is so.

53,803. That applies to the whole of Scotland?—To all I know of it.

The letting of farms.

53,804. In regard to the advertising of farms when you want a tenant, is it your opinion that the mode of not doing so would avail on small estates as well as on large?—I am not prepared to say it would. I should rather think it would not. In my experience there is a tendency to prefer a holding on a large estate rather than one on a small estate.

53,805. And you think that on these large estates the sons or other relatives of farmers are anxious to get on the same estate?—Yes, and we generally provide for them if we can.

53,806. Would the county council be a suitable body to draw up a list of official valuers to be approved of?—I think so.

Co-operation.

53,807. Do the tenants in your part of the country co-operate in any other way than in the creameries—for sales, for instance?—Not for sales, but men who can pay cash do co-operate in the purchase of manures.

53,808. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Scotland is now practically free from contagious disease, such as pleuro-pneumonia and foot-and-mouth?—Completely.

Importation of foreign cattle.

53,809. And to make safe against any re-introduction of those diseases you advocate that the admission of foreign cattle into the interior of the country should be prohibited by law?—I do.

53,810. Is that the view of the majority of farmers in Scotland?—It is in my part of the country, and I believe over the most of Scotland.

53,811. And the demand sometimes made with a good deal of noise for the re-introduction of Canadian cattle has no very wide support?—It has no very wide area of support.

Effect of depression.

53,812. You think the depression is due to the fall in prices?—Yes.

53,813. On your estates there appears to be very little depression?—There has been a large reduction of rental.

53,814. But you say there are no unlet farms, and no land has gone out of cultivation, few changes of tenants take place, and that for any vacant farms there is no difficulty in finding suitable and practical tenants?—Yes, but I also said I did not think farmers were making any profit except a bare living.

53,815. On your estates there has been a general reduction of how much?—20 per cent.

53,816. And the farmer is still only making a bare profit?—Yes.

Condition of labourers.

53,817. Are the labouring population very well off?—Yes.

53,818. Are fewer labourers employed in agriculture than was formerly the case?—I think there will be fewer employed in harvest operations, but not otherwise.

53,819. Then in your district the labourers have not, as in some other parts of the country, left the country and gone to the towns?—We have a reduction in the population, but I think it is as large in the small towns and villages as in the rural districts.

53,820. But the fact is that on your estates there are as many labourers, and they are as much employed as formerly?—That is so.

Margarine.

53,821. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you formed any opinion about the questions relating to margarine and butter?—We are very strongly of opinion that all these should be distinctly marked, to enable the buyer to know what he is getting.

53,822. Are there large margarine factories in your district?—Yes.

53,823. Are the margarine factories a benefit to the dairy farmers?—They are a decided loss.

53,824. If co-operation was started on other lines, would it develop the butter trade?—Unless we can have a sensible increase in the value of butter, the prospects of making a profit on butter is very shadowy.

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Creameries.

53,825. (*Lord Cobham.*) Can you give the average price of the butter which the creameries sell?—I cannot say, but the fall has been enormous.

53,826. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is there any difference in the price of the creamery-made butter and that made at home?—Our home butter is not good.

53,827. But does the creamery butter fetch a higher price than the home-made article?—I think it does.

Rent.

53,828. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The average rental of the whole of your estate works out at 7*s.* an acre?—That includes about 55,000 acres of sheep walks. The arable land in Wigtownshire may be put down at 1*l.* an acre.

53,829. And the sheep walks?—At so much per score of sheep; we do not judge by the acre there.

Wages.

53,830. What is the average money wage of the labouring man?—The average wage, with cottage and perquisites, will run from 18*s.* to 1*l.* a week.

53,831. Has the addition to the farmer's labour bill been larger or smaller than the fall in rents?—I do not think it has been so large as the fall in rents, nothing like it.

53,832. You do not employ a great quantity of labour?—Yes, we do.

53,833. What has been the rise in the wages of labourers for the last 20 years?—About 30 per cent.

53,834. And the fall in the rental has been 20 per cent.?—Yes.

Rates.

53,835. Can you say what the burdens on land amount to on your estate?—About 10 per cent., or 2*s.* in 1*l.* Of course, that is exclusive of the income tax.

53,836. That includes the local rates upon owners and occupiers?—Yes. On the Galloway estates the landlord's proportion is 5·554 as against 3·834 for the tenant.

53,837. (*Lord Cobham.*) Does that include the education rate?—Yes.

53,838. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is that more or less than you used to pay?—More. The same amount requires to be raised, and if you reduce the rental the per-centage of assessment must be increased.

53,839. Can you give us the figures of the per-centage 10 or 20 years ago?—No. But the road subvention, for example, was reduced 50 per cent. a few years ago.

53,840. Have you a system of classification of poor rate in your district?—There is no classification, except in one or two parishes.

53,841. Does it give satisfaction in those parishes?—Yes.

53,842. Are they partly urban and partly rural?—Yes.

53,843. You do not find that the urban ratepayers object to the classification?—No.

Depression in 1846.

53,844. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you remember when the corn laws were repealed in 1846, and foreign competition began?—I was very young then.

53,845. Do you say there were no complaints of agricultural depression during the years which followed 1846?—I can remember there were very grievous complaints from 1846 till the Crimean War began.

53,846. And from that time, for the next quarter of a century, there was uninterrupted agricultural prosperity?—That is so.

53,847. And yet it was all under free trade?—Yes, but we had not the new countries which have since been opened up, and are sending in their masses of produce to this country.

53,848. And you had not the new mouths to feed?—But the quantity of foreign produce received is out of all proportion to the increase in the population.

Foreign competition.

53,849. You attribute the fall in prices to foreign competition, with the belief that the world's productions recently have greatly exceeded the world's requirements?—I believe so.

53,850. Can you give us any evidence that it is so?—I think it is the general opinion entertained all over the country, and I think it is a very sound opinion.

53,851. We have been living for 15 years in a period when there has been a continual fall in prices?—We have.

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53,852. Would that encourage the holding of large stocks of corn anywhere, or would it not rather make people chary of doing so?—You must look at the various new countries opened up. The Argentine Republic is producing enormous quantities of wheat, and there has been an enormous extension of railways in America, through which wheat is being showered into this country.

Wheat production in Argentina.

53,853. For the last 10 years there has been no increase in the production of wheat in the United States of America, where there has been an enormous increase of population?—That applies to the United States; but if you go to South America you will find a totally different tale. The Italians in South America are growing large areas of wheat, and they live on practically nothing. They are able to send their grain into this and other countries at prices which we cannot fight against.

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53,854. Are you aware that the price they sell it at here is multiplied to them three or four times in their own money?—That is owing to the appreciative currency; but I am not prepared to go into the question of bimetallism. I think you will find that the price of wheat in the Argentine a few years ago was so small, and the quantity was so small, that it would not pay the cost of export, and it had to be used for locomotive purposes.

53,855. (*Lord Cobham.*) Can you refer us to the source of your information?—No; it is private information, communicated by friends to myself, but I have no doubt of its accuracy.

Witness then withdrew.

Adjourned.

One Hundred and Second Day.

Edinburgh, Monday, 10th June 1895.

PRESENT:

VISCOUNT COBHAM IN THE CHAIR.

Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries.*

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Mr. JAMES FYSHE called in and examined.

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53,856. (*Lord Cobham.*) I think you are a tenant farmer at Treaton, Markinch, Fifeshire?—I am.

53,857. Farming how many acres?—376.

53,858. What kind of land?—All arable.

53,859. I think you came here wishing to make some suggestions in the nature of remedies or palliations of the present agricultural depression, and to say something about the cause of it?—It is much easier to find the cause than to find a remedy.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,860–2. We will take your suggested alterations on the Agricultural Holdings Act first, and run through the main alterations you would propose?—I think that all improvements of a permanent nature ought to be paid for. And that the basis of the valuation should be what the improvements are worth to the farm merely. I would therefore abolish all schedules appended to the present Act. All improvements should be put on the same footing. All buildings, if not consented to by the landlord, should be erected subject to the decision of an official valuator that they are necessary for the farm. If not found necessary they should not be paid for.

Improvements by tenants.

53,863–4. When you say that schedules ought to be abolished do you mean anything done by the tenant to the farm that adds to the letting value should be taken into consideration by the valuator and become the subject of compensation?

(*Mr. Channing.*) With a reservation as to buildings?—I ask you to recommend that if the landlord declines or is unable to put up the buildings for the tenant the tenant shall be recouped for the expense.

53,865. That is to say, if the buildings are, in the opinion of the valuator, necessary for the farm?—Yes.

53,866. (*Mr. Clay.*) And the official referee is to be judge of that?—Yes.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

53,867. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you hold that continuous good farming or cumulative fertility should be a subject of compensation?—Yes. That is a recognised principle already, but the present Act is so cumbersome and so expensive that really it precludes many a tenant from making a claim. We often find that, no matter how absurd a tenant makes his claim, when it gets into his landlord's hands, or those of the landlord's agent—and although it is absurd enough to preclude him going into court, or put him out of court even—the landlord or his agent goes one further, and tops that claim by one quite as absurd, with the result that the litigation and the expense preclude any man of moderate income from prosecuting it.

53,868. How is cumulative fertility recognised under the Act?—We come to that further on: "An inspection of farm to be made by an official valuator at the beginning of the lease, whose report shall be deposited in the Scottish Land Office."

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,869. With regard to home-grown produce consumed on the farm, what alteration would you make on the existing law?—I would make compensation there for stuff which might otherwise have been sold. The present law is frequently evaded in this case. It is quite possible for a man to sell his produce, and buy his neighbour's, and get compensation.

53,870. Is that commonly done?—Yes. I have heard that one man sold his hay to his neighbour, and that his neighbour sold it back, without it ever being lifted.

53,871. You think there is much room for fraud?—I think a man who can sell it honestly surely is as much entitled to compensation as the other.

53,872. Have you any suggestion as to safeguards?—Farm books should be attested by the farmer and principal servants, and any false entry should be considered criminal.

53,873. You think that would be a complete safeguard?—I do.

Penal clauses.

53,874. With regard to penal clauses in leases, what do you say?—Anybody who puts his signature to a lease with a penal clause to it can be made to pay, and in any claim for damages outside of agriculture—in the

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case of any contract not being fulfilled, or anything of that kind—it is necessary to prove that damage has been actually received; whereas in the land the tenant is bound to pay, whether the damage is proved or not.

53,875. Are these clauses used for the purpose of preventing tenants' claims being made?—I do not know, but I do not think it is right.

53,876. Can you quote instances of hardship?—Yes.

53,877. You mean cases where the penal clauses were set up against claims for compensation?—I do.

53,878. Were the penal clauses in those cases of an unjust character? Did the landlord receive no damage?—I do not think any penal clauses do.

Cropping and sale of produce.

53,879. How would you meet the case of mis-cropping?—I would restrict the claims to the actual damage proved to have been done.

53,880. That would come under the amended Act?—Yes; continuous bad cropping must be paid for.

53,881. And any damage produced by mis-cropping, or in any other way, would be a subject of counter-claim?—I do not say about mis-cropping. I do not think any farmer who is a good farmer would hurt his farm. It would be to his own detriment. If you have a bad tenant you may have all the clauses you like in the lease and they will be evaded. A good tenant can do well without the lease, and leave the farm considerably better than he got it.

53,882. You believe, I see, that there should be freedom of cropping and sale of produce, but that at the close of the tenancy, say, during the last three years, a regular course should be followed?—Yes; because a tenant farmer might, through bad temper or ill-feeling, take it upon him to leave his farm all in one crop, which, of course, he would have to pay for.

Length of leases.

53,883. Are you in favour of 19 years' leases?—I think breaks of five years are not desirable from a farming point of view. Some men go into a farm in good condition and wait until the close of the fourth year—do nothing for it—and then give notice to quit. The land is thus deteriorated. I would much rather farm from year to year than have a five years' break. Men will try a farm now for a certain period, and if it is not good give it up. These cautious men try it only to see how it is to work.

53,884. You think if the law was amended as you suggest that they would prefer a 19 years' lease without a break?—Or 15 years.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,885. With regard to the machinery of the Act, is it found to be at present cumbrous and expensive?—It is.

Official valuators.

53,886. Do you suggest any remedy?—I would suggest that so many valuators be appointed by the whole country and paid by Government. They would thus be in a more independent position than if employed by certain parties, and would be more unlikely to do anything unjust—although I do not accuse any of them of being unjust. They may have gone wrong, but I think they only acted according to their ideas.

53,887. How would you appoint them?—Under Government certain valuators would be appointed for certain counties.

53,888. Is it desired that to some extent you should have local valuators?—The very opposite has been acted on. Valuations in Fife have been done by East and West Lothian men. If official valuators were appointed they would soon become acquainted with the ins and outs and customs of a local place.

53,889. Then one of those valuators should be called in whenever the landlord and tenant cannot agree?—If they do not agree about a claim and counter-claim then there is your man to settle it.

53,890. Are the parties to pay any fees at all?—Yes, they should each pay so much.

53,891. You would, I see, give a right of appeal from one valuator to another?—Yes, but I would except the one who made the valuation. I would give an appeal to three other valuators.

53,892. To a court of any three official valuators, who would settle it finally?—Yes.

53,893. Do you consider that a large staff of valuators would be required for the country?—No. I think four or five would cover the whole country of Scotland. In doing so you could select the five men from the portions of the country that would be representative.

53,894. You do not tie yourself down to five?—Certainly not. If three or five were not enough I would say more.

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53,895. Would the Act be worked from Edinburgh?—Yes.

53,896. By a branch office of the Agricultural Department?—Yes.

53,897-9. What would be the duties of such branch Agricultural Department?—They would receive all those official reports when a tenant entered a farm; they would receive those awards and issue them; and they would be the party to write to for an arbiter in any valuation.

53,900. Would you give any appeal from official valuators on matters of fact?—If there was any reason for either party being dissatisfied they would require to say on what ground they were dissatisfied.

53,901. That is to say, the appeal would be to the court in Edinburgh?—Yes, and it would be for them to decide whether they would trouble those other valuators or not.

53,902-3. Would you give an appeal to a legal court on points of law?—No; I would give no appeal to a legal court.

Railway rates.

53,904. Is there much feeling as to railway rates in your district?—They want to have the same rate for home as for foreign produce. They have no right to dictate to the railway companies what they should charge, but they think that produce from a foreign country should not be carried cheaper than the produce of this country.

53,905. Would you provide that hundredweights should be charged for at the same rate as a truck load?—If they charged the foreign produce in the same way, I do not care. They carry the foreign produce at a much cheaper rate than the home produce.

53,906. Why has not complaint been made?—Complaint has been made now and again.

53,907. You think the farmers cannot prevent it?—The farmers are of opinion that the railways carry foreign produce at a much lower rate than home produce.

53,908. I wanted to get from you whether you thought the same rates should be charged no matter what the loads?—If it came in in any small quantities it should be charged at the same rate as those large quantities. I want the train loads to be charged the same price per truck.

53,909. The question is whether the foreign traffic would not go round by sea instead of being carried by rail?—That is their look-out.

53,910. If any did, would the farmers get the benefit?—I think they would, because the goods after going so far by sea could not get to the inland towns without railway carriage. They always take the nearest port for the delivery of the stuff. If it is to be delivered in Scotland they generally come to Glasgow and send it from there to other places. Some foreign cattle that come into the North Sea are carried to Norfolk, and carried cheaper.

53,911. Supposing you had British packed in the same way as foreign produce would not you get the same rates?—A man in Aberdeen last December, I believe, wanted a train and could not get it at the same rate.

53,912. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was it packed in the same way?—Yes.

53,913. (*Lord Cobham.*) You have not made the same offer yourself to the railway companies, in order to test the point?—No.

Local rates.

53,914. Would you alter in any way the incidence of local rates?—Yes. I think land is too highly burdened. For instance, a man takes a farm and pays 500*l.* per year rent. He is charged local rates on all that land in the same parish.

53,915. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is that the general practice?—Others, I believe, are different; but in my parish on the whole rental, with the exception of 10 per cent. off.

(*Witness resuming his reply to Lord Cobham.*)—Another individual may be living in the same parish, with an income of 1,500*l.* from investments, and yet only paying rates on a 19*l.* rental, or only on the rental of his house, whatever that might be.

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53,916–7. You think all personalty should be taxed?—I think so. A farmer takes a farm for a living, and even in these hard times our local taxation is continually increasing.

Sale of cattle by live-weight.

53,918–20. Are cattle sold largely by live weight in Fifeshire?—They are not sold by live weight at all. The salesmen meet the requirements of the Act of Parliament by erecting a weigh-bridge; but we hold that these weigh-bridges, with a dial showing the weight, are not reliable. There was a question asked some time ago in the House of Commons about a sale-yard in Thornton. Mr. Gardiner said it was found the weights were quite right, and that the fault was with the attendant. To satisfy ourselves upon that point, last Monday we had an inspector of weights and measures to test that weight. It was said to be right enough to begin with, but at the finish it was found to be 3 cwt. in the ton wrong. That was through leakage of water. Those dial weighbridges are regulated through water supply, and (*handing in sketch of one*) they are so liable to go out of order that they cannot be relied upon. I believe it is the case in Haddington, when they are selling cattle there, that the butchers frequently tell the auctioneers—"That weight is not right. You had better get it put right." I am not particularising one auctioneer more than another. In fact, the one man whom the question was asked about in Parliament, namely, Swan, has the most reliable weight of any of them, at Haymarket, and that has given great satisfaction. But these are details. We want it made compulsory that our cattle should be sold at so much a hundredweight; that there should be a sworn weigher to see that the weights are correct, and that no sworn weigher will issue a weight unless he is quite certain that his weights are correct.

53,921. (*Mr. Channing.*) This machine, you have said, was 3 cwt. wrong; was that amount against the farmer?—Yes.

53,922. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are machines inspected at present?—An inspector could go there in the middle of the selling and stop the sale, and find if the weights were correct.

53,923–4. Is there much breeding of cattle in Fifeshire?—A good deal, but not so much as there used to be.

Importation of foreign cattle.

53,925. What has caused the change?—Well, it is due, in one way, to the irregularity of the Government's management, I think. Sometimes we are allowed to get Canadian cattle in, and sometimes not.

53,926. You must have certainty in the matter?—Yes. I think we should allow all Canadian store cattle to come in. At any rate, the county does not object to the fat cattle coming in. They come in great quantity. That cannot prove we have got enough. Canadian store cattle should also be allowed to come in, because some cattle are forced up to a fabulous price, and store cattle coming from the States would lower the prices.

53,927–8. Would it not be better to breed in Fifeshire?—Yes; but probably next year, or during the next six months, they might allow Canadians in.

53,929. Do you think a majority of the Fifeshire farmers hold your view?—Well, I should say, yes.

53,930. And you are not afraid of the importation of disease?—From all that we have seen I think we need not.

Sale of foreign produce.

53,931–2. Do you consider that much foreign produce is sold as home produce?—I should think that most of us are pretty well aware of that, because in Glasgow, and, I believe, in Liverpool and London, if you go into a butcher's shop and ask a supply of anything, it is said to be home-grown and home-fed.

53,933. How would you prevent it?—I would licence certain shops to sell foreign beef and mutton, and foreign produce alone.

53,934. Do you consider that foreign produce should be marked?—Yes; but I do not see how the marking would work with beef and mutton. Other products can easily be marked. Anything in a bag can easily be stamped as foreign produce, or in cases of any kind; but some means should be adopted to have an actual commodity sold for what it is.

53,935. Under heavy penalties?—Yes.

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53,936. I think you have some figures to give us as to the beer tax?—Yes. I think these figures will speak for themselves. Before the beer duty was imposed by Mr. Gladstone in 1880 the duty on malt was 2*s.* 7*d.* per bushel, and five per cent. additional, or nearly 22*s.* a quarter. This duty was repealed and one placed on beer equivalent to 25*s.* on each quarter of malt. In 1885 Mr. Childers proposed to add 1*s.* to the duty on each barrel of beer, or 4*s.* on a quarter of malt. That proposal was rejected. In 1889 Mr. Goschen reduced the standard gravity of beer from 57 to 55 degrees, and so, without adding anything, really added another 1*s.* Last year Sir William Harcourt added 6*d.* making the tax 27*s.* a quarter; in short, barley growers find their duty, he believed, more than increased from 22*s.* to 27*s.*, or nearly 30 per cent. in 13 years. Along with the reduction from 57 to 55 degrees, the growers find that the brewers are using much lighter barley, mostly foreign barley, I believe, and forcing down the price of the barley in this country. In addition to that, there is a large quantity of sugar being used. There is an increase of sugar since 1881 of 1,680,688 cwts. used in brewing, or an increased displacement of malt of 534,344 quarters, or roughly speaking, over half a million quarters of malt in 13 years. Last year there was used in brewing 2,194,030 cwts. of sugar, or a displacement of 1,097,015 quarters of malt.

Beer duty.

Tax on barley and sugar.

53,937. Do you suggest that foreign sugar or barley should be taxed, or both?—We are told by societies of philanthropists, local vetoists, &c., that brewing and distilling is a very evil trade, that it is the cause of all our misery, and degradation, fills our gaols, and is the cause of all our crime. We do not object to the taxes, but if this trade is so deleterious to the country and its inhabitants I think the whole of the whisky in the whole country ought to be made from the produce of the country that it so hurts. Sugar is now going down to such a price that it is much cheaper to use. Therefore the foreigner is getting the benefit of all this.

53,938. You would tax all sugar?—I would make it an adulterant and prohibit it in brewing altogether.

53,939. You would make it a criminal offence?—Yes.

53,940. And as to foreign barley?—I would tax it. It is a protected trade already.

53,941. At what stage would you tax it?—In the raw state. There is no barley used for human food in this country. I would tax what goes for whisky and beer.

53,942. That is to say, you would put foreign barley on the same footing as sugar, and so far as it is used for spirits or beer you call it an adulterant, and tax it as such?—Yes. I believe that sugar to a large extent is used in England by some of those brewers who have so many tied houses. The best brewers dare not use sugar, for I believe beer exported will not keep when made with sugar. In order to make the best beer I believe it is thoroughly requisite that the best barley should be used, and hops, of course. The increase of sugar where this is going on speaks for itself. These figures are from Somerset House.

53,943. How do you account for the increase in the use of sugar in brewing?—I believe it is a question of the price of rye. When rye ran up to a large price other ingredients were used.

53,944. Have you anything else to say on that subject?—I believe there is also a large importation of Berlin spirit, which by some authorities is considered pure; but it is well known that it is used for fortifying weak whisky, and we are led to believe that it is greatly used in all our feeing markets, and has the effect of making people nearly mad.

53,945. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Is there anything to show the importation of it into this country?—I have not looked it up.

Cause of depression.

53,946. (*Lord Cobham.*) What in your opinion is the principal cause of the agricultural depression?—High rents, low prices, foreign competition, and general depression of trade; and of course we cannot blind ourselves to the fact that tenant farmers have themselves to blame for those high rents.

Rents.

53,947. Do you mean the present or former rents?—I think the present rents are too high. But when you find one farm let at 200*l.* of a rise and the other going to be let at 40*s.* an acre, and an offer comes in for 50*s.* an acre, in one week, it is difficult to find a remedy, unless this court is directed to take possession of the

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liberty of the subject and allow valuators to say, "Well, "Mr. Landlord, there is the value of your land. You "can take what tenant you like."

53,948. Do you say he should fix the rent?—I am only saying that as to the valuation. We have plenty of depression, and the case is, as we all know, what is stated, and yet we have plenty of competition for farms —any amount of competition—and, notwithstanding all that depression and the inquiry you may make, there is the fact.

Farming capital.

53,949. We are told that the land is as well held as in past times. Do you think there is any diminution of the amount of capital in land?—Wherever farmers are hard run it is generally found that their land is not so well farmed and that their stock is reduced in quantity and quality.

53,950. Do you see that in Fifeshire?—My locality is rather celebrated for good stock; but in other places and, in particular, farms where the farmers have gone to the wall, if you attend the sales you generally find the state of matters to be what I state.

53,951. But in your own district your experience hardly bears out what you say?—There is a very good class of stock in it, although I believe the money is not so plentiful in it as it used to be.

53,952. Do Scotch tenant farmers as a rule put all their available capital into their farm?—Those who are farmers have no hesitation in putting all their capital into the farm; also those who have a love for it.

53,953. If there has been a substantial loss of capital it is sure to be shown in the reduced condition of the farm and the stock kept on it?—Generally.

53,954. If we find no great difference the inference is that it is all right?—It may mean that he has not reduced his capital. They are very strong in faith, and always hope for better times.

Fertilizers' Act.

53,955. As to foreign competition, I think you have given your views as to the best way of meeting that as regards barley. Have you any other suggestion to make?—No. It is needless speaking about protection, although it is wanted. I think the farmers would do well to pay strict attention to the Fertilizers Act passed in 1893, and take full advantage of it. I am informed that to a great extent it is not taken advantage of as it ought to be. While I would not like to state that all manure merchants are dishonest, still it is a fact that they are charging too much for their manures.

53,956. Have you tried to meet that by co-operation?—Farmers have attempted co-operation, but I have never been a member of such a body.

53,957. Are you able by strict supervision to keep the merchants up to the mark?—Yes, with a fair profit—or, rather, giving them the profit that the Highland and Agricultural Society fixes every year. It is said they can all sell at that price.

Coal strikes.

53,958–9. Have you suffered from the depression of trade?—I have suffered from coal strikes. The colliers were great beaf-eaters at one time and very ready to spend money. Now they are very short of money. I live in a colliery district. They are not getting full time, and, of course, their money is short. I am surrounded by collieries on one side.

Cost of labour.

53,960. The losses incurred by farmers through the diminution of prices have not at all been made up by diminution in the cost of labour?—No. The cost of labour is rather increasing.

53,961. Is it a substantial difficulty?—It is very difficult to get good servants in Fifeshire. We are not keeping any fewer of the class, but a lot of them are drifted into public works, and coal-pits, and railways, and forcing wages up. I think the farmers round about me are keeping the same staff of men and female workers as they used to have. Female labourers are hard to get.

Condition of labourers.

53,962. Has the condition of agricultural labourers improved?—I think all servants were never better treated or more dissatisfied.

53,963. With their wages or cottages?—They have too many wants foisted on to them by other people who have some extraordinary desire to be philanthropic at other people's expense.

53,964. Are they more particular in their way of living and standard of comfort?—Yes.

53,965. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You think all tenancies should be from year to year?—Rather than a 15 years' lease.

53,965*a*. And that the tenant should, with the approbation of a valuator, put up buildings on his farm?—Certainly, if that valuator said they were desirable for the working of the farm.

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Improvements by tenants.

53,966. You would also enable him to lay down land in permanent pasture without the consent of his landlord?—That would come to be a question to be decided at the end of the lease. I would allow it without the consent of the valuator.

Freedom of cropping.

53,967. Would you have freedom of cropping?—I would have freedom of cropping in those yearly leases.

Importation of foreign cattle.

53,968. You said you thought the importation of Canadian store cattle should be allowed. Did you ever suffer from disease in the locality of Fife?—Yes; but we hold that we got the disease from somewhere else than these cattle. I would like to run the risk of these cattle coming in instead of breeding them here.

53,969–70. You are aware that pleuro-pneumonia may be in animals for a considerable time; they might spread it over many?—We are not satisfied in our own minds that Canadian cattle had pleuro.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

53,971. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would you include oats consumed by the farm horses in the produce to be allowed for?—Yes; I would allow compensation for oats consumed by farm horses.

53,972. Are you not afraid that there would be in these allowances great chances of fraud?—We must act on the basis that the farmers have not a monopoly of the fraudulent spirit.

53,973. Do farmers, as a rule, keep books in Scotland?—Yes; now, I think.

Official valuators.

53,974. That does not hold in the south, I think. With regard to the valuators, must they not be necessarily local men to understand local customs and requirements?—I pointed out to you that in two cases we had decided they were not local men.

53,975. Do you think there would be no difficulty, then, as to locality?—Yes.

53,976. As valuations come on at the same time, do not you think there might not be enough valuators?—There are very few valuations in Scotland for compensation in any one year. You may turn up five or six in one year. Although there were a score of them, what about it?

53,977. Would you require that those valuators engaged in no other business?—Yes.

53,978. That would necessitate high salaries?—Yes.

53,979. What class would you take them from?—From men who had been trained as valuators of farm produce and farm compensation.

Local rates.

53,980. With regard to rates, could you tell me whether rates have increased during the last 10 years?—Yes. The local rates have always a tendency to increase, and they will be increased this year.

53,981. Can you give the rate 10 years ago and now on your farm?—The present rate is 1*s.* 9*d.* a 1*l.* That includes the local rates.

53,982. Ten years ago, what was the rate on the same farm?—I think it would be 2*d.* per 1*l.* less.

53,983. And what has been increased?—Education. Sometimes we have to send a lunatic to the asylum which has the effect of raising the rates. It is a small parish, and 1*d.* per 1*l.* only gets 30*l.* of rates. So that we are liable to be fluctuating.

53,984. You say that on the whole rates have increased?—Yes.

53,985. Half the rates are paid by the landlord?—Yes. That is calculated in the rent to be paid by the tenant.

Barley growing.

53,986. Have you heard that barley is not so good in recent years for brewing purposes?—I have heard it stated, but I do not believe it.

53,987. It is stated that brewers have used foreign barley and sugar for their purposes?—I do not think so.

53,988. Have the crops of barley been less of recent years, so that brewers could not depend on the supply?—I do not think that.

Tax on barley and sugar.

53,989. Suppose you put a tax on sugar and barley in a bad season, would it not raise the price of beer to an alarming extent?—I would be inclined to run the risk.

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53,990. Is whisky at all made with sugar?—No; but it is largely made from Indian corn. Molasses, I believe, is used for colouring. In many distilleries sugar is used in making whisky, but not in this locality.

53,991. Do you not think it would be sufficient if brewers were obliged to declare that their manufacture was composed of sugar and a substitute for hops?—They are bound now to declare that.

53,992. The brewers do not sell the article?—The seller of the article has no right to tamper with beer after it has left the brewery. The London men got badly fined for that.

Rents.

53,993. As to rents, have they fallen or been raised within the last 10 years?—Fallen.

53,994. To what extent?—I should say 10 per cent.

53,995. Generally throughout your locality?—Yes.

53,996. The actual rent per acre paid on your farm now is how much?—26*s.* 6*d.*

53,997. And 10 years ago what was it?—29*s.*

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

53,998. And the produce 10 years ago?—It was by the fiars prices then. I cannot say.

Permanent pasture.

53,999. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose your idea as to the Agricultural Holdings Act in advocating that permanent pastures of land be laid down, is that that is the best means of increasing its fertility?—I have found that out myself by keeping my land lying in grass for three or four years.

54,000. Your experience is that nothing will increase the fertility of the soil more than keeping it in grass, and keeping sheep upon it? You think that is the best way?—Yes, especially in the case of a farm that is a considerable distance from the station, and not suitable for growing potatoes, as some of our Dunbar friends do.

54,001. You think keeping land in grass greatly increases the fertility of the soil, and that is one of the principal reasons why you consider that pasture should have a distinct claim made for it?—It will show that itself. The incoming tenant will discover that it is richer and will afford more cropping.

54,002. And he will have increased the value per acre?—Yes; and in the event of land generally being further depressed, this land will be of more value then.

54,003. That permanent pasture used to be in the old Act of 1883?—Yes.

54,004. You want it to come into the regular work of the arbiter or referee, giving full scope for continuous good farming?—Yes.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

54,005. I think you advocate also that home-grown corn—what is grown on the land—should be allowed for by the arbiter if consumed on the farm?—Yes.

54,006. You say the farm-book, the steward, and other evidence, should be produced as a safeguard?—That is my opinion.

54,007. Do you know that most farmers that are in high districts never sell corn, and that the whole produced goes into the land?—Yes.

54,008. In that case would it not be very difficult to fix the quarters per acre?—I should think so.

Official referees.

54,009. In regard to the official referees, you would not tie them down to four or five in Scotland if more were required?—No; although my own opinion is that that would be enough to do the work.

54,010. You think those men should be practical men, trained to agriculture—trained men in Scotland, the same as Commissioners chosen by the Government?—Yes.

54,011. And these men would, after experience, you think, give an equal award and, through having no other business to attend to, become familiar with the work?—I hold they would be in a more independent position if appointed by the Government and paid by the Government, and if the parties using them were charged fees.

54,012. You think they should be men above suspicion?—I think there would then be no bias in any way, and that they would be looked upon by the parties employing them with more confidence.

54,013. You would let the expenses go, as in the Court of Session, against the person who failed to make out his case? Or to the person who came first for arbitration?—I would be inclined to charge each alike. If two men make up their mind to make a claim when there is only one arbiter, I think it would do away with the claims made hitherto.

54,014. If the man who made the claim was found to be wrong, do you not think that if he were held in expenses that would be a wholesome deterrent?—I would hold that if the award should be equal, the fee should be equal.

54,015. I agree with you in that. But if the award was not equal?—If the man was making an absurd claim I would then, whether he is landlord or tenant, give the referee the right to issue an award of the expenses, less or more, to either one or other.

54,016. Regarding the appeal, you said you would not allow it to any legal court. Would you allow the arbiter or referee to have the opportunity of consulting counsel to direct them in any point of law?—I think the fewer legal gentlemen you have in connexion with agricultural arbitration the better.

54,017. But many a time legal expenses are incurred in connexion with small leases, when the official referee had the opportunity of going in a case of law, where he is not qualified himself, to lay it before counsel?—I have no objection to him consulting a lawyer.

Tax on barley and sugar.

54,018. You would say that would be advantageous sometimes to save expense?—Yes.

54,019. Regarding the malt tax, you would like to see it brought back to its old place again?—Yes. Although the tendency in this country is to put the tax on the finished article.

54,020. If you could not bring it back, you think a duty might be put on foreign barley used for brewing?—Yes.

54,021. And put a duty on sugar that was used in beer?—Yes. A cwt. of beer is equal to four bushels of malt. The latter will cost 18*s.*, and the cwt. of sugar about 9*s.*

54,022. You are of opinion that if foreign barley used for beer were taxed, it would not be a violation of free trade. You think that such luxuries should be assessed to keep up the revenue of the country?—Yes; I think so.

54,023. Our whisky is assessed, and why should not beer be assessed?—It is in plain terms that it is a luxury and considered a dangerous luxury, and I think it should be made from the products of our own country, and give the country the benefit of the duty.

54,024. When it is coming for the luxury of the general community from abroad you would tax it?—Yes. It is not a question of tenant farmers, because if barley was raised 10*s.* or 5*s.* a quarter in five years, the landlords would have the best of the law.

Rents.

54,025. You said something about the high rents that our own class have been giving for land, and so running it up. Do you think there is anything in the sale of produce to warrant these high rents?—They are strong in hope, I think.

54,026. In a sense, it is what you consider false or unwise competition?—It is certainly unwise.

Importation of foreign cattle.

54,027. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you figures as to how many members of the Windygates took part in this discussion as to the importation of Canadian cattle?—We had a meeting of 23 or 24. That number is representative, as you know, and we were unanimous on that.

54,028. How many members are there in the society?—We have 180 in our society.

54,029. I thought you said you spoke for the whole Society?—I beg your pardon. I am speaking of the people round about me, irrespective of the Windygates Society.

54,030. Since Canadian cattle stopped we have been clear of disease?—Yes, but we were clear of disease before Canadian cattle were stopped.

54,031. For some time?—Yes.

Claims and counter-claims.

54,032. You would allow a landlord to claim whether a tenant makes a claim or not?—Certainly.

54,033. You have not told us your views as to the date of putting in claim and counter-claim?—I would make it compulsory to put it in the same day.

54,034. And prior to or after the termination of the lease?—Within a certain time after the termination of the lease for both.

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54,035. Would there not be a tendency on the part of the landlord, not knowing what his tenant was to claim, to make larger claims than he might if he knew what his tenant was going to charge?—From what we have seen, the landlord, aided by his agent, has been as big a tra..sgressor in that way as the tenant farmer, and on that account I would say it should be put into the hands of a neutral man on the same day.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,036. Would you allow, as is at present done, a landlord and tenant, at the commencement of the lease making what they call a fair, reasonable agreement, and that being held to come in place of the Act?—Those agreements are easily made on the landlord's side at the beginning of a lease, because if the tenant does not agree to it he is merely told that he can apply elsewhere.

54,037. Is that not a business-like way of doing things?—From the excessive competition for farms, I should say no.

54,038. I suppose you are acquainted with the details of compensation on the most important and best-managed estates in Scotland?—Yes.

54,039. Do you consider these fair agreements?—Yes, to the best of their ability; but when they abolish schedules I would abolish these.

54,040. You make it illegal for a landlord and tenant to come to an agreement at the beginning of the lease?—It is hard to say what would be illegal.

54,041. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you say that the amended Agricultural Holdings Act should override all agreements made at the instance of either the tenant or the landlord?—I think so. There is an inclination for most people to contract themselves outside these Acts, and I do not think it is right.

54,042. But if there is an agreement and either party finds it suits him to repudiate the agreement and appeal to the Act it should be open to him to do so at the end of the lease?—I would rather not allow the agreement to be made so as to allow people to override it.

54,043. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You think there should be no opportunity for schedules?—I would say that there should be no right to allow a landlord to contract himself outside of the Act of Parliament, as has been tried in several cases.

54,044. That question virtually carries out the entire question, making it illegal, really, to make an agreement?—Yes.

Freedom of sale.

54,045. In your freedom of sale of produce do you lay down that an equivalent should be brought on to the land?—Yes. No one will sell all his produce without bringing compensation in.

Assessment to rates.

54,046. Do you approve of the mode of classification for assessment in Scotland?—As far as tenant farming is concerned, I object, and consider there should be more equalisation.

Sale of cattle by live-weight.

54,047. About the weight of cattle, would you enable any person who desired to sell his cattle not by weight in those auction marts to do so, or would you make it that every animal to be sold should be weighed?—I was told by an auctioneer the other day that if one man stuck to selling by weight and the other was allowed to depart from it, he would be boycotted.

54,048. (*Mr. Clay.*) Would you have it in the same way as America, and there is no dispute there?—Yes.

54,049. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would you object to the landlord having the right during the tenancy to get an injunction from the Court against bad farming or robbing the land?—I think it would be quite right.

54,050. I think that is when men do not fulfil the agreement made at the beginning?—That is so.

The fixing of rent.

54,051. About rents, I think you said in Fifeshire rents were at one time fixed by fiars prices?—The rent of the farm I am on was, before I took it, fixed by fiars prices as to certain agricultural products.

54,052. Is it your opinion that it would be better to have rents by valuation than competition?—I do not say that, because I fail to see how you can take possession of people's rights and ask them to offer more or less for a farm than what you wish.

54,053. But suppose you could reduce to valuation this productive power of a farm and take that as the basis of a rent at the beginning of a tenancy, would that meet your views?—I do not think that could be done.

54,054. You think there is no way of stopping the extreme competition for farms?—Unless what I must term the punishment that occurs to the individual from loss of money acts as an example to others.

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54,055. Would a valuation of the productive power of a farm be approved by any large number of farmers?—I could not say.

54,056. No meetings or resolutions have taken that course?—No. I think the majority of tenant farmers would like to reserve to themselves the amount they would give for a farm.

54,057. There has been no movement in to get rent by a fixed valuation?—Not that I am aware of, unless tenants were willing to allow any competition to value their rents for the next or sitting rent.

54,058. That would be a valuation of tenants' improvements?—Yes.

54,059. When he felt he was too highly rented some landlords have allowed a competent party to value the land, and then he may have made it less; but at the end of the lease it has been left to a valuator to say whether the rent should be increased or not?—That is so.

54,060. (*Captain Thomas.*) Would you make that compulsory?—No.

54,061. You would give a right to make a valuation?—If he is to remain there it is quite possible they might appoint a valuator to say what the continued rent is to be, and he should have the benefit of his own improvements; and that would be put in the valuator's hands; and the tenant would take care that he was not rented upon his own improvements.

54,062. It would suffer payment to expire at the termination of the lease?—If a man is going to sit he should not get compensation, but he should not be rented upon his own improvements.

Farming capital.

54,063. Do you think the capital of the great majority of tenant farmers has been reduced in recent years?—Yes.

54,064. Did they borrow from banks?—I do not think they borrowed from banks, because in Scotland it is a well-known fact that banks will not trust farmers.

54,065. (*Mr. Everett.*) Was that in the old times?—That is of late.

54,066. How about stock on farms?—It is difficult to say whether there is less stock or not on farms, but a lot of the stock belongs to dealers and graziers. They would rather let their grass than be at the expense of stocking it themselves.

Fertilizers' Act.

54,067. About the Fertilisers' Act, you think that would be a satisfactory Act if properly worked?—It would be a very useful Act.

54,068. If the farmers studied the elements of the different manures they would be able to save very much?—If he studied the recommendation put upon manures he would be able to tell the price, and so save himself paying too much. On the other hand, if the seller does not sell according to his analysis, he can be punished, or the tenant can send back the stuff.

54,069. What about feeding stuffs?—Cakes and feeding stuffs have been very useful, and I am informed by the analysts that they are not enough taken advantage of.

54,070. Every man is not an analyst?—But you can ask what the analysis means.

Rates.

54,071. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What amount of rates do you pay on your farm?—25*l.* or 26*l.*

54,072. What is the extent of it?—376 acres.

54,073. Have they gone up in your town of late years?—They have gone up rather than down.

54,074. Have you given the wages of the labourers in your district?—No.

54,075. What are they?—My men are getting 19*s.* a week.

54,076. Is that a considerable rise?—Yes. That is exclusive of house rent and other perquisites, such as garden, nothing for coals or coal-driving, and no rates.

54,077. How much do you think the whole wage comes to in money value?—I should say about 22*s.*

54,078. Do you think the rise in wages is larger than the reduction in your rent?—I think there is a larger increase in the labour bill, and it is still increasing.

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54,079. Do you think it would be desirable to reduce the labour bill still more?—I do not think it is possible.

54,080. Do you think competition for farms will bring its own remedy for high rents in time?—It is generally considered so.

Changes of tenancy.

54,081. Have there been many changes of tenancies in your district of late years?—The late tenants have stayed on pretty well.

54,082. How many changes have there been?—I think in seven or eight farms during the last ten years there were six farms vacated.

54,082*a*. On account of the tenants losing their capital?—Yes, in one case. In the other cases the farms were too dear, and the farmers were losing money.

54,083. (*Mr. Everett.*) You said one farmer in particular had lost his capital. What kind of farm was it?—The same as mine, arable and feeding.

Store cattle.

54,084. Is there a scarcity of store cattle in your district?—There is a scarcity of cattle.

54,085. Would you say store cattle would pay breeders?—Yes.

54,086. You think store cattle are being sold at fabulous prices as compared to fat cattle?—Yes.

54,087. Are these fabulous prices likely to be maintained?—They are likely to lead to farmers breeding more at home.

54,088. That, of course, would reduce the present prices?—Certainly.

Importation of foreign cattle.

54,089. Would you buy Canadian store cattle in preference to home-bred cattle?—Of late I think I would.

54,090. If a breeder did so you would be hit very hard?—I regret to say there is not enough attention paid to breeding.

54,091. If all the breeders bought Canadian, would not that tend to lower the quality of English and Scotch beef?—I do not think so. I think they are better in quality, in many cases, than imported cattle.

54,092. How long do you keep Canadian cattle before sending them to market?—About six months. There is a better class of cattle there than in many places in Scotland. In many places where they breed calves in Scotland they are not good enough; they are mongrels in many cases.

54,093. (*Mr. Everett.*) Did I understand you, in regard to railway rates, to say that the railway companies carried the Canadian cattle from the Scotch ports to England cheaper than they would carry your local cattle?—Yes.

54,094. That certainly is a remarkable instance of preferential rates. There is no difference in the packing of foreign cattle?—No. But there is a contract with the shippers.

54,095. You would like those Canadian cattle to come in free?—Yes.

54,096. You are a buyer of store cattle and a grazier and the barley you would like to be protected because you grow barley and sell barley?—My proposition is that the country should get the benefit of that trade, seeing that it is a protected and fixed trade already. I do not see what right they have for making beer more than other things.

54,097. You think protection affects that trade differently from others?—Yes.

Tax on barley.

54,098. Was not it the case before the repeal of the malt tax that we sold wheat for more than barley?—Yes.

54,099. Has not wheat gone down more than barley?—Yes.

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54,100. Does not that look as if something had forced all things down?—You cannot help yourself in wheat, on account of the extraordinary importation.

54,101. You do not attribute it so much to the change of importation as to the change of the duty as to barley?—I do not.

54,102. We have the natural advantage for barley?—Yes.

Fall in prices.

54,103. Were farmers doing pretty well, generally, in Scotland till 15 or 20 years ago, notwithstanding there was great competition for farms?—Yes. The prices from the various products were so much higher that they could afford to pay more.

54,104. The reduction has been more in the price of produce than land?—Yes.

54,105. Do you know anything about the currency question?—I am not up in it.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,106. (*Lord Cobham.*) I understand you to say that you wish the schedules of the present Act to be abolished, and compensation for accumulated fertility to be paid. Do you mean that the tenants' outlay in feeding stuffs and manures should be considered under the common head of accumulated fertility?—Yes.

The fixing of rent.

54,107. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding the sitting tenant, I do not think you made it very clear. You say, I think, that the sitting tenant should not be rented upon his improvements?—I said so.

54,108. You would not say that the farm should be valued as it stands with the improvements, and get a sum on account of the money value of the improvements to be shared, then deduct from the rent put upon the farm the interest of the money for those improvements, instead of asking the landlord to pay them?—I have already said that the state of the farm should be written out by the official valuator at the beginning of the lease, and lodged in its proper office, and that any man valuing a farm at the expiry of the lease would have this report in his hands, and see what state the farm was in then and now. If the farm was better the rent should not be raised on that account.

54,109. (*Lord Cobham.*) You would leave the official valuator to say what the rent should be, having regard to the increased fertility of the farm affected by the tenant?—If the times are the same as they were when the farm was taken, and the farm the same by the report, it is an easy matter to say what the rent is to be, if it is his wish and the landlord's wish that he continue the occupancy. If it is his wish to continue the occupancy, then the report is there, and the value or improved value can be seen.

54,110. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Then the rent is not to be fixed by the landlord and tenant?—It is only if they cannot agree between themselves that the matter will be left to this valuator, if they wish.

54,111. (*Mr. Clay.*) It would be left by the landlord to the tenant to get the valuation of the farm, less the interest on the improvements?—I mean that the man who is to sit there as tenant should not be rented upon his improvements unless he is to get paid for these improvements at the same time.

54,112. The landlord would be able to take the amount of the improvements until the 19th year?—The rent in that case would be according to the condition of the farm, and the tenant would draw interest for his improvements.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. J. Ballingall.

Mr. JOHN BALLINGALL called in and examined.

Mr. J. Ballingall.

54,113. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a farmer at Dunbog?—I am. I have been all my life engaged in agriculture.

Particulars of witness' farm.

54,114. What kind of land do you hold?—I hold about 1,200 acres of arable land, besides hill land and occasional grazings.

54,115. Where is this?—In the eastern division of Fife.

54,116. Your present rent is how much?—It is 1,500*l.* at present.

54,117. How does that compare with 15 years ago?—15 years ago my rent on the books was 2,400*l.*, subject, I believe, to some occasional deductions, by the generosity of the landlord.

54,118. Did your rent fall to that extent on a renewal of your lease?—By an arrangement.

54,119. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that for the same land?—A little was taken off.

54,120. (*Lord Cobham.*) Have you acted as valuator under the Agricultural Holdings Act on land, farm stock, and crops?—Yes.

54,121. Is there much depression in your district?—Yes.

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Mr. J. Ballingall.
10 June 1895.
Rents.

54,122. Have rents generally fallen in a similar proportion to your rent?—Yes.

54,123. That is to say, about 40 per cent.?—I think so.

54,124 What is the general value of land in your district?—I should say 20*s.* to 28*s.*

4,125. Has rent fallen on all classes of land?—Yes, but not so much as a whole as for land with some disadvantages.

54,126. And you say that rents have on the average fallen about 40 per cent.?—I think so, and some have fallen more. Some years ago I made up a calculation, and that would very nearly be what it came to.

54,127. That shows rather a special fall of rents as compared with other parts of Scotland we have had evidence from?—The two largest and best farms adjoining mine are 40 per cent.

54,128. Is your farm up to the average of the district?—Thereabout.

Effect of the depression.

53,129. Have the farmers suffered themselves?—Yes, very severely.

54,130. Mainly, I suppose, from the fall in prices?—Yes. At first it was supposed to be bad seasons, and everyone was hopeful, but it became chronic and worse, and I think in that change the farmers' capital was passing out of their hands very quickly.

54,131. Has the land deteriorated in condition?—In a marked way. Anyone who knows the work would observe it in passing along the roads.

54,132. With all this heavy reduction of rent are the farmers now holding their own?—I will not say so much.

54,133. Are there still applications for reduction of rent?—Well, the rent must fall ultimately to what will be taken out of it.

54,134. Has much land gone out of cultivation?—I do not think so.

54,135. Is much going into grass?—Strong lands are going into good grass, but not in hill farms.

Labourers.

54,136. Are the labourers leaving the district to any extent?—To a considerable extent, but there is always abundance of male labourers.

54,137. Have you sufficient cottages?—We have.

Wages.

54,138. What about wages?—Their wages are rising, and, besides, the wage does not represent now as much labour as formerly.

54,139. Is that because hours are less?—Hours are less, and diligence is less. They take it easier nowadays than they used to do.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,140. Have you something to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act? I think you follow the amendments placed before us by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes. I think this must have come before you many times already.

Sale by live-weight.

54,141-2. Is there a strong opinion in your district as to the sale of animals by live weight?—There is a growing opinion that it would be well to sell them by the live weight.

54,143. Has there been any expression of opinion in your district?—I was at a meeting of influential farmers in Cupar, and resolutions were passed unanimously that they thought it desirable to have cattle sold by live weight at a rate per cwt.

Duty on potatoes in America.

54,144. Have you suffered from the importation duty put on potatoes by the United States?—There has been a good deal of complaint in recent seasons. The Americans have not been regular. They can take a great deal of our potatoes. The reduced duty is 23*s.* 4*d.* per ton, and it is virtually prohibitory. Farmers generally considered it unfair.

54,145. What was the duty formerly?—It was nearly 40*s.*

54,146. Is there a considerable importation in any one year?—It seems to be somewhat fitful, but some years they could take a great deal from us. We are prevented in almost any year by that duty.

State loans.

54,147. You wish to see the granting of State loans extended. Do you mean to landlords and tenants?—I do not know what security tenants could give, but I think it is desirable landlords should have loans where they cannot face desirable improvements.

54,148. If the tenants could give good security would you allow them to borrow public money?—I would like the present system of lending public money extended, but at a lower rate of interest, and extending redemption over a longer number of years.

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54,149. Do you consider that in your part of the country landlords are a good deal hampered in the provision of improvements on their property for want of money?—I think so.

54,150. Has farming deteriorated in consequence?—In Fife, landlords have maintained their farms up to the mark. When land began to fall out of cultivation they provided fencing; water for fields; improved sanitary accommodation for cottages; and in all these things, I think, have done fair. But in regard to their position, their incomes must be terribly reduced. They have not only the reduced rents, but they have more rates to meet, and so their free income is reduced.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,151. Have you had much employment as valuator under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—A few cases. I believe people are deterred from arbitrations very much on account of the expense.

54,152-4. To whom?—To both parties, but particularly to tenants and those whose claims would be only small. I should like to say something about cumulative fertility and the satisfaction the Act has given. The administration of the Act has not given the satisfaction that we expected from it. It has failed particularly in the way it has been carried out, which offers a premium to moderate or inferior farming, while the liberal farmer who supplies large quantities of manure for a long series of years does not perhaps get justice. I think it simply acts as a deterrent against high farming in the way in which it has been administered. In point of fact the man who only gives enough manure to keep the land from poverty gets compensation, and the other man gets his compensation in the same proportion. It seems grossly unfair, because it is plain on the road-side that there is a fertility in some land that will stand for half or more of a long lease, and they get no more, according to the proportion they spend, than another man whose land is poor and gets but little.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,155. How would you provide for the compensation being paid at the end of the lease? In a lump sum?—I think that is the only way.

54,156. How would you calculate it?—I think cumulative fertility should be a calculation from the outlays, at a rate per ton per cwt.—at a higher rate for those who are giving the land the largest quantities of purchased manure.

54,157. The tenant's whole outlay on his land would be brought into consideration?—I understand cumulative fertility may be calculated at a rate, and extending over a long period of time.

54,158. But take the case of an unskilful farmer who spent a large amount of money upon the farm and feeding stuffs without correspondingly adding to its fertility of his farm, you would leave it to the arbiter to estimate the result?—Entirely to the arbiter's opinion. In point of fact the arbiters have not distinguished between the two systems. The liberal farmer has not come off equal or as well as the man who has farmed indifferently.

54,159. Owing to the arbiters going too much upon actual outlay?—Yes; absolutely upon a scale.

54,160. Have the arbiters in Fife agreed as to a scale?—There has been no general agreement. Apparently their awards are irregular.

54,161. Is compensation to be paid in the case of a farmer who wants to continue his tenancy?—In the present system he makes a calculation on the basis that there is no claim. He should get advantage in the rent. The fertility he has in the land should be calculated, and he should get his farm at a smaller rent than an outsider would.

The fixing of rent.

54,162. Would you allow a valuator to fix the rent?—I do not think any public body can interfere between the landlord and his tenant. As a rule, the tenant is treated in his new lease on more favourable terms. That is the system, and I do not see how we can alter it. It appears to be justice that he should say, "This " is my claim," and that the other should say, "This " is mine." He gets a few hundred pounds, but the tenant is no sooner in than he begins spending it, and at the end of the lease he has another claim for an amount.

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54,163. If the tenant has to get his compensation by a reduction of his new rent, must it not be fixed from outside?—We have already found that. There has been shown much difficulty in landlords and tenants fixing the rent.

Tenants' improvements.

54,164. Any other points in regard to the Holdings Act?—I think the Act should include the improvements that add to the letting value of the farm, so far as they have been made by the tenant, and should be compensated for.

54,165. And that the tenant should have power to carry out improvements?—Except buildings, and so on.

54,166. But the tenant is to be allowed, on the report of an official referee to make even these improvements?—Yes.

Results of farming.

54,167. (*Captain Thomas.*) When did your farm cease to pay?—I have not quite said that, but if I had, I should not have far exceeded the truth. It has not been paying a return upon capital.

54,168. Is your farm paying you now, then?—It is not. This last year there must be a loss.

54,169. Are you spending capital?—I must be spending capital if I do not take the rent out of the land.

Effect of depression.

54,170. Do you think a further reduction would meet the case?—I think we could reduce it, but I think we must go on to pay as much as we can. The landlord's case is very hard indeed. Our business is, however, uncertain, and we may have a change next year.

54,171. Is there much demand for these farms?—Evidently, for some reason or another, there is a greater desire to get occupation of land.

54,172. What is the reason?—I do not know any reason, except that they have a good deal of hope about the recommendations of this Commission resulting in better compensation for improvements.

54,173. If they had better compensation would they improve?—I have no doubt that if they could calculate upon full compensation the cultivation of land would be kept up.

54,174. Do not you think that the occupying class are suffering as much?—I think the tenant-farmers suffered more at first, but the landlords more now.

54,175. The occupying class have no loss, and can compensate themselves?—They are not in the same circumstances, but I do not see that they will suffer any worse.

54,176. You said you depended a good deal upon the amendments. But the landlord is quite clear. He has full value for his outlays?—The landlord can never get away from the property.

54,177. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Fallen rents are, practically, in your district, the strong proof of the agricultural depression?—Yes, so far as they affect the landlords.

Cost of labour.

54,178. Can you say whether on your farm the increase in the labour bill has been as much as the fall in your rent?—I think the increase in the labour bill is not greater—rather less, I should think.

54,179. What was the fall in your rent?—900*l.*

54,180-1. And your labour bill is how much?—The increase in my labour bill is about 250*l.* within 15 years.

54,182. At the present time the tenants are barely holding their own under these conditions?—I do not think they are holding their own under these conditions.

Evasion of claims for compensation.

54,183. (*Mr. Channing.*) In your brief you say that, "in cases where reductions of rent have been granted "during the tenancy of leases the landlord frequently "stipulates that the tenant shall not claim compensa- "tion under the Act." Do I understand that to mean that you know of cases where the landlord has deducted from the compensation due to the tenant for improvements, to cover part of the reduction of rent he has made during the currency of the lease?—I mean to say that has been a distinct stipulation on the part of the landlord—when a remission of rent was made.

54,184. That he is to forego all claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes. I know a good many cases where that stipulation has been made before granting the remission of rent.

54,185. You are not referring to cases which occurred on an alternative lease where the landlord lowers the rent on condition of certain improvements being carried out?—No. I believe that the tenant was finding difficulty in paying his rent, but that at the end of his lease he must forego all right to make a claim under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,186. I understand you to say that you want the tenant to have freedom to make all improvements, except buildings and certain other permanent improvements, and to get compensation for that?—Yes.

Restrictions.

54,187. You would insist strongly upon freedom of cultivation?—I do not think there has been much cause of complaint from restrictions as to cropping. Occasionally, as to sale of produce, tenant-farmers may feel it a disadvantage, but in almost every case when he applies to his landlord he gets leave to sell stuff which he is bound to use at home on condition of his returning an equivalent as manure to the land.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

54,188. About compensation for tenants on the renewal of a tenancy, you would wish to place the tenant who wishes to renew his lease on the same footing as the out-going tenant, I understand?—It is simply a matter of friendly business arrangement between the landlord and tenant. If he has been an improving tenant, and has added to the value, the landlord should give him the rent cheaper on that account.

54,189. I understand you would make that statutory?—I do not wish to interfere with the law at all. I wish the law to remain as it is at present.

Railway rates.

54,190. About railway rates, has there been any effort in your neighbourhood to meet this difficulty about the preferential rates by combining to collect and forward agricultural produce in truckloads?—No. There has been no attempt in that way. I do not think it could be carried out successfully.

54,191. You know about these preference rates, do you?—We understand that Canadian cattle were being brought about the country from place to place; the railway companies gave preferential rates to foreign cattle. I believe that truck loads of cattle were taken from Glasgow and put into waggons, and after being exposed in the market, and taken to England, were carried at a cheaper rate than Scotch cattle from the same place and for the same destination.

54,192. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are foreign cattle carried at a lower rate than Irish cattle?—At one time they were.

54,193. Are you sure?—I am sure that Irish and foreign cattle went at different rates.

Importation of foreign cattle.

54,194. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Would you say it is the leading opinion that Canadian cattle should be admitted?—I think the impression is that they should be allowed to come in. I do not think the decision is fair at all.

54,195. What about the disease?—I do not think they are satisfied that contageous disease has ever come from Canada. We do not think the cases we had were perfectly certain.

Letting value and claims for compensation.

54,196. In regard to this increase of the letting value of the farm, if a rent falls considerably, how do you as valuator read that at the expiry?—I would neither see whether it is paying or not. The landlord and tenant at that time have no valuation about improvements. Compensation is not claimed when the tenancy is continued. It is a matter that does not require any arbitration—as to the rise or fall of rent.

54,197. If the compensation is to be given according to increase in the letting value, and the rent falls, where is that increase in letting value?—The price of land may permanently fall. It must be the condition of the land as it augurs, so far as the present value goes, that is considered.

54,198. Can you discriminate near enough to tell the increase?—We must go and see the manure and feeding cake bill as to what has been put into the land.

54,199. You would base your estimate of the value upon the figures the man may produce?—That is a principal element.

Official valuators.

54,200. If you had these official valuators, do you think four or five would do the work for the whole of Scotland?—I should think a good many more would be required.

54,201. Do you say there should be a list of men named in every county by the county council and approved by the Board of Agriculture, and that parties must agree upon any man in a dispute?—I think if it

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is to be an official appointment it should be official all through, and that parties should not be allowed to nominate him, because that allows in the end of the wedge of friendship or partisanship.

54,202. You think he should be chosen and paid a salary, and not follow out any other business?—I cannot say about following out any other business, but I think he should be a man in such an independent position that he has no chance of being influenced by either party.

54,202*a*. Would not the appointment of that man or men as official valuators lead to a unanimity of decisions and to a man taking more trouble almost than at present to see that decisions were given without variation?—I think it would tend to greater uniformity of valuation.

54,203. And that no man could value these things better than a man engaged in agriculture himself?—I think he should be a man of agricultural training, and of independence, and capable, above all things, of independence of position and character.

54,204. Would he give an opinion on questions of law?—I think he might make mistakes in law.

Agreements between landlords and tenants.

54,205. As regards landlords and tenants to make agreements that would come in place of the Agricultural Holdings Act, what do you think?—I do not think at the beginning an agreement could be come to that would cover every point. Supposing the time is agreed for the tenant, there are circumstances that might modify it. The land might be thoroughly well cleaned and ploughed, or might have been roughly treated. I do not think an agreement made at the beginning of a lease can be made to cover equitably either case.

54,206. Is it the case in your experience that much has been saved to landlord and tenant by agreeing to a certain scale?—I have no objection to it, but I do not think it would be thoroughly equal. Certainly it is a great saving of expense.

54,207. You would not make it illegal to have such an agreement between landlord and tenant?—I think it would save expense.

Compensation for improvements.

54,208. (*Mr. Clay.*) A farm might at valuation be worth 100*l*. more of rent, through natural consequences, if it had been well managed; but if it had not been well managed, and no improvement came to it, it might have fallen 200*l*.?—Certainly. There might have been a rise and, along with it, an additional claim for outlays. It may have gone down, and the same claim might have been made. It should have been taken at the current value of land at the time.

54,209. A man who has been farming liberally with cakes and manures is entitled to the compensation that is left in the land?—Certainly; it does not matter whether land on the whole has been rising or falling.

Official valuators.

54,210. Regarding the appointment of this official referee, if they were men of experience and general knowledge would they not be largely used by landlords and tenants, and even be called in to settle rent sometimes?—I believe it fully.

54,211. Would it not have a great moral effect if the landlord and tenant simply said, "Here we have a man "recommended as an official referee?" Would it not be a strong moral power to bring tenants and landlords together in fixing rent?—Yes.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

54,212. With regard to sitting tenants, we are a little at cross purposes; but does not it strike you that if a tenant has been farming his land very highly with improved cakes and manures and other things, the valuator would value the land as it stood?—Certainly. What is this land worth as it stands for a given time, he would consider.

54,213. If a man's rent was, say, 600*l*., and you found 50*l*. compensation was due to him, you might, I suppose, not take the money from the landlord, but the interest, and make it less value through the lease?—The official valuator would have instructions to that effect, that the value he had put to it should be deducted from the other value.

54,214. Is the tenant not entitled to have that deducted off the valuation?—He is entitled to have it at the 50*l*. less.

54,215. You would bring in a valuator; do you think anyone would take the farm by the increased fertility?—I understand you to ask this question: a friendly reference is made to the official valuator, and he goes over the land and values it in its present high state, and then he is told the outlays that have been made upon this; the valuator says the farm is 50*l*. better for these, therefore he takes that off his valuation and says, "That is the valuation I think you should pay." It would be the interest of the compensation the landlord would have had to pay if the tenant left.

54,216. You know that if a man sees a good security he generally pays a little for it?—Certainly.

54,217. Do you not think that the value of this increased capital would be a security, and that he would be inclined to pay a little more rent?—It would be a great encouragement to tenant farmers to have that security.

54,218. He might be inclined to pay a little more to get under a good landlord?—Certainly. I think a landlord is a fool to part with a tenant who keeps the land in good condition. Good lands I have known gone down almost to wreck from the system of taking the highest rent. In former times it was not unusual for unfair means to be used when an estate was to let, to induce just one offer and then another to get the highest possible. There was more security then, and on those estates, which I could mention, the land has gone down.

54,219. We have had evidence from the Duke of Richmond and Mr. Drew, his agent. They say they have asked no more for the land than got a tenant of real worth and paid expenses, and they have had no difficulties?—I believe in time that no more will be got for land than can be got out of it. By rack-renting you take away a man's hope. The first thing that suffers is the land, and it goes on until the land is very much reduced in value.

54,220. You think there should be good security and farming?—I think the land will never fail to pay rent if we have good security and farming.

54,221. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Have you had many cases under the Act?—I have had six or eight.

54,222. That would be in the county of Fife?—Yes, and elsewhere.

Demand for farms.

54,223. You say there is still a demand for farms in spite of the depression?—There is now more demand for land in the county of Fife than there has been for some time past.

54,224. Of what class are those who seek farms?—There is always a few of a class whom the landlord would select.

54,225. Are they local men?—They are mostly local and practical men.

54,226. Are there men from a distance—from Ireland and England—coming in?—Very few. There is an inroad from the south of Scotland. A good few have come from there, and a few from further away.

54,227. Have they taken them mostly on lease?—Mostly.

Restrictions in leases.

54,228. What restrictions as to cropping do you mean?—I mean in regard to the practice. In the first place, they are restricted as to the amount of white crop. Frequently they are prevented from taking white crops in succession, and must have a certain amount in grass, and that certain products—straw and turnips—shall not be sold off the farm. These are the usual restrictions.

54,229. What alteration do you propose?—I think the restrictions should be as few as possible, but I do not say we should expect landlords to abandon restrictions.

54,230. Is there any sale for hay and straw in Fifeshire?—Yes; but tenant farmers generally purchase straw instead of selling it.

54,231. Are seeds kept down for more than one year?—It is the practice, and more the practice now than formerly. The practice has been extended in late years. There is a desire in particular upon ordinary lands—I do not say the most fertile—to allow lying as long in rotation as will pay.

The witness then withdrew.

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Mr. J. Mitchell. 10 June 1895.

Mr. JOHN MITCHELL called in and examined.

54,232. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Where is your farm?—In North Fifeshire.

54,233. You are a tenant farmer?—Yes.

54,234. Farming how many acres?—460 acres.

54,235. What kind of land?—Most of it is arable.

54,236. Any hill grazing?—About 100 acres.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,237. What is your opinion of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I concur almost entirely with what has been reported in the papers by Mr. Hope, one of the Assistant Commissioners. I have read the report.

54,238. And you agree with it?—I agree with it almost altogether, but I held the opinion before I saw the report.

54,239. One condition you strongly recommend is the scheduling of the condition of holdings on new tenancies by official valuers?—Yes.

54,240. How is that to be recorded?—It is to be kept in the court of the county town.

54,241-2. And at any time would be available?—Yes.

Tenure.

54,243. What do you think about leases?—I approve of 19 years, with perhaps two breaks during the currency at the option of the landlord and tenant.

State loans.

54,244. You advocate also loans from the State for improvements at a lower rate of interest?—Yes. Previously 6½ per cent. was charged for passing a loan for drainage. That was charged upon the occupying tenant. That 6½ was the interest of capital paid in 25 years. The occupying tenant paying 6½ per cent. paid the greater part of the outlay, which I think was very unfair, seeing that the drains last more than 40 or 50 years.

54,245. It was only through the landlord. The landlord borrowed the money?—Yes; but he saddled the tenant with it. He could not help himself.

54,246. Have you found that the drainage has lasted more than 25 years?—Yes; more especially where there has been a declivity. In sand land it has got choked up with oxide of iron, and perhaps does not last more than 19 years. It ought to be reduced in 25 years or so. But generally in Scotland those tile drains are running still after being 40 or 50 years in.

54,247. Do you advocate the lending of money for the tenant as well as the landlord?—Yes. I think the landlord should be security for the money.

Sale by live-weight.

54,248. You advocate the sale of cattle by live weight?—Yes. Seeing that everything else is sold by weight, why not cattle by the hundredweight?

54,249. Would you like to see it compulsory by weight?—It is difficult to make it compulsory, but why not make it compulsory that the seller should declare the weight to the purchaser?

54,250. Would you have the machine inspected?—I would have it inspected to see that it was correct. I do not care what kind of machine it is so as it is correct.

54,251. What about those dial machines?—Those dial machines, being regulated by water, are very uncertain, especially in winter.

Sale of foreign meat.

54,252. I think you would like to see that no one would sell imported meat without a license?—I think that is the only way. You cannot mark foreign meat, and there is no other way of preventing it than by making them take out a license.

54,253. (*Lord Cobham.*) How would you get a conviction?—I think the only way to prevent the foreign being sold as home would be to prevent foreign being sold along with home meat in the same markets. Foreign carcases coming in should be sold by themselves.

54,254. Do you mean that they should be impounded and that someone should see that they are sold as foreign meat?—Yes.

54,255. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you mean that it must be sold at the ports where it is landed as foreign meat?—Yes.

54,256. Afterwards when it came to be sold you would make no difference?—I would make the salesman have a license displayed in a conspicuous place in his premises. In every place where it was sold he should have a license, and display it so that every person coming in might see that it was foreign meat.

54,257. If it is sold as foreign meat at the port where it is landed, how are you going to trace that meat when it comes into hands to be retailed?—There is great difficulty there; but if it was sold at any port where it was landed it would be easily detected if any retailer of home meat bought that foreign meat, if he were not licensed to sell foreign meat.

54,258. Wherever it is sold by retail you want it to be sold by a man with a license?—Yes.

54,259. (*Lord Cobham.*) I do not see how you are to prevent it being sold as home meat. Supposing an ordinary buyer comes in and buys it as foreign meat, what is to prevent him selling it as home meat?—If a penalty was put upon him he would be found out the same as in other cases.

54,260. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Can you distinguish between home and foreign meat?—No; I do not think it——

54,261. How, then, would you get a conviction?—By him having been seen to buy it at the place where it was sold.

Tuberculosis.

54,262. As to tuberculosis, you want compensation for animals killed on account of it?—I think compensation should be paid to the owner of it, provided the animal looked healthy when it was bought.

54,263. Paid by whom?—By the authority in the town where it was confiscated.

Sale of foreign meat.

54,264. You suggest that imported meat should be inspected at the port of landing by experts for the detection of tubercle. How would that be done?—I think it would be the same as for pleuro-pneomonia—under the same regulation. The great objection I have to scheduling tuberculosis is, that it has never been proved that it will, perhaps, come from a severe cold, the same as a man who has caught a severe cold and takes consumption.

54,265. At all events, for those that are bought as healthy, and have it, the owners should be compensated when they are killed?—Yes.

54,266. As to the inspection of foreign meat on landing?—Diseased carcases are confiscated in the slaughter-houses of certain towns, and yet you allow foreign meat to come in without inspection, which would be the surest means of detecting it. It says in the same report that the butchers contaminate the carcases by their knives in dressing. Foreign meat comes in, and these carcases may have been, before they were dressed, tuberculous, and so they should be inspected.

54,267. What I understand you to advocate is that all dead meat landed at the port should be inspected by experts?—Yes.

Milk from abroad.

54,268. What do you say about milk? Would you let foreign milk come in?—No, seeing that in the report of the committee it is said that milk is the most ready means of spreading tuberculosis, unless the authorities, where that milk came from, were sure the animal was free from disease.

54,269. If they were able to prove that the sanitary restrictions imposed upon home-produced milk were imposed equally upon foreign milk you would not allow it to come into this country?—No.

54,270. As to local taxation, has it increased or not?—It has increased to a considerable extent.

Rates.

54,271. Can you tell us what your rates were 15 years ago?—In 1856 the average burgh and county rate was 1*s.* 8½*d.* In 1893 it was 2*s.* 0¾*d.*—that was 4½*d.* per £ on the rental.

54,272. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Your rates have gone up. Which rate has increased?—The parochial rate in 1881 was 1*s.* 1½*d.*, and in 1893, 1*s.* 1½*d.* The burgh rate is inclined to fall. The county rate is increasing very much.

54,273. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) How much has it increased?—The county rate was 7*d.* in 1881. It is 11*d.* this year.

54,274. Do you, as a tenant farmer, pay all that, or does it fall upon your landlord?—I pay about the half.

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54,275. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You do not pay county rate, do you?—No.

54,276. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Putting these three rates together, the increase is 4½*d.*?—Yes.

54,277. You are apprehensive there will be an increase now?—It is very likely.

Competition for farms.

54,278. Are there many farms vacant in your part of the world?—Several this year are being let just now.

54,279. Do they find tenants for them?—There is a great demand for farms at present. For one for which I am manager, I think there have been 20 applications.

54,280. How do you account for it?—There are more farmers than farms.

54,281. That does not look as if agricultural depression was felt in your part of the world?—It does not look like it. The agricultural depression was brought about by bad seasons and prices, but we have had several fine seasons.

54,282. Have rents fallen in your neighbourhood?—Between 30 and 40 per cent.

54,283. Are they going down or rising now?—They are rising on account of the competition for farms, but not on account of increased prices.

54,284. Are most of those competitors old or young farmers—people trained to farming?—Young men trained to farming who wish to get into farms, and also old farmers.

54,285. Have they sufficient capital?—Generally, but a few have not sufficient capital, and yet offer for farms.

54,286. Will they give larger rents than the others?—Well, sometimes they do.

54,287. But I suppose landlords will not take them if they know they have not sufficient capital?—They sometimes do.

54,288. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the size of the farms in your district?—On one side a holding in our district is about 200 acres. We have them from 100 to 500 acres.

54,289. Who have done better, the larger or the smaller owners?—It is hard to say.

54,290. Is there any difference?—I do not say.

54,291. What courses are cultivated?—Generally the farms have been managed upon a seven years shift—two years' grass, one year's turnips, one potatoes, and the other for grain crops.

Sale by live-weight.

54,292. (*Mr. Clay.*) I see you advocate cattle being sold by live weight. Would that be an advantage to the farmer?—I think so. There have been only 25 per cent. over the live weight, while from 75 to 80 per cent. have been below it.

54,293. Just now he is a good deal in the dark. The butcher is at the weighing trade every day in the week, and the farmers are only selling a few times a year?—Yes and they are so far at the mercy of the butcher.

54,294. Do you know any other way of getting out of it than making it compulsory?—No. You have the sale yards already, and I think it should be compulsory upon the seller to announce the weight before he takes a bid.

54,295. Just as in the corn market a sworn man is, so you would have a weigher in each market?—Yes.

54,296. In regard to the home and foreign cattle, you would require separate markets for them?—Yes.

54,297. You consider it very unfair to the home consumer that he is paying for home and getting foreign meat?—Yes.

54,298. You think every butcher selling foreign meat should take out a license?—I think that would be a check.

Tenure.

54,299. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You favour a 19 years' lease?—I hold that a 19 years' lease is the best for landlord and tenant, so that the tenant may have full value for his improvements and so that the landlord may have full value for his land.

54,300. Would you have any break?—Yes. Something may take place in family matters, and so on, to induce him to break.

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54,301. Have you not generally found that the break must start a new arrangement between landlord and tenant, either on one side or the other?—Immediately after or during the depression, leases were begun with these breaks. A good many people took advantage of them and left at the end of the five years after exhausting a good farm.

54,302. How would you prevent a man now coming into a farm and doing the same thing?—I think taking a note of what was in the farm when he entered and when he left would meet that.

54,303. Would this official valuer be the sole judge of the value of the farm? Would his decision be subject to appeal to other valuators?—No. If he was a man acquainted with his work I think his opinion would be sufficient.

54,304. Do you think there would be any difference between the opinion of one man who had valued the farm at the beginning, and since died, and another who valued it before the end of the lease?—I think it as practical a man going over the ground as the former one could come very nearly to an opinion as to the difference.

54,304*a*. Practically, your suggestions agree with the suggestions of the Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

Claims and counter-claims.

54,305. Have you thought out thoroughly the question of claim and counter-claim—as to whether these should be given on the same day?—I think as nearly as possible they should, so that the claim should be made public and opened on a certain day.

54,306. Do not you think that would lead to high counterclaims being made, owing to the want of knowledge of the claims the tenant was making?—I think it would be perfectly fair that both should do it unknown to the other—not knowing what the other's claim was.

54,307. That would mean that both claims should come in about the time of the expiry of the tenancy?—Both claims should be lodged with the county clerk, say, and lie there for a time.

54,308. It could be done with probably less expense, do not you think, when he was on the farm?—He would require to consider everything before he put in his claim.

Contracting out of the Act.

54,309. Would you make an agreement between landlord and tenant contracting out of the Act to be illegal?—No. I think that if landlord and tenant did make an agreement between themselves it would save a good deal of trouble then.

54,310. You would not have that applied too strictly when it came to be acted upon?—No.

54,311. (*Mr. Clay.*) If the agreement was not fair and according to the spirit of the Act?—It ought then to be broken.

54,312. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) If two men consider at the beginning of a bargain, would you have that original contract interfered with by any official interference?—I think altogether it must conform to the Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,313. Supposing that by the end of 19 years an idea changes and this is brought forward as not a fair and reasonable arrangement, is that to be overridden by an official arbiter brought in, who said the tenant could get a little more or less?—If it was conformable to the spirit of the Act.

54,314. You are in favour of it being a fair and reasonable arrangement for estates, to lay down proportions for dealing with these different compensations?—Yes.

54,315. Among the Fife farmers, what do you think is the chief help that could be given to them at the present time under any legislation?—I cannot say altogether in regard to that.

54,316. Do the majority of them, for instance, think that the greatest help they can get from the labours of this Commission is going to be an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I do not think it is going to help us very far except as I have said before, by getting money at a smaller rate of interest for agricultural improvements.

Laying land down to grass.

54,317. What about laying down land in grass?—As to laying down land for grass, I think that is the best way of improving the land for three or four years. If a tenant has done that he should be compensated for the land lying in grass.

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The schedules.

54,318. Have you been asked as to the question of the schedules? We have had a witness saying that he would have the schedules abolished altogether, and let the tenant do anything during his tenancy but let it?—I am not of that opinion. I think the landlord should be consulted as in the case of buildings, &c.

54,319. Do you consider that it ought to be put out of Part I. into Part III.—the laying down of permanent pasture?—What I have said was regarding land lying perhaps three or four years in grass; but in the case of land lying permanently in meadow, land where the crops are not of the same value as if grown upon harder land, then I think the landlord is entitled to be consulted.

Scheduling the condition of farms.

54,320. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You wish to have the schedules of the condition of holdings on new tenancies made by official valuers?—That is the condition of the farm at entry, by an official valuer.

54,321. Do you want to make that compulsory? Because, supposing a landlord and tenant want to have that condition recorded by anybody else, would you admit that?—No. It would not be the same value. Where a landlord and tenant agree to compensation perhaps there would be no difference.

54,322. The record of condition would be of value in all cases?—If the landlord and tenant made a bargain conforming to the Agricultural Holdings Act then it would not be necessary to have a value. If the tenant had to take his decision as final then it would not be necessary to have an official valuation.

54,323. Do you think it would be desirable to get rid of this official record of the valuation of the farm?—If the landlord and tenant made an agreement they would do so.

Milk from abroad.

54,324. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you are proposing that milk should not be imported into this country because we are not certain that the sanitary regulations are good in the country from which it comes?—Yes. It is said that tuberculosis is spread by milk.

54,325. Have you any reason to believe that tuberculosis is as prevalent in the country from which the milk is imported as it is in Scotland? What country does most of the milk come from?—I suppose from France, Belgium, and Norway. I am ignorant altogether of the place where the milk comes from, but I say that until we are satisfied that these cows were free from tubercles the milk should not be imported.

54,326. The milk in England is not always carefully examined by the sanitary authorities. These inspections vary very much in various parts of the country?—It is not so much the inspection of milk, but the Commission says that where the udder is diseased it spreads tuberculosis. I think there should be an inspection of the dairies.

54,327. At present, the sale of tuberculous milk is allowed in England?—My suggestion is for the future, after legislation is brought into England.

Inspection of dairies.

54,328. The same as to inspection of dairies, you would wait until the law is more strictly enforced in England?—I say it is unfair to allow the milk to come here, considering what the Commission says.

54,329. You are aware that the medical officer of health when he inspects a shop inspects the foreign as well as the home meat. He goes into the shop and inspects all the meat that is there, and if he finds bad meat there he condemns it. He does not know, I suppose, whether it is foreign or home?—The carcases are inspected in the slaughter-house.

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54,330. Where are you speaking of? That is not general?—No; but I expect that after that recommendation of the Commission it will be in every town.

54,331. Then your recommendation does not come into force until the recommendations of the Commission are enforced?—No.

54,332. In the majority of towns there would be the inspection you mention, though in certain towns it is not general?—Yes.

Rates.

54,333. I think you said the average fall of the rents in your district has been 30 to 40 per cent. and that the rates have risen from 1*s.* 8*d.* to 2*s.* You must be paying very much less now on rates in a particular farm than what you were paying before the fall began, because 1*s.* 8*d.* on 100*l.* valuation comes to less than 2*s.* or 2*s.* 6*d.* on a smaller rent?—There is no doubt we are paying a smaller sum.

Wages.

54,334. What are the wages in your district?—They will average fully 18*s.* a week.

54,335. They have risen considerably?—Considerably.

54,336. (*Lord Cobham.*) You will have to add to the 18*s.* to get the full wage?—It is scarcely 1*l.*

54,337. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Another witness from Fife has said very nearly 23*s.*?—If you take farms generally, I think they will bring the wage up to at least 1*l.*, but I do not think it will be 23*s.*

54,338. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the value of land?—23*s.* to 30*s.* the imperial acre.

Bad seasons.

54,339. (*Captain Thomas.*) I think you said the depression was due to a certain extent to bad seasons?—The depression was due at that time to bad seasons as much as low prices. Rents came down even after that cycle of bad seasons.

Cost of wheat-growing.

54,340. At how much per quarter can you grow wheat to pay in this part of the country?—2*l.* a quarter to make it pay.

54,341. You have been selling it at about half?—I have not been selling it, but eating it.

Laying land down to grass.

54,342. Have you laid any of your land in grass?—It has lain three years in grass. I know a very great improvement in it as compared with the two years.

54,343. What does it cost per acre to lay it down?—It costs very little more. You would have natural grass.

54,344. Does it cost more for permanent pasture?—It would do perfectly well for permanent pasture.

54,345. You think it would pay better to graze the land than keep it always going?—Yes. I break it up regularly after the three years.

54,346. I wanted to know whether this land was to be permanent pasture which you have been laying down?—You get more off it after it is broken up for a year or two, and the extra year makes it produce better then.

54,347. (*Chairman.*) You have not laid down land with the view of keeping it in permanent pasture? You mean to plough it up in three years?—Exactly.

54,348. You think that is a more paying process than laying it down for permanent pasture?—I think so.

Witness then withdrew.

Mr. A. Smith.

Mr. Andrew Smith called in and examined.

Mr. A. Smith.

54,349. (*Lord Cobham.*) Where is your farm?—I am a tenant farmer at Longniddry, East Lothian.

54,350. What is the size and nature of your farm?—The farm we live at is about 360 acres. It is wholly arable, although a little bit of it lies in permanent pasture. We have another farm in Roxburghshire.

Effect of depression in East Lothian.

54,351. In East Lothian are there many proofs of agricultural depression?—There is no doubt of it.

54,352. What are these proofs?—Well, the land is lower rented and is being starved and farmed in an insufficient manner. That is especially so in the medium and worse classes of land. The best land has been kept up.

54,353. Do you see any difference in that respect between the farms that have been taken by recent tenants and the farms still being farmed by old tenants?—I think so. I think the new tenants are not farming generally as well as the old tenants did.

54,354. Do you attribute it to less skill or capital on their part?—They seem to adopt cheaper means of cultivation.

54,355. Is there a considerable falling off in the cultivation of the land?—I think so.

54,356-7. Do the statistics, you think, show that there is less cattle on the land?—I cannot say.

54,358. Do you see less building and draining going on now?—It is quite a rare thing to see draining going on. There is also less building.

54,359. Is there much draining requires to be done? Yes; a good deal has been choked up by sand.

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54,359*a*. Are good buildings getting into bad order to such an extent that the tenants have been hampered in their business?—I think so.

54,360–1. The tenants do not keep up the buildings?—I think some landlords cannot help themselves. All tenants are expected during the lease to keep the buildings in tenantable use. Some landlords are taking farms into their own hands and setting them down to grass, and leaving the buildings alone, rather than put new buildings up.

Causes of depression.

54,362. What has been the cause of the depression in your district?—Low prices for agricultural produce generally, due to foreign competition; and increased cost of production, caused by the enhanced price of labour. Increased taxation, bad trade and strikes, have also done harm.

54,363. There is a decrease in prices, but farming requisites are much cheaper?—Manures and cakes are cheaper, and upon good farms rents have fallen from 20 to 40 per cent., and in some cases rather more.

54,364. Would you maintain, therefore, that, with rents lowered to such an extent and with considerably reduced prices of many farming requisites, the cost of production is greater than 15 years ago?—I think so.

Cost of labour.

54,365. How much has the labour bill gone up on your farms?—Female labour has gone up 50 per cent., and male labour has risen something like 33 to 40 per cent. within the last 30 years.

53,366. Is there a sufficient amount of it?—Not of female labour.

54,367. Is the quality good?—The quality of the male labour is fairly good.

54,368. There has been no reduction of hours?—No.

54,369. You do not find that the machinery has displaced labourers?—I do not think so. It makes the work easier to do, but I think it requires as many hands.

Rates.

54,370. About rates and taxes during the last 15 years—have they increased?—I have only been in this farm at Longniddry nine years. They have not increased much in that time; perhaps about 10 per cent.

54,371. Do you grow good malting barley?—Yes; fairly good.

Malt tax.

54,372. What is the effect of the abolition of the malt tax?—I think it has lowered prices of home barleys at least 6*s*. per quarter.

54,373. Who has got the advantage?—The foreigners and the brewers only, I think.

54,374. What do you think the loss to the grower has been?—About 30*s*. an acre upon average land.

54,375–6. How often have you a crop?—Once in every five or six years.

54,377. Have you got any suggested remedies to this serious state of things—I mean as regards the abolition of the malt tax?—I should suggest that it should remain in the same shape as before.

54,378. And that the beer duty should be abolished?—I think so.

Wheat cultivation.

54,379. Do you still continue to grow wheat?—Yes, a little. We require the straw, at any rate, for thatching and covering potatoes, and so on.

54,380. Do you consume the whole of the produce off the farm?—We can sell a portion. We consume the whole of the straw, but we sell the bulk of the wheat.

54,380*a*. At present prices you do not see your way to give up the cultivation of wheat altogether?—No, because it divides the labour over the season.

54,381. You find the straw still indispensable?—For some things.

Price of wool.

54,382. Have you suffered much by the fall in wool? Considerably.

54,383–4. How far have the prices fallen?—I have got as high as 2*s*. about 1864 or 1865, and the same wool is now selling at 10*d*. or 10½*d*., and it has been that for a considerable time.

Rates.

54,385. Do you think that much benefit could be done to the agricultural interest by an alteration of the incidence of rates and taxes on land?—I think it would help us.

54,386. How would you do it?—I would be inclined to tax means, and substance, and house property a little higher.

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54,387. Do you think there are difficulties?—I think there are difficulties, but that they might be overcome.

54,388. But you have not a scheme?—Not quite.

54,389. Would you assist local rates in any way?—I do not think that you can assist them much.

54,390. I mean by adding State subsidies to them?—I cannot see my way to that.

Import duties.

54,391. Would you impose protective duties?—I think if there was an imported duty equal to what agriculturists pay in rates and taxes on the grain they produce, or about 1*s*. a quarter—if that small sum were imposed on the 22 millions of wheat alone which is annually imported, it would raise 1,100,000*l*. We import about 8 million sacks of flour, and if that was put at 1*s*. the sack they would raise about a million and a half. These sums would help to reduce our rates, and without reducing the consumption or preventing food coming to our shores.

54,392. Do you think it is certain that it would not affect the price of food to any extent whatever?—I do not think it would affect it very much.

54,393. Who would really pay that 1*s*. a quarter?—The foreigner would, I expect.

54,394–5. If that is true of 1*s*. a quarter, would not it be true of 2*s*. or 10*s*. or 12*s*. a quarter?—If you raise it very much you might help to raise it here, but I do not think 1*s*. would raise the price of food in this country.

54,396. You are not a protectionist to more than that extent?—No.

State loans.

54,397. Do you think that landowners are now prevented from improving their estates by the crippled state of their resources, and that the State should do something towards assisting them?—I think so.

54,398. If money was lent to them at 3 or 3½ per cent. more would be done than at present?—I think a great deal more.

54,399. That would necessitate the charge being spread over generations?—Yes, but it would not be a heavy one, and would enable properties to be kept up.

54,400. Do you find that drains last 50 years?—That depends upon the nature of the soil. Some might run for 50, and others not for over 10.

Fixity of tenure.

54,401. What do you think of fixity of tenure?—I do not believe in it. I think the present system is good. I would rather have an agreement from year to year under a good landlord.

Restrictions in leases.

54,402. Do you think that tenants are too much restricted in cropping? Would freedom of cropping benefit them?—I do not think so in a general way. I have never suffered much from it myself.

54,403. Have you seen farms injured by close cropping?—Yes, and the tenants being the worse of it in the long run.

54,404. Are you allowed freedom of sale in farm products?—I can sell one-third of the straw, the whole of the hay, and all the potatoes.

54,405. Do you consider that sufficient?—Yes.

54,406. And do you sell all you are allowed to sell?—We rarely sell straw or hay, but sell the potatoes.

54,407–8. Is that the usual practice in the district?—I believe it is on the estate I am on. I cannot speak of the district. I do not think many of them can sell straw, but they can all sell hay and potatoes.

54,409. Have you to give an equivalent in the shape of manures to the land?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,410. Is the Holdings Act much valued in East Lothian?—No, it is not.

54,411. Is there much done under it?—Some persons will not make claims rather than be bothered with it.

54,412. When claims have been made have they been settled satisfactorily to the parties?—Not as a rule.

54,413. You think amendments should be made in the Act?—I think the tenant should be compensated for all improvements made during his tenancy, including the laying down of the land to permanent pasture; and that claims and counter-claims should be lodged with the sheriff of the county in which the farm is situated on the same day.

54,414. What alterations would you make in the schedules to the Act?—I would allow laying down

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land with permanent grass without the consent of the landlord.

54,415. You would put the laying down of permanent pasture into Part III., and only that?—Yes; I think only that.

Compensation for permanent pasture.

54,416. Do you think that the laying down of permanent pasture has been impeded a good deal by the consent of the landlord not being given?—I think it has. I was in difficulty myself with a former landlord. I wanted to lay down a field in pasture and he would not give his consent. I laid it down without his consent, but got nothing for it.

54,417. Was it a suitable field?—Everyone who saw it said what a suitable field it was.

54,418. Could you not enter into terms on condition that you did not plough it up? I suppose you could plough it up?—I laid it down and left it without compensation, and it lies in grass still.

54,419. You did the whole at your own risk?—Yes.

54,420. What did it cost?—Something like 1*l.* an acre. I had no crop on it that time, and that added to the cost about 3*l.* more per acre.

54,421. You could not put cattle on it that year?—A few, but mostly sheep.

54,422–3. How soon do you think that new pasture can become remunerative to the farmer?—At the outcome, or almost at once. It depends on how it is fed.

54,424. Notwithstanding you did not get compensation, you found it paid you?—Yes.

54,425. Do you think the farmer is entitled to compensation in addition to the profit he has made?—I think he is if it can be found that it is of advantage to the farm.

54,426. Has the machinery of the Act been found to be slow?—Yes, and very troublesome.

Official valuators.

54,427. How would you alter that?—I would simplify it. I think the decision of the oversman and arbiter should be binding. I would have no appeal.

54,428. And if an official valuator were appointed?—The same if an official valuator were appointed. Now they may be dragged into court if the claim is above 100*l.* If it is under 100*l.* it is hardly worth claiming.

54,429. Do you think that official valuators should be appointed and employed in all cases?—They might; but I think that in ordinary cases of arbitration we have amounts greater than under this Holdings Act. Their decision is binding and final.

54,430. Might they not make a mistake?—I would rather run the risk of them making a mistake than be dragged into court. I find that is the opinion of a great many in this country.

Sale of foreign meat.

54,431. I think you have heard the opinion of Mr Mitchell as to foreign produce?—I agree that it should be prevented as far as possible, but I can see that there are considerable difficulties in the way.

54,432–3. You think the actual meat should be labelled?—I think it would be difficult to label it, but that it might be sold in shops licensed to sell foreign meat only, and that the home meat man should be prevented from selling foreign meat.

Government help to breeders.

54,434. Do you think the Government might encourage the breeding of a better class of live stock?—I think so. That is one of the things we would receive benefit from, particularly as breeders.

54,435–6. In what shape should this encouragement be given?—It might be given in supplying good bulls or rams.

54,437. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you think there are as many cattle and sheep in Haddingtonshire as when you went?—There are about as many. In the district from which I come I think there will be as many sheep at any rate. In the higher parts of the country there might be an increase, but not in the other parts.

54,438. Were you examined before the Duke of Richmond's Commission?—No.

54,439. You have just told us that you would like cart stallions, bulls, and rams provided. Is that because good ones are dearer now than before, or that tenant farmers have not the price of bulls? Has not the price of bulls come down greatly in recent years?—Most people will go in for a cheap one.

54,440. Cheap and nasty?—I am afraid so.

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54,441. Do very many landlords let their tenants have a bull, do you think?—Not above two or three landlords keep them.

54,442. (*Mr. Whithead.*) Surely the price of shorthorn stock is cheaper now?—They are not very dear, but money is scarcer.

54,443. Do you think the State should improve stock? Has not the Highland and Agricultural Society done something to improve stock?—They have offered prizes, and helped in that way.

Laying land down to grass.

54,444. I think you said that landlords who have farms are laying them down to grass?—There are a good many farms on the landlords' hands.

54,445. Is that because they cannot get good tenants?—I believe that in many instances they would rather keep them in their own hands than spend money on them.

54,446. That is not done in Scotland, is it?—They are a kittle people.

Dairying.

54,446*a*. Is dairying attempted in Haddington at all?—Scarcely at all.

54,447. Is the land not suited for it?—The land or climate is not suited for it.

54,448. Is there any poultry-farming in Haddington or Scotland?—I do not know.

54,449. Do you think it has been tried?—I do not think it has been tried much.

54,450. (*Mr. Clay.*) Are the reductions of rent in keeping with the fall of farm produce?—No.

54,451. If this season continues it will be a bad one for tenant farmers?—Yes.

54,452. Is it as bad as 1868?—Hardly, but the prospects are not very bright.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,453. Regarding the Agricultural Holdings Act, do you agree with Mr. Hope's report and the Chamber's views on that matter, to make the Act more workable?—In a general way I do.

54,454. I suppose you see the need for the landlords to have money at a cheap rate to make improvements?—Yes.

Rates.

54,455. Putting your tax on means and substance would make a great difference to the tenant farmer?—I think it would help.

54,456. What proportion would it relieve you of?—I can scarcely say.

54,457. Do you know in your county what amount the railway companies pay?—No.

54,458. What amount would railways in proportion to tenantry pay?—I cannot say.

54,459. You estimate there is a loss in your farm as to cropping?—Yes.

54,460. I think you say you do not believe in fixity of tenure?—I do not.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,461. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) If a landlord has to go on at the end of every lease adding this increased fertility which is supposed to be there when rents are falling, will he not raise the nominal value of his property to an unnatural condition?—If a man has a property of 10,000*l.* and has to pay 500*l.* for increased fertility at the end of every lease which is continuous, will he not get into difficulty?—I think he would get good interest for his outlay, because if it was known that the farm was in good condition he would get more for it than if it was not.

54,462. I think you said you would have no appeal from the determination of the valuator. Would it not be necessary on a question of law to take an appeal?—I do not know, but I would run the risk of it.

Penal clauses.

54,463. Are these penal clauses in the lease generally insisted upon?—Not very often.

54,464. You incline to the belief that they are necessary to protect against the badly-designing tenant?—Yes.

Government help to breeders.

54,465. Would your proposal as to Government help to breeders not check private enterprise?—It might to a certain extent, but it would enable more of those good animals to be used than at the present time.

54,466. Would you take them out of the general taxation?—Pretty much as you do with the Queen's premiums.

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54,467. That money comes partly out of Her Majesty's private purse?—I thought it was provided by Government, in a sense.

54,468. (*Mr. Channing.*) What kind of land is yours?—I am farming a goodish class of land.

54,469. You have potatoes?—Potatoes is one of our rotations. We grow one-sixth part of the farm with potatoes.

Rents.

54,470. What is the rent you are paying?—I am paying at present 52*s.* per imperial acre.

54,471. This land is exceptionally well placed as to railway convenience?—There is a railway station on the land.

54,472. What is the average rent where there is no exceptional advantage?—I should say 30*s.* would be about the average.

54,473. Is there much down to 1*l.* an acre?—Yes there is, in what we call the high country. There there are some, I believe, for less than 20*s.*

54,474. Your's is rather a high rent compared with the others?—Yes, but it is a good farm.

Market gardens.

54,475. Is there any market garden on your farm, or anywhere else?—There are some alongside of me.

54,476. Under what agreements do they work?—I do not know, but they seem to farm it very much as they like.

Payment of compensation.

54,477. Is there any demand in Scotland for special protection for the capital of market gardeners?—I sometimes hear them grumble at the foreigners coming in and competing with them.

54,478. If land is valued on the whole, and the actual valuation of it falls from 20 to 40 per cent., if a tenant has improved the land so to prevent it falling below 10, 15, or 20 per cent., he should have contributed something to the land more than the tenant who let it fall 20 or 40 per cent.?—Certainly.

54,479. And if he was compensated he would not raise the original rent?—I think not much.

Tenure.

54,480. Do you approve of 19 years' leases, or leases with breaks?—I approve of leases with breaks—five years, especially on stock land. On arable land I would rather have it from year to year, under a good landlord.

54,481. Does not the practice give a chance to bad tenants to come in and rob the land?—There is that objection in it, I think, although it is desirable for good tenants.

54,482. Have you spent anything yourself on drainage?—Not on this farm, but when I started farming first. I got no compensation. That was before the Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,483. At the present prices of wheat and barley, as compared with cake, which would you prefer?—I would rather consume the cake, because there is a better residue after cakes than after grains.

Particulars of witness' farm.

54,484. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How far is your farm from here?—My farm is about 13 miles from Edinburgh.

54,485. Has the rent been reduced to any great extent? You are paying 52*s.* an acre now?—That is the same rent I paid on entering.

54,486. There has been, then, no depreciation so far as the rent is concerned?—No: but it is splendid land.

54,487. What is the usual amount of rates you pay on that farm?—Rates and taxes, something over 60*l.* That is rather more than I paid when I went into it.

54,488. What is your labour bill per year?—I pay somewhere about 800*l.* a year.

54,489. What was it when you went in?—There is not much difference. I think I have been there nine years. But if you go back 30 years there is a considerable rise.

54,490. Can you say if there has been an addition to your rates?—I should say 10*l.* fully.

54,491. You give that as one of the contributory causes of the depression?—That is on the farm I hold now.

54,492. If you go back 30 years there is a rise?—Yes, a greater rise.

54,493. Are you sure? You have 360 acres, at 52*s.* an acre, and you pay 60*l.* on that. That is a very small rate in the £, is it not?—That is rather over 1*s.*; about 1*s.* 4*d.*, I should say.

54,494. I suppose the rents that increased began with 40 or 50 years ago? Did your farm command 52*s.* per acre 30 or 40 years ago?—I do not suppose there is much difference. The rent has been very little different during the last three leases. I cannot say what it was. I find the rent was about 60*s.* per acre 30 years ago.

54,495. (*Captain Thomas.*) Would you allow the landlord to make a claim otherwise than as a counter for decreased fertility?—I think so.

54,496. (*Mr. Everett.*) How many counties do you include in the term Lothians?—There are the three—Mid, East, and West Lothian.

54,497. Is Edinburgh about the centre?—Yes.

54,498. What crops per acre of wheat and barley and oats do you get on an average on a good farm?—Something like five quarters an acre we consider a good fair crop.

54,499. Do you grow most per acre of oats, barley, or wheat?—Most of oats. All my farm is arable, but I have allowed some light land near the sea to lie in permanent grass. With the exception of some 30 acres, it is all arable, and kept in rotation.

Potato growing.

54,500. Do you sell your potatoes to merchants who dig them up?—We generally lift them ourselves, and sell them to merchants.

54,501. What would it cost to lift an acre of potatoes?—The average cost, counting horses and paying 16*s.* for women labour—we lift them with a plough, and then the women pick them up, and the men put them into the carts—is altogether about 2*l.*

54,502. What kind of price do potatoes make per acre?—We think we do pretty well if we get 20*l.*

54,503. In regard to the malt tax, I suppose the labourers do not brew beer?—No.

Witness then withdrew.

Adjourned.

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One Hundred and Third Day.

Edinburgh, Tuesday 11th June 1895.

PRESENT:

VISCOUNT COBHAM IN THE CHAIR.

Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary*.
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., } *Assistant*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Secretaries*.

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Mr. GEORGE RIDDELL called and examined.

54,504. (*Lord Cobham.*) You were tenant of the farm of Corsehope, in Mid Lothian, for 19 years, commencing 1870?—Yes.

54,505. Since you left in 1889 have you carried on business as a farmer?—No. I have been carrying on the business of grazing and feeding in East Lothian.

54,506. But you have been brought into constant contact with farmers?—Yes.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,507. And you have come here to-day chiefly to state your views in regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, I believe?—Yes.

54,508. Do you consider that it requires thorough amendment?—Yes.

54,509. On what ground do you base that conclusion?—I will mention the expense of it, for one thing.

54,510. Have you found that from personal experience?—Yes, I have.

Corsehope case.

54,511. Could you state in what way you found it expensive?—Well, I had to fight a case against my will. I offered to refer it, putting in all the accounts, and leaving it to arbiters and an oversman, and that offer was refused. Then I had to fight the case at great expense, and it cost me 200*l.*, and my witnesses did not charge anything at all.

54,512. Would you describe the different steps in the litigation?—I called on the landlord's agent—this is not in writing—and said I would send in all the accounts and put my books into their hands if we could agree on an arbiter. If we could not agree I said that we would have two arbiters and an oversman, and I would leave them to decide, and have nothing more to say on the matter.

54,513. Had you each to pay your own half of the cost?—Yes.

54,514. What were the expenses?—I do not know what the landlord's expenses were, but he had to pay his witnesses. I think it would cost the landlord from 350*l.* to 400*l.*, because all his witnesses would cost from 15 to 20 guineas a-piece.

54,515. (*Mr. Clay.*) These were expert witnesses?—Yes.

54,516. (*Lord Cobham.*) After the award by the oversman, was the case carried further?—It was appealed against.

54,517. By yourself?—By the landlord.

54,518. It went before whom?—Sheriff Crichton.

54,519. And did that necessitate the employment of counsel?—Yes.

54,520. Did you employ counsel before?—Yes.

54,521. Were the proceedings before the sheriff final?—The proceedings before the sheriff were paid by the landlord. The decision went against him, and the proceedings were final, of course.

54,522. And the landlord had to pay the cost; what was it?—I do not know what the cost was.

54,523. But he had to pay it?—Yes.

54,524. Did the appeal cost you anything at all?—I do not remember about it, but I think I had to pay some extra judicial expenses. I do not remember the exact sum.

54,525. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did you not get costs allowed you?—There are some costs not allowed.

54,526. (*Lord Cobham.*) That settled the case?—Yes.

54,527. But in order to win your case you were put to a considerable expense?—It cost me 200*l.*, and I was not charged a single penny by any of my own witnesses.

54,528. And the landlord's expenses—were they also considerable?—He had six or seven, I think he had eight witnesses altogether. He had eight men in the case at any rate, and they would cost five guineas a day. They charged five guineas for inspecting the farm, and then they charged for making up the report, and also for appearing in court. They were two days there. I suppose they would cost him about 20 guineas a-piece.

54,529–30. Had the landlord to pay the costs of the proceedings before the oversman?—The costs were divided.

Compensation for improvements.

54,531–2. How would you improve the machinery of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and make it less cumbersome and expensive?—I think that where the proprietor refuses his consent to any of the improvements specified in Part I. of the Schedule, the tenant should be allowed to claim compensation for such improvements as an arbiter appointed by the county council, under direction and supervision of the Board of Agriculture, shall certify to be really necessary or desirable for working the farm to advantage. I do not think it is desirable to leave the appointment of an arbiter to the sheriff.

Official valuers.

54,533. You think there should be one arbiter appointed by the county council?—Yes, or be under the supervision of the Board of Agriculture. I do not think a sheriff is a good man to appoint arbiters, they know very little about farmers.

54,534. (*Mr. Clay.*) In counties it would come under the sub-sheriff?—Yes. I do not think they know much about it.

54,535. (*Lord Cobham.*) You think the arbiters should be local men?—Most decidedly. I tried to get local men in my own case.

54,536. You do not agree that three or five appointed arbiters for the whole of Scotland would be sufficient?—No, I do not think so.

Scales of compensation.

54,537. What are the main amendments you propose to suggest in the Act?—The use of scales, I think, has been very unfortunate for doing justice to all parties, because, if two farmers were to start together on a 19 years' lease, and one of them was to make his farm his bank, as it were, for all the time, when it came to the end of the lease—suppose the other farmer had farmed in a very sluggish way and done nothing for the farm—under the system of scales they would get very much the same amount awarded to them.

54,538. You mean, if a bad farmer for the last year or two of his lease had gone to considerable expense in manures and feeding stuffs, that he would get more

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compensation than the man who had kept it in good condition for a long number of years?—Quite so. It is mostly worked under scales at present, and any clerk would do it as well as the best agriculturist.

54,539. Your are speaking, I suppose, of farmers who intend to quit at the end of their tenancy?—Well, I am speaking of the system of awarding compensation.

54,540-1. What is the usual practice if a tenant farmer wishes to go on after the end of his lease? Does he not come to an agreement with the landlord some considerable time before the expiry of the lease?—If he is a good landlord that would be the natural proceeding. But if a landlord who is keen and wants to get all he can the chances are, if the farm is in a very high condition, he will take advantage of the fact. At least that has been largely done in Scotland.

54,542. The Act hardly applies in such a case, does it?—A fresh agreement is made between the parties, but I think the sitting tenant might be compensated, and be treated as an incoming tenant.

54,543. That can be done, I suppose, by agreement, at present?—Quite so.

54,544. If you wish to see schedules or scales no longer used in valuations, how should the valuations be made?—I see there is great difficulty there, because it can only be done under a general award; and, at least, you would require to be very careful in the men selected; but I have far more faith in the practice of the skilful agriculturist than any guess that the farmer can make about what remains in the soil of substances put into it several years before. A skilful agriculturist in walking over the farm could tell how much it has improved per acre far more reliably than he could tell you what remains in the soil.

Scheduling condition of farms.

54,545. You mean, if he had in his hand the schedule describing the farm 19 years before, that he would be capable of making a just comparison between the state of the fertility of the farm now and then?—Yes. If a farmer did not put himself in a position to keep a record and have his improvements proved, he would be to blame.

54,546. You are in favour of scheduling on entering and quitting?—That would be absolutely necessary. The difficulty about the present Act is that it lays down the principle that you have to award the value to the incoming tenant, and then, in working it out, you can only work on certain things, so that has caused the arbiters to use scales. I think scales are a delusion.

54,547. (*Mr. Clay.*) But scales would be part evidence?—You mean in proving a case? Yes. In the quantity of cake, &c., of course. You would have the amount for that.

54,548. That could be used as good evidence?—Perfectly.

Corsehope case. Compensation for high farming.

54,549. (*Lord Cobham.*) Was it laid down in your case that the arbiters might take into consideration generally the state of fertility of the farm?—I had no men to speak to scales in my case at all. I would not have them. I had a proof with half-a-dozen of the ablest men I could get hold of. In the proof I had, it was, What has the farm improved per acre? and then the basis they had was the capacity for carrying an increased stock.

54,550. Was it because an account was taken of the actual outlay that the landlord appealed against the award?—I do not remember, but the landlord's men had scales, without seeing the farm, I think, some of them.

54,551. Did you win your case without introducing scales at all?—I did not introduce scales. I had proof by men with practised eye who were to say what they thought the farm had improved per acre.

54,552. Have you not got the judgment of the sheriff here?—No, but I could easily put it before the Commission. I will send it to the secretary. (*See* Appendix X.) The lowest sum I got for one year by the diminishing scale was 15*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*, and that was after I had been 13 or 14 years on the farm, and I had been improving it quite as much in the earlier years as in the later, and that, I think, shows the absurdity of the system of scales.

54,553. You kept on farming on the same scale up to the end of the lease?—From the very beginning of the lease; I stuck to my ideas all the time. By the diminishing scale the first sum the oversman awarded was 15*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* That looks a very small thing.

54,554. Did you crop your farm in accordance with the agreement throughout?—No, not from the very commencement, because I saw it was a mistake. In the district in which I farmed a great deal of the hill land had been broken and taken in on account of the high prices of sheep, wool, and grain at the time, and I saw that the system of cropping would by-and-by result in the exhaustion of the soil for many years to come, and render it almost useless, and that on land which had been cropped the grass would not stand. As time went on that system exploded on account of the fall in prices. Light land never intended for cropping had been taken up, and the consequence was that a great deal of that class of land is lying in grass at a very small value.

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54,555. Was there a counter-claim made against you for this cropping?—The only counter-claim was on the march fence, and it was withdrawn, half the sum being taken that was claimed. They claimed 50*l.*, and they took 25*l.*, and we agreed to that.

54,556. Did you make any permanent improvements on your farm?—I do not remember the exact thing. I think it was something like 775 of permanent pasture.

54,557. That was done without consent?—With consent, but not in the sense that conveys compensation. I made an agreement with the landlord before the Act was passed to get payment for my way-going crop, and then I proceeded to lay down pasture under that agreement.

54,558. You do not complain that you did not get compensation under an agreement which you voluntarily entered into?—I do complain very much.

54,559. (*Mr. Channing.*) That was only for the way-going crop of corn?—I paid for the crop on entry, and I did not get payment for the grass seeds, for which I paid on entry; and after the Act was passed public opinion said I was entitled to payment for permanent pasture.

54,560. (*Lord Cobham.*) But you made an agreement?—Oh, yes.

Compensation for laying down permanent pasture.

54,561. Do you think that the laying down of permanent pasture should be taken out of Part I. and classed with those improvements for which consent of the landlord is not required?—Certainly.

Compensation for permanent improvements.

54,562. With regard to improvements, such as buildings and making of permanent fences, and so forth, is it your opinion that the tenant should erect them and claim compensation if the landlord declines to do so?—Yes, I think so.

54,563. Would they be subject to the supervision of any outside authority?—I think it should be all under the supervision of the Board of Agriculture. The men who are appointed as arbiters would act accordingly.

54,564. Do you think that would be largely done in Scotland—the erection of such costly improvements as farm buildings?—If the tenants had plenty of money I think it would end in them preferring to do it.

54,565. But I am afraid there is not a large proportion of the present tenant farmers who have got a large amount of capital available for such purposes?—No.

Laying down permanent pasture.

54,566. You are strongly of opinion that the laying down of land to permanent pasture is a necessity in these days?—It would create a perfect revolution in farms of that class, because at the present moment the landlord's consent cannot be got to get payment for a way-going crop, and for that reason most of them keep it going. It results in the destruction of the soil altogether, and a great deal of the out-field land, broken from the hill and cultivated for two or three rotations, is done for growing grass. My farm was at the very extreme point for cultivation.

54,567. Do you find that farms on which a good deal of permanent pasture has been laid down command much higher rents than those left under the old rotation?—I know hardly a case where much of it has been done, for the reason that in a great many cases the landlord does not know about it, and if you go to the lawyers they are very difficult to convince. In my own case it took me more than two years to get an agreement carried through.

Corsehope case.

54,568. On your own farm of Corsehope, on which you laid down 775 acres of permanent grass, what was the rent, and what is the present rent?—The rent when I entered was 915*l.*, but I paid interest on drainage and other improvements that made up 965*l.*

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I got in 1881 an abatement of 150*l.* For the last four years of the lease I got 100*l.* a year. The tenants who succeeded me paid 700*l.*, but they gave up their right to compensation under the Act, except for the last year, and then they just got a third of the cost. Besides that the lease was altered for the worse.

54,569. Do you consider that by your outlay you did a great deal to maintain the value of the farm?—At the present moment I have not the smallest doubt the proprietor is reaping 300*l.* a year of benefit, because if you look at the list of rents I have prepared you will see they have fallen.

54,570. What was the fall of rents in the district generally?—It depends very much if the farmer were sitting under a kindly landlord. About the good times very often rents were not raised much, but if the farm were advertised, and let "at the point of the sword," as we call it, then in that case the fall would be greater; and I think, speaking generally, that this class of farms could not be carried on under 50 per cent. of a reduction and some more. I know of some cases where it is more; but the farms could not be carried on under a 50 per cent. reduction.

54,571. You quote the case of Allanshaws let in 1868 at 650*l.*?—Yes.

54,572. And is now 360*l.*?—Yes.

54,573. And Craigend fallen from 700*l.* to 335*l.*, and Brockhorse from 600*l.* to 300*l.*, and a good many others?—That was a voluntary abatement; but the reduction has been 50 per cent., and in several cases between 40 per cent. and 50 per cent. I think that most of the figures in the list I have put in are taken from the evidence of my own witnesses.

54,574. Have you selected these as being the worst cases in your district?—I took them as they stood amongst my papers when I was looking through them. That is what I had when I had the proof, so that it would be, I think, mostly taken from the evidence of my own witnesses and men farming beside the place.

54,575. But your object was to show that your farm, owing to your outlay, had well maintained its value?—That was the purpose.

54,576. While most others had fallen?—Yes, but those men would go into permanent pasture the moment they were allowed.

54,577. (*Mr. Channing.*) Would the landlords refuse to allow compensation if they went in for it?—Yes. It is a most expensive business at any rate. I would not do it again for double the sum I got.

Compensation for high farming.

54,578. (*Lord Cobham.*) What are we to understand by the principle of general award of which you are in favour?—What I said before was that I think a farmer who has had long practice and has a practised eye will come nearer the truth in looking over a farm for the purposes of an award.

54,579. That is to say that he would not necessarily take into consideration the actual outlay?—No.

54,580. But the results of the outlay?—Perfectly. That is what the Act says at the beginning.

54,581. Do you think the present system puts a good farmer under a disadvantage in taking a farm?—Very much, because at the end of a 19 years' lease if a farmer has his farm in very high condition it makes a good many others covet it, and the landlord very often, too. I speak more with regard to the past.

54,582. Do you mean that thereby he would be unduly forced out?—Yes.

54,583. Would you not sooner take a farm in high condition at a high rent than a farm in low condition at a low rent?—Oh, certainly, but I have known plenty of cases where farms have been let at from 10*l.* to 15*l.* over the head of the old tenant when there was no sufficient reason for it. In my own case I never got the offer of the farm at all.

54,584. I understand the difficulty you have put before us is that of a good farmer renewing his lease advantageously to himself?—I do not mean under good landlords, because there are plenty of good landlords. It is the middling class of landlords I am speaking about, and that is done very frequently, the farm being in high condition. Men who are looking for farms will covet it, and the landlord is in a very different position to screw rent out of it when the farm is in a high condition than when it is in a low condition.

54,585. You are speaking of the sitting tenants?—Yes. It is the difficulty of re-taking farms.

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54,586. Are you in favour of agreements being allowed in substitution of the Act?—No. At present it says that a landlord must do what is fair and reasonable before he can get outside the Act. I think it would be better if there was no contracting out.

Agreements *v.* The Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,587. An agreement to hold good should be at least as favourable as the Act?—Yes.

54,588. Are you against such an agreement?—I think it would be better, on the whole, to have no contracting out, because neither landlord nor tenant can foresee improvements that could be made in the course of 19 years, and the result of agreements would be to limit the improvements. The tenant would not put his money into improvements that he was not to be compensated for. Besides that, there is often a hostile feeling between parties unless it is clearly laid down that they must come under the Act.

54,589. You say that although parties may make an agreement the law should give no validity to them?—Well, I think for this reason, that you limit the improvements that could be made if you schedule them. It is impossible to foresee improvements that could be made on a farm for 19 years in advance.

54,590. You would put such agreements in fact very much on the footing of those relating to ground game?—Something like it.

Freedom of cropping and sale.

54,591. You would not give absolute freedom of cropping?—No. I never could see how that would work. The landlord's interest is permanent, and must be safe-guarded. There are plenty of tenants who would take a farm and abuse it.

54,592. Is there sufficient freedom of sale of produce allowed?—I would be in favour of it, but outside of it you must have the landlord's consent to it in some way.

54,593. In addition to remedies he now has by the common law?—Well, I do not think the remedies are of much use if you have a bad tenant.

Corsehope case.

54,594. (*Mr. Channing.*) I understand the farm of Corsehope was let nearly 40 years ago at 314*l.*?—Well, that is not the exact thing. I could not get at the exact figure. There was a small holding, I think, which was let at about 40*l.*, and the rest of the farm at about 300*l.*, but there were some fields on the farm then which were taken off when I had it. I think I am quite safe in saying that.

54,595. Practically what I mean is this, that the farm at the present time is let for more than double?—Quite so.

54,596. The value of about 40 years ago?—Quite so.

54,597. I understand the farm when you first took it was under rotation—the half of it?—When I took it, yes. About 600 acres had been broken from the hill. It was a hilly farm. This breaking up had been done by the proprietor.

54,598. And the usual way of dealing with those farms at the time was the breaking them up and liming them very heavily?—Yes.

54,599. And you formed the opinion that it was better to lay down permanent pasture and feed it highly?—Yes.

54,600. You handed in a list of farms, and I have also seen a list of farms in the proceedings in this case which shows a drop of about 50 per cent?—Yes.

54,601. Were most of these treated in this way, or in what way?—They have to farm according to their lease.

54,602. Were most of these leases for farming in rotation?—Very often, and possibly in the five shift, that is, two years in grass, then oats, and then turnips.

54,603. I understand that after laying down and feeding upon the new pasture none of your farm was broken up and cropped, with the exception of a small portion you reserved?—I laid it down by degrees. None of it was broken up after I got it down.

54,604. But in improving the pasture I mean you left the fertility caused by the feeding in the soil?—I kept it as new land. There was a lot of it never cropped at all. I laid down over 500 acres without a crop.

54,605. So that all the fertility added by your treatment was left in the land?—Yes.

54,606. I do not think you have given the outlays you made?—No.

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54,607-8. Am I right in saying that the outlay, chiefly in cakes and feeding stuffs, was about 18,000*l.* or 19,000*l.*?—From the beginning of the lease to the end of it I think that there was 20,000*l.* beyond the obligations of the lease, and if I remember aright the receipts put in at the proof were somewhere about 16,000*l.*

54,609. (*Mr. Channing.*) You expended nearly 20,000*l.* over what you were bound to expend by the lease?—Yes, easily.

54,610. And your claim was 2,700*l.*?—Yes. If you capitalised it it would come to less than that.

54,611. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What was the amount received? Did you get the whole of it?—I got 1,063*l.*, but I received 40*l.* from the landlord besides.

54,612. (*Mr. Channing.*) Just to get this clear in the notes your estimate, I understand, of the added value of the farm was about an increased value of 300*l.* a year?—Yes. I have not the least doubt of that.

Corsehope case: cumulative fertility.

54,613. What was the amount you got in respect of the cumulative fertility, so far as recognised by the oversman?—300*l.* by general award, after he had exhausted the cost, by the diminishing scale it would be 763*l.* He would award by the diminishing scale, and then he went on to say that owing to the extensive use of feeding stuffs he awarded 300*l.* additional.

54,614. Have you got the details of the award?—No; but I will send them. (*See* Appendix .)

54,615. Practically the amount of 300*l.* was assigned you in respect of this cumulative fertility—yes—in addition to the sum arrived at by the calculation of the diminishing scale?—Yes.

54,616. How far did this scale go back for your expenditure?—Six or seven years, I think, but the sum I got for the first of these years was 15*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.*

54,617. Now, this six or seven years would be considerably less than half of the period, would it not, for which you were carrying on this treatment of the farm? You were carrying on this treatment for about sixteen years?—Oh, for all the lease. I began at the beginning of the lease.

54,618. Well, then, it was practically only a third of the time that was covered by the diminishing scales?—I do not know how the 300*l.* was awarded, because when the oversman awarded it there were four years at the beginning of the lease when the Act was not operative.

54,619. (*Lord Cobham.*) Had you boned or limed the land?—I was always doing it. I spent 1,500*l.* in lime.

54,620. Previous to the six years?—No. I spent a very great deal at the beginning of the lease, and nearer the end of it. The landlord assisted me in liming some fields; but I wish to explain, in answer to Mr. Channing's question, that I could not answer it for this reason, that the award of 763*l.* was for the last six years. The oversman said the 300*l.* was for the extensive use of feeding stuffs during the lease, but he had already charged the remaining value.

54,621. (*Mr. Channing.*) Then is it quite correct to say that the 763*l.* was determined by the diminishing scales?—Well, he said so in his award. He said the remaining value.

54,622. As a matter of fact, did you spend nearly 2,000*l.* in boning the land?—I do not remember.

54,623. Your plan was to feed heaviest on the younger grass?—Yes.

54,624. And put on the heavy stuff and feed very highly for the first few years?—Yes.

54,625. I do not think you have stated the carrying capacity of the farm?—Well, I have stated that it was a hilly farm. I think it carried about 50 score of black-faced sheep, and when I left it it was carrying a stock of over 100 score of feeding hogs, besides the hill sheep—20 score of black-faced on the hill. I think I had from 70 to 100 cattle, and my successor has been carrying far more stock than I had summer and winter. I do not think they ever have had less than 100 cattle summer and winter.

54,626. There is a very considerable increase?—It is an enormous increase in the carrying power. But I will give you one instance. There was one field—the first I laid down—which had been broken up from heather but not cropped, when I went. I asked the shepherd how much stock it carried before it was taken off the hill, and he said about 50 ewes and hogs, and the average stock on the field the time I was there would be about 220 to 240 sheep in the summer. And it is the same all over.

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54,627. Have you any accounts you could put in, since you have parted with your farm?—I will give you anything you wish.

54,628. I mean the accounts as to the profit and loss of the farm?—I have not got that. I did not keep it separate. There were some years in which there was a very heavy loss, and there were other years when the farm did well enough. It was a very great deal better in good grass, and saved a great deal of money in the bad times.

54,629. On the whole, did you make a profit, and a considerable profit, out of it during the lease, or was this high farming a loss to you?—I could not really say, because I am perfectly sure that it was better for me, and better for the landlord infinitely, to have it in grass.

54,630. Was your estimate based on the current prices in 1889, when you gave up, that the income of the farm would be 1,689*l.*?—Yes.

54,631. That is the price of all the crops, and also the cattle and sheep, and so on, and the outgo on the other side included rent, labour, manure, and other expenses and taxes, 935*l.*, leaving a balance of 754*l.*?—Yes.

54,632. Is that your general impression of the results of the farm?—Well, that is an estimate such as any farmer might make in valuing a farm. You do not know whether it would be valued or not, but the estimate there of the stock has been far exceeded since I left.

54,633. The farm was re-let at 700*l.*?—Yes.

54,634. For five years?—Yes.

54,635. And at the end of that time it was taken on again?—I do not know the new terms.

54,636. It was taken again by the same tenant?—Yes, by the same tenant.

54,637. And did the competent agriculturists express the opinion as witnesses in your case that the value added to the farm by your treatment was practically inexhaustible within a near period?—Yes, some of the best men I could get.

54,638. Do you think yourself, as a practical farmer, that you, considering your treatment of the farm, were charged too high a rent—that the rent was too high during your tenancy?—Oh, well, it was dear when I had it, considering the times. It was dear, taken at the first.

54,639. Are you strongly of opinion that the amount of compensation you received was wholly inadequate?—Very much so.

54,640. Considering the value you had added to the farm?—Yes.

Laying down of permanent pasture.

54,641. Does your case show very strong ground, for giving freedom to lay down pasture?—That is the strongest point for this class of land, and that applies to a very large part of Scotland. That is the strongest point I could give evidence about—to see men free to lay down pasture if they think fit.

54,642. It is the most effectual means of increasing the fertility of the land?—It is safe for everybody, alike as regards landlord and tenant; but it will not succeed as permanent pasture unless it is very liberally treated.

Stock feeding and price of beef.

54,643. (*Captain Thomas.*) How many years have you been engaged in cattle feeding?—I have been all my life I may say. On the farm I had it was necessary to have the two together.

54,644. How did you dispose of fat stock?—I sold them principally myself.

54,645. At home privately?—Yes, I had between 400 and 500 cattle last year.

54,646. By live weight?—No.

54,647. Do you find feeding as profitable now as formerly?—No.

54,648. What would you say has been the reduction in the price of beef as compared with the best years you have had?—Oh, I could not say. A very common price was 9*s.* per imperial stone, for a long time, and now about 7*s.*, the imperial stone will be as much as the most of people will get, I think—and often less, 6*s.* 6*d.*

54,649. I suppose you buy a large quantity of feeding stock?—Yes.

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Price of store cattle.

54,650. The price of feeding stock is reduced very much?—Very much.

54,651. Do you buy all your store cattle for feeding?—Yes.

54,652. Is there any scarcity in Scotland of store cattle?—Well, there is. You have to buy both cattle and sheep beyond their value at the time.

54,653. Do you consider the price is too high?—Very far beyond their value, because there is not enough cattle and sheep bred in the country to supply the demand for store cattle and sheep.

54,654. The prices of store cattle have gone up lately?—Yes.

54,655. Do you think that present prices will be maintained for any length of time?—Nobody can say anything about that.

54,656. Are farmers going in more for breeding now?—Where I reside it is not a district for breeding much. That is in East Lothian. It is not a good district for breeding.

Importation of Canadian cattle.

54,657. Are you in favour of importing Canadian store cattle?—I would be in favour of that if they could be imported under a system that made us absolutely secure against disease; but I think that Mr. Gardiner is quite right in sticking to his advisers.

54,658. You approve of what he has done?—Yes.

54,659. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you lose or increase your capital during the time you were engaged in farming? Well, I never kept any books. I kept a bank book.

54,660. Taking the other farmers in your neighbourhood, have they lost?—I think, myself, they have done very well in keeping a house over their heads.

54,661. You do not hear complaints of loss of capital?—Plenty, but not in East Lothian.

Rent of farms in Dunbar district.

54,662. What is the average rent per acre of farms in your neighbourhood now?—I could give you any amount of them in detail.

54,663. Could you give any idea how much per acre?—All the lands in the Dunbar district, including Mr. Hope's farm—I think his farm of Eastbarns is 4*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* or 4*l.* 12*s.* 6*d.*, I do not remember which; but others there hold at 4*l.* an acre.

54,664. Are these the farms where the rents have fallen very much?—No, few of these have fallen at all. One fell from 5*l.* to 4*l.* and another from 5*l.* 15*s.* to 4*l.* 5*s.* There was a farm let in the North Berwick district—Highfield—last week at about 2*l.* per acre.

54,665. Was that a fall of rent?—It was a rise of rent.

54,666. Take the farms in the other districts?—This is the North Berwick district, and Queenstonbank is another large farm on the same estate which let at about 43*s.*

54,667. Are these rents higher or lower than formerly?—Well, Castlemains let last year at 2*l.* That was a slight rise. Queenstonbank was a slight rise. That is the two I have given you.

Depression in Dunbar district.

54,668. There is no depression in that part of the country?—Oh, well, it does not follow, because altogether it depends who you take as a tenant. Men will come to offer rents for farms who cannot pay them, and a great deal has been done in this way in past years—men avowedly and knowingly paying more than they thought the farm worth on the idea that a good landlord would not like to have his farm on the market again, and that they would get the rent down once they were in. You have also men coming in from other districts who have been accustomed to live at a great deal less expenditure, but who do not always succeed.

54,669. What is the most prosperous time you can remember for farmers?—Oh, well, I was not farming for myself before 1870, and things were very dear then.

54,670. Since 1870 what has been the best time?—Times were very good in the "Seventies"—not for arable farmers by-the-by. You see I am a stock farmer. I think 1872 was a bad year for the arable farmer.

54,671. Was the best time you can remember very much better than at present?—There were times when the prices were good, but the seasons were bad, and it is somewhat confusing. I could not answer this in detail.

54,672. You cannot remember any particularly good time?—I know the times were good for prices for sheep, but they fluctuated a great deal. In 1868 lambs were sold on account of the drought at 12*s.* a piece, while in 1871 I sold them at 40*s.*

54,673. About what time did you make the largest profit on the whole farm—on the whole business?—I cannot remember that.

54,674. Have the profits varied very much in different years?—For a very long time there would be more losses than profits.

54,675. But the capital has not been much diminished, has it?—Oh, well, in a great many cases men have been ruined.

Deterioration of farming.

54,676. Has the greater part of the land in your district improved or got worse in the matter of cultivation?—Well, I think there is not such a very great difference. I farmed in Mid-Lothian when I had the farm of Corsehope, but I am speaking of East Lothian now, and I do not think that the land has gone back so very much. It has in other parts of the country.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,677. Do you think if claims were allowed for cumulative fertility there would be any large amount that ought to be paid for the improvement of land in your district, taking it as a whole, for the last 20 years, or is it only in exceptional cases where such claims should be allowed?—I would always draw a big distinction between a man who had farmed well from the commencement of his lease down to the end of it, and a man who has merely farmed to get compensation.

54,678. My question is, looking at the land as a whole, should you say that in the last 20 years the farming has been such as to deserve compensation for cumulative fertility, or do you think the land remains at about the same quality as at starting?—It is not very easy to answer that.

54,679. You do not see any great change?—I would take exceptional cases as a strong point in the matter.

54,680. But on the whole you do not think there has been any very great change. But do you think it is not likely that if compensation were given for cumulative fertility each farmer would be disposed to think that he deserved something on that account? Is it not the tendency of every man to think that his own work is particularly good?—Oh, well, I have already explained, I am speaking of farmers generally.

54,681. Do not you think that most farmers are under the impression that they have improved the farm?—It is quite natural.

54,682. It is only human nature that they should think so?—Yes.

54,683. Do not you think that everybody would claim for it nearly?—I have already said that if it could be managed I think it is a safer system to award by the practised eye of a skilful agriculturist than on the scale system.

Condition of labourers.

54,684. Has the position of labourers improved in your district?—Oh, yes, everywhere, I think.

54,685. They all get higher wages?—They are better off everywhere, and they do less work. They are not so good servants as they used to be.

Bankruptcies of farmers.

54,686. (*Mr. Everett.*) Have you known many farmers who went bankrupt in these last five or ten years?—Yes.

54,687. You began in 1870?—Well, I said for my own land. Of course, I was farming all my life.

54,688. Was it a very rare thing at that time for a farmer to go bankrupt? Was it an almost unknown thing for a farmer to be ruined?—Very seldom, for a man who knew his business.

54,689. As a rule, a man who attended to his business at that time could thrive?—Quite so.

54,690. And keep his head above water?—Yes.

54,691. But in the last few years you have known several of the same class of men who have gone to the wall?—Oh, a great many. They retired too.

54,692. Is most of this land for which as much as 4*l.* to 6*l.* an acre is paid in rent arable or pasture?—It is entirely arable. It is all for the growth of potatoes. The potatoes are used in the London eating houses. They can stand a long time after they are cooked.

Price of potatoes.

54,693. What sort of a price do potatoes on red soil fetch per acre—the price on an average?—I think they have been getting about 5*l.* a ton, but I am not very sure. On the grey soil at present they are worth 4*l* a ton.

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54,694. And about how many tons would be an average crop?—I forget what Mr. Hope used to produce, but I think it was estimated at 8 tons an acre or more.

54,695. They make sometimes about 30*l.* an acre for potatoes?—Oh yes, and even more than that.

54,696. You were a grazier on a large scale?—Yes.

Profits of grazing.

54,697. You have found grazing less profitable than formerly?—Very much.

54,698. The fall in the price of feeding stuffs has not compensated you for the fall in the price of the meat? It is very difficult to hold your own.

54,699. You spoke of the highest prices you had known as being something like 9*s.* a stone. Did not you get 10*s.* or 11*s.* for beef in the early "Seventies"?—I remember higher prices than 9*s.*, but that was in exceptional times. If you held on at one time about this time of year you were able to get exceptional prices for beef, besides the foreigners were not in then.

54,700. And by a stone you mean, 14lb. dead weight?—Yes.

54,701. You have been a high grazier; I gather you fed your cattle with a great deal of bought food?—Yes.

54,702. Did you reckon to spend more on the cattle than you hoped to get back again with the cattle who consumed the food?—Never, when I went into the business, but I have often found it so.

54,703. You fed them with the view of immediate profit rather than with the view of what they left on the land?—I was like any other man, I had to go on, or go out of it. It is nothing like so good as it was.

Corsehope case.

54,704. Did you try to continue that occupation on this farm? Did you wish to renew the hire of this farm?—I was willing. I offered to bid for it on two conditions. My landlord was very unwilling to admit if there was any depression, and he had done very little for me when all my neighbours were getting large reductions of rent. I had great difficulty in getting him to agree to transact any business, such as laying down the farm to pasture. He consulted people "behind my back." He would ask Tom, Dick and Harry, and I said if he would put a skilful, practical agriculturist between us, and change the term from Whitsunday to Martinmas I would bid. If not I would not. I said I would rather offer along with the public, and the next thing was that his agent wrote me, and he asked me to go in and see him, and he pressed me very hard to offer for the farm, and I said to him "what "would you do if I made you an offer you thought not "adequate." He said he would put a valuator over it and that in any case they meant to do that, and I said "Well, in that case when you have called in the "assistance of an expert I expect you will offer me "the farm" but they never did that. Practically I was told that if I did not lodge a private offer I must bundle and go. I was not allowed even to offer along with the public, the landlord had changed his agent in the course of the negotiations, and I was asked to offer through a new agent.

54,705. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did you gather that you would have had no allowance in the rent for your past improvements, except the enjoyment of that in the future?—Oh none, the valuator said "I will never please "the landlord here."

54,706. (*Mr. Everett.*) How long before the expiration of the lease did you negotiate about re-hiring?—I think it would be the last year.

54,707. What strikes me is, that, where you have these long leases on such conditions, what you want to do is to renew two years beforehand?—Oh, certainly. In the hands of a good man there is no difficulty about it. The best thing you can do is to ask the tenant. On the other hand, I knew that if I offered for the farm, to offer where there is confidence between the parties, then it would be valued, and probably advertised to let. Well, I would not think that good enough.

54,708. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Did you say that there was not much change in the fertility of the soil at the present time from what has been a good many years ago?—Oh, well, if you take where the Waverley Railway goes down. At the time it went through any amount of the land was broken up, which yielded large crops yearly. It is high land. It was found afterwards that it had become exhausted, and matters were intensified when prices fell, because the land would not pay for cultivation. What I maintain is, that if the farms were put into permanent pasture it would improve them.

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54,709. In that part of the country at present there would not exist much land that would be dealt with for increased fertility?—Not at the present time.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,710. If it is such a very small thing, either one way or another, either increase or decrease, do you think it is possible for a man to go over a farm in November or December and judge with his eye of the increased or decreased fertility of the soil?—It is done every day by men who value farms, if a farm is to let.

54,711. And you think that that can be done on some sort of basis?—I could not say; but I would have some misgivings about the working of it out, because the valuation might get into the hands of unscrupulous men. I would have far more faith in the practised eye of the skilful agriculturist to tell you what the improvements are worth.

54,712. Well, but surely you have admitted the great difficulty of carrying this thing out of judging by your eye entirely. Would the valuator rely on the start that his basis is as to what a man has laid out—what you call the proportion?—I am against that entirely. The cost of the improvement has nothing to do with it.

54,713. (*Lord Cobham.*) Would you not let him know it?—Oh, yes.

54,714. If he knew he probably would take it into consideration?—Well, he could not help that.

54,715. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) But that would seem to mean a sort of fair foundation for the man to go along with a practised eye to some decision on a certain foundation?—If the tenant had laid out a vast sum of money in some foolish undertaking it would not be fair that the landlord should have to pay for that.

54,716. It is a question dealing entirely with increased fertility?—Yes, I suppose the difficulty you mean is the difficulty of judging with the eye. Well, then, I am accustomed to value turnips, for instance, and I do that by the eye. I do the same thing in valuing grass. I do the same amongst cattle. I buy and sell them, and carry on my business in the same way. Take the buying and selling of a horse, that is a task performed by the eye altogether.

54,717. That is a very different subject, I think. You can put him through his paces?—Yes. Well, then, in the first place, I say that if the farmer does not keep a record and get it tested as he goes on, I would not give him anything at all. At least, I mean it would need to be proved before I would give him anything.

54,718. Where does your practised eye come in then?—This is as an aid to his practised eye.

54,719. The start?—Yes.

54,720. It would be the foundation of it?—No; the two things would be perfectly consistent. If a man had put a field through a certain course of treatment, and I was to award compensation for it, and it was proved to me what had been done for it, well, I would probably be influenced a little by this proof as to how long it would last. But I think it is right that a farmer should do everything in his power to support his claim.

Local valuers.

54,721. And you consider that the man, to do this, must be a local man?—Certainly; the arbiter should know the district.

54,722. And it would be out of the class of the practical farmer?—Yes.

Appeal from valuer's decisions.

54,723. And from that man's decision would you have any appeal?—I do not see how we could get quit of an appeal to the sheriff.

54,724. Would that be only on questions of law?—I think so.

Lodging of claims and counter-claims.

54,725. As to the time of putting in claims or counter-claims, have you anything to say?—I do not think it is very important, but I adopt the views of the Chamber very much on the subject.

Competition for farms.

54,726. What practical way, or have you any idea of any way to stop this over-competition for farms that we believe exists at present?—Well, I think if we had resident factors, especially on large estates, instead of having the management of farms in the hands of lawyers it would be better.

54,727. But to put a stop to that would you go the length of saying that landlords would be wise not to grant reductions to those men taking the farms now?—If I let a farm to a man and he was not long in asking

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a reduction afterwards, I would not give it, I would get quit of him rather.

Popularity of leases.

54,728. Do you consider that the 19 years' lease has worked well generally throughout Scotland for the good of agriculture?—I believe that the Scottish farmers have got so accustomed to that lease that it would be difficult to change.

54,729. Is there any feeling in your part of the country as to having two years' notice on taking a farm to quit?—I think that feeling is rather dying down. They are in favour of a 19 years' lease.

54,730. Have breaks been tried?—Oh, yes.

54,731. Have they done good?—The only advantage is that a man who does not want to go hat in hand for an abatement can give notice to quit. When you have a case to fight such as I had, the professional valuators hunt in a body, and it is very difficult for the tenant to fight them single-handed.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,732. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have no difficulty in going over a farm in valuing it like all valuators to put an amount upon it according to the improved condition or the condition of poverty?—I never heard of any other way.

54,733. These men value the farms without seeing receipts as to outlays?—Perfectly.

54,734. So that is the mode which nine-tenths of the men who value adopt in the work?—I do not know of any other method you can adopt.

54,735. If you were to take a grass park would you offer what you thought it was worth according to its quality?—Perfectly.

54,736. Well, coming to deal with this compensation matter, you would have no objections—indeed it would be a kind of help to them—to have tenants' receipts laid before them as to the quality and cakes used on the farm?—Certainly not; I think every aid should be given to arrive at the truth.

54,737. That being a help and the practice he would, as a rule, get at the proper value of the farm as far as he could?—I think so.

Corsehope case.

54,738. They were denied in your case?—Yes.

54,739. Is that fair?—I think it is very hard. The landlord never offered me a single shilling. He never offered to disprove a statement I made, and his witnesses spoke to the scales possibly without ever seeing the place.

54,740. Should the expenses—the same as in a court of law—not be assessed on the man who has not proven his case?—Decidedly.

54,741. You proved your case up to the hilt. Should not the expenses have been given against the man who could not do that?—Certainly.

54,742. (*Lord Cobham.*) Did not you get less than the amount of your claim?—Yes, but they never sought to disprove my case.

54,743. (*Mr. Clay.*) You kept a good deal of extra stock on the farm?—Yes, about three times more.

54,744. What extra stock did you keep in the summer time? You said one field had only kept 50 blackface ewes and hogs, while with the improved position it kept 220 sheep or more?—Yes.

54,745. That was about four times more?—Yes.

54,746. And that showed a great increased fertility in the land?—No doubt of that.

54,747. Since you left has the farm kept up its fertility and maintained as much stock as when you left?—It has kept far more. More were put on to it. I think they had 150 cattle summer and winter, besides about 100 score of hogs and 20 score of sheep on the hill.

54,748. Does that not only show but prove that the fertility you put in and left there is going on and adding still to the value of the holding?—There is no doubt about that. I found that instead of the thing going away and going out, as the landlord's witnesses said, I had more power over the farm every year I farmed it. I had more power over the pasture It is a difficult thing to make pasture on that class of land, but after you get it fairly established that is the time I found I had most power over it to improve it. That was my experience when I left it. I found I could improve far more at the end of 19 years than I could at the beginning, and for five, or six, or seven years at the first, proving beyond a doubt that the idea that it would be exhausted in three, or four, or five years was ridiculous.

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54,749. That is very good proof to show the mode of the valuators under the Agricultural Holdings Act in going no further back than three years?—It is perfectly ridiculous. The sum awarded me was only 15*l.* 13*s.* 4*d.* for the first year dealt with by the diminishing scale.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,750. Is it not ridiculous also to say that they should not go further back when you proved and others have proved that the unexhausted fertility remains a good deal longer—goes back very nearly into the middle of the lease?—If they are right their theory is that if you get grass improved for three, or four, or five years you cannot improve it any more. According to my experience I can improve it far more after I have been 10 years at it.

54,751. What is the cumulative fertility, as you call it?—Just feeding and feeding it, and it remains in the soil.

54,752. If you put in lean cattle to feed you would not know much difference in them, but still the time comes when the feeding begins to tell, and they improve at a greater ratio than before?—Perfectly.

54,753. Do you know anything about the decision given in East Lothian called the Winterfield farm case?—I know the place a little.

54,754. Was there increased fertility there?—I have such confidence in the man who was arbiter there that I think his award would be right on every ground. There has been a good deal said about it, but not much that is worth paying attention to.

Stock feeding.

54,755. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think your business is that of buying cattle and feeding them on other persons' land. Are there many people employed in the same kind of business?—Not a very great many.

54,756. Is it because the tenants do not like the trouble of buying stock, or because they have not the capital?—Plenty of men who have capital in East Lothian let their turnips, for instance, to a person who is constantly in the trade, and are specialists, because, for one reason, if a man is wanting wheat early, it would otherwise take him a long time. If let to me I would put on a big lot of sheep, and he would get his wheat in early. I would consider those who let their turnips in preference to stocking themselves would be sensible people.

54,757. It is not an indication of want of capital on the part of the tenants?—It may be in some cases. I know in some that it is and in others that it is not, but there are a great many different reasons for it. I have bought certain classes of cattle—may be 200—and I would keep the butcher going for nearly 12 months with the same class of beef. Well, that man could afford to give me better prices for them than if he had got them now and then.

Rents in the Lothians.

54,758. (*Mr. Channing.*) The rents you gave in the Lothians were chiefly of good potato land. What would you say was the average rent of ordinary arable land?—There is very little of it below 1*l.* an acre. You may go to the borders or the hill foots. There is Upper Keith, which is near the hills. It was let not long ago at 650*l.*, I think, but including the game. It would average from 1*l.*

54,759. For ordinary arable farms what would be the rent per acre?—Upper Keith was let about 17*s.* an acre, and the tenant had the game, but there was a large expenditure by the landlord. That was about four or five years ago. This is a case of a break, and the landlord thought he was entitled to interest on the large expenditure, and at the end of five years he gave the tenant notice. The rent now is raised 50*l.*, and he gave up the game.

54,760. (*Mr. Clay.*) Was that for buildings?—Yes.

54,761. (*Mr. Channing.*) Can we take it that these farms are let at 30*s.*?—Oh, 1*l.*, 30*s.*, and 35*s.*

Marking of meat.

54,762. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In your opinion could consumers tell the difference between Scotch beef and Irish bullock beef?—There is no doubt experts can tell.

54,763. Could they tell the difference between home and foreign meat?—I doubt if ordinary consumers can.

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Mr. A. Campbell.

Mr. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL called and examined.

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54,764. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a farmer at Boreland Fernan, Killin?—Yes.

54,765–6. Are these two farms?—Yes; they are let together.

54,767. And you are here to speak on behalf of the Breadalbane Agricultural Association?—Yes.

54,768. Which has a membership of 250, and embraces within its bounds a district of half a million acres?—Yes.

54,769. You hold on lease a large farm—of how many acres?—About 2,000 altogether, of which about 200 are arable and old pasture, and about 100 of which are under rotation now.

54,770. You wish to confine your evidence to the sheep farming industry?—Quite so.

Depression in sheep farming.

54,771. How have the sheep farmers been affected by continued fall in prices?—They have felt the depression very badly indeed, particularly in the last 10 years since the price of wool has gone down.

54,772. Have there been many changes of tenancy?—A great many.

54,773. And a good many farmers gone into bankruptcy?—Well, possibly not into the Bankruptcy Court, but their capital has diminished in such a way that they had to give up farming.

Disposal of sheep stock.

54,774. When a man gives up sheep farming how does he dispose of his stock?—He disposes of it by valuation to the in-coming tenant or the landlord.

54,775. Is it under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No; it is an old-established custom in Scotland, particularly in the Highlands.

54,776. Is the valuation taken at the time of outgoing?—Yes.

54,777. And the landlord or the in-coming tenant is compelled to take them?—Yes. It is a very common provision in the lease that the landlord or the in-coming tenant has to take the stock.

54,778. Have there been many cases in which the landlord has had to take over the sheep?—Very frequently within recent years.

54,779. And the land as well?—Yes.

54,780. And I suppose in many cases that has hit the landlord very hard?—It certainly has.

Tenant's capital.

54,781. Do you consider that a good deal of farming capital has been lost since 1885?—A good deal.

54,782. Is it shown in the diminution of the numbers of the sheep?—Well, possibly not so much in the diminution of the numbers of the sheep as in the restriction of profitable expenditure in the way of managing sheep.

54,783. Resulting in deterioration in the sheep themselves?—Quite so.

Breaks in leases.

54,784. Are 19 years' leases common in sheep districts?—No, not at all common. Fifteen years are more common, with breaks at the end of five years.

54,785. Have the breaks come in in recent years?—Oh, yes, it is quite a recent introduction, dating back possibly to 1880.

54,786. Do you think it is a beneficial practice?—I think it is.

Profits of sheep farming since 1885.

54,787–8. Do you consider that since 1885 there has been no interest earned as a rule on the capital invested?—That is the case as far as my experience goes. Possibly there may be exceptions, but that is the general rule, I think.

54,789. Do you think that where a man is careful and prudent, with a good command of capital, he can still hold his own?—I think so, if he gets all of the advantages—his holding at a reasonable rent, for instance.

Foreign competition.

54,790. What do you class as amongst the contributory causes of depression?—I think the first and principal is the large importations of foreign produce in the shape of mutton and wool from abroad.

Price of wool.

54,791. How much has your wool fallen in value?—Since 1870 it has fallen in value, on an average, 50 per cent. In the years following 1872 I think we were getting 1*s.* a lb, for black-faced wool for which we now only receive 5½*d.* and 6*d.*

54,792. You have not any remedies against low prices to suggest to us?—It is very difficult to suggest a remedy in that direction—in the direction of contending against foreign importations.

54,793. Sheep-farmers are not in favour of protection, as a rule?—No.

Cost of wintering sheep.

54,794. And the second cause that you lay stress upon is the excessive cost of wintering young stock?—Yes.

54,795. Has that increased largely during the last 20 years?—It has, very much.

54,796. How much do you say?—To the extent of 50 per cent., at least.

54,797. Then the farmers who are able to let their land in the Lowlands to the Highland farmers must be largely benefited?—A great deal of that increase has gone into the hands of the middlemen—men who contract for wintering large numbers of sheep. A great amount of the profits goes into their hands. But the Lowland farmers must be benefited likewise.

54,798. They contract for land as well?—They take large stretches of land and contract with the northern farmers.

54,799. They are ordinary Lowland farmers?—The contractors, they are mostly north countrymen, who go south in the early summer and take large extents of farms for wintering purposes.

54,800. Do you mean that they take farms from the ordinary occupiers?—Possibly they give so much per acre, or a lump sum for the whole farm. They have stated periods of entry and removal.

54,801. And the ordinary tenant comes in again?—He has control of the farm all the time, though he may be contracted as to privileges—as to use of grass, &c.

54,802. But the profit has gone to the middleman and not the farmer?—I believe the greater proportion of the increase has. It is a comparatively recent institution this contracting for wintering sheep.

54,803. At all events, to some extent, the Lowland farmer must have been benefited?—I admit that.

54,804. What has caused the cost of wintering to go up?—It is very difficult to explain. Sheep farmers are at a very great disadvantage compared with these middlemen. They have this advantage, that they can deal in a more profitable way with the south country farmers, and afford to give bigger rents than the sheep farmers single handed. When they contract for possibly 7,000 or 8,000 sheep, then they can make better terms with the south country farmers.

54,805. Do you think this is due to the superior business capacity of these people?—Possibly. They make a trade of it.

54,806. But it is difficult to understand why, when the value of all farming producrs has gone down, the cost of this particular thing should have increased 50 per cent.?—It is strange, but it is the case.

54,807. You speak with certainty to the fact that wintering costs you 50 per cent. more than 15 years ago?—Oh yes. It has an injurious effect.

Deterioration of hill pastures.

54,808. Are the hill pastures maintaining their quality and condition?—No: that is a fact that is getting very apparent now. The hill pastures do not carry the same amount of stock as they used to do, say, 25 years ago, and if a farmer persists in keeping the same number of stock, he notices a deterioration in the quality, and a large death rate.

54,809. What is the chief cause of hill pastures going back?—I think the principal cause must be the large quantity of constituents of the soil taken away in the shape of mutton and wool yearly, and nothing being put back.

54,810. I suppose nothing is given?—Nothing. There is no extraneous feeding whatever.

54,811. The manuring, if any, will be on a small scale?—On the northern hills there is no manuring whatever, except what the sheep leave in a natural way.

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54,812. No liming done?—No.

54,813. You say that for a long continuance of years there has been a constant drain on the land, and nothing put back?—That is so.

54,814. Does that necessitate increased expenditure on the part of the farmer? — Yes, by reducing the stock; sending more to wintering than formerly. In my own experience I know many farmers who were not in the habit of sending out two-year-old sheep at all, but now they are obliged to send them away.

54,815. What proportion of the whole stock is generally sent south?—With the yearling stock, possibly a fourth may be sent away.

Cost of wintering sheep.

54,816. What is the price you have to pay per 1,000 sheep for good average wintering? — This year, of course, has been rather an exceptional year. There has been extraneous feeding needed, but in an ordinary year I consider that 7*s.* to 7*s.* 6*d.* would be the average price of wintering black-faced hogs from 10th October to 1st April. This year, of course, that sum has been largely exceeded in many instances. It has been as much as 10*s.*, and I know one case in which it was 11*s.* This year the price of store sheep and fat sheep is relatively out of greater proportion than formerly.

Price of mutton.

54,817. What is the present price of a fat animal?—I think that a fair price for blackfaced wether mutton would be 9*d.* per lb.

54,818. What is the sheep's weight?—A good blackfaced sheep or old wether ought to weigh about 75 lbs. or 85 lbs.

54,819. (*Mr. Everett.*) Can you work the sum out for us? Is that the price that the hill farmer gets?—Oh, dear no. That is the price the feeder gets. The hill farmer very rarely feeds his sheep at all.

Scarcity and increased cost of labour.

54,820. (*Lord Cobham.*) And the fourth cause you give is the scarcity and the price of labour. That is one of the most serious difficulties we have to contend with. There has been an actual scarcity of labour in recent years.

54,821. How much labour do you employ yourself?—All the year round I employ about 10 hands on the farm. In harvest and lambing time there may be 12 or 14.

54,822. With about 2,000 acres of land?—Yes.

54,823. Do you find that the men are leaving the county?—Oh, yes. That is a common experience.

54,824. And seeking employment in large cities?—Yes.

54,825. And that the wages of those who remain have a tendency to increase?—Yes. That is the case.

Local rates.

54,826. Lastly, you lay stress on the great increase of local rates?—Yes, that is an experience that is common to every farmer in Scotland.

54,827. Can you give us the increase of the rates on your farm since 1880, or any time about that?—Since the imposition of the school tax—since the Education Act was passed—that has added 50 per cent. to our rates; and the passing of the Turnpike Roads' Act, whereby the rates were handed over to the counties, has entailed an additional expense of 15 per cent. at least.

Bad seasons.

54,828. You have had several very severe winters, but that is temporary?—Oh, yes, these are exceptional altogether, but it has been the cause of very serious loss this last winter.

Railway rates.

54,829. Have the farmers been benefiting by the opening up of country by the railways?—Oh, there is distinctly a benefit in that direction.

54,830. Do you send your sheep south by rail?—We send them north to Morayshire. We get exceptional advantages from the railways. We pay so much per waggon per mile of railway carriage and we get the sheep back free. Taken that distance it costs about 10*d.* or 1*s.* a head.

54,831. Is that a fair rate?—Yes. I think it is very reasonable.

Deterioration of sheep.

54,832. Consequent on the deterioration of the pasture you observe a deterioration in the sheep themselves?—Oh, yes, there is no question about that.

54,833. Is that wholly owing to loss of condition in the pasture?—Possibly. It is rather a disputed point. There are some who think that sheep are getting much softer now than formerly as the result of high breeding.

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54,834. Has there been much attention paid to the breeding of Highland sheep?—Oh, yes. I do not believe there is any other district in Scotland where greater attention has been paid to this than in the Breadalbane district. There has been quite a new industry sprung up there recently in the breeding of young blackfaced rams. I do not know whether it is to be profitable or not, but it is promising just now.

Breeding of Highland sheep.

54,835. Is the breed getting larger?—I do not know if the size has much increased, but they have effected a new line of reformation altogether.

54,836. As to the quality of the meat I suppose there is hardly much room for improvement?—By judicious breeding the type of animal may be, and the mutton may be, made somewhat more profitable.

54,837. But with these improvements do you think there is a certain loss of constitution?—I am afraid there is, because if sheep are bred in an unnatural sort of way, especially young blackfaced rams, from the month of October till the following year when they are kept under unnatural conditions in the house, with the temperature at 65 degrees, and clipped in the month of January, I cannot see how it could be otherwise.

54,838. Has the land been more neglected, comparatively, than in former times?—There is no doubt but there is a gradual deterioration going on. Even on mixed farms there is not the same attention given to it as formerly—not the same amount of labour spent upon it.

Hill draining

54,839. But as to permanent improvements, such as hill draining?—That has been very much neglected during the last 10 years. Ever since the tenants' capital has been a little curtailed hardly any attention has been given to it.

54,840. Are tenants expected to do hill draining?—They do it largely at their own expense, under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,841. They are mere cuts? — Yes, open drains, 18 inches broad by 10 inches deep.

54,842. And they are provided for under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

54,843. Do you think that draining is discouraged by the fear of sufficient compensation not being given?—I speak more particularly as to the provisions of the Breadalbane lease which is framed very much under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and it only allows 10 years to do away with unexhausted value through drains. These are not exhausted in 10 or 20 years, and there is a distinct benefit to be derived even at the end of 20 years.

54,844. The provisions of the Act are not adequate?—I cannot speak precisely about that.

54,845. Are you under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Oh, yes; we can take advantage of it.

54,846. Have you then agreements which override the Act on the Breadalbane estate?—No, I do not think so.

54,847. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) They lay down a scale for compensation?—Oh, yes.

54,848. What does it cost the hill tenant?—It depends on the locality, and much also on the nature of the ground—between 5*l.* and 6*l.* per 1,000 roods. Each rood is six yards, that is 6,000 yards.

54,849. Of course the hills do not require it, but only here and there?—Yes. Some hills are almost entirely undrained.

54,850. Does neglect of draining have a bad effect on the health of the stock?—Certainly it has.

54,851. And it diminishes the quantity?—Yes, and the quality as well.

54,852. (*Mr. Channing.*) You have no moor in Scotland?—Oh, yes.

Heather burning.

54,853. Is moor burning generally necessary?—Yes, and I believe that even landlords are beginning to see the advantage of that, both from a pastoral and sporting point of view. The more attention that has been given to burning to that extent the pasture has been improved.

Retention of labour on hill farms.

54,854. In what way do you think that labour can be retained on the hill farms?—I think that is a matter that rests almost entirely with the landlord. I think it is clearly his duty to make living as favourable for working men as possible. I think in the first place that landlords ought to try and build suitable cottages in connexion with every medium sized and large farm,

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and in a general way to make the surroundings even more attractive for them than in a great many cases they are.

54,855. Is there generally an insufficient supply of cottages?—I think so.

Rents of sheep farms.

54,856. What has been the fall of rents of sheep farms since 1885?—It would be very considerable, depending very largely on the situation and character of the farm. I think I have said that the fall of rental has varied from 25 to 40 per cent., and in some exceptional cases I know it has been as much as 60 per cent.

Farms in owners hands.

54,857. Are there many farms now in the hands of the owners?—Not so many as there were six years ago.

Competition for sheep farms.

54,858. Is there any increased competition for sheep farms?—There has been some slight spurt in letting within the last year or two.

54,859. Is it more difficult to let larger extents of land than less?—Oh, yes, much more so.

Amendment of Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,860. Do you think that any improvement in the condition of agriculture in your district can be secured by legislation?—Oh, yes. I think that legislation could help very considerably in the improvement of agriculture in the district.

54,861. By an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

Hill draining.

54,862. Do you think that hill draining might be more encouraged?—Certainly, because a great deal of very valuable and really productive land is going to waste for want of open and closed drains, especially in the old arable land.

State loans for improvements.

54,863. How would you amend the Act?—I think I would first of all lay great stress on the advancement of money to the landlords at a cheap rate of interest.

Simplification of Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,864. Yes; but as to the Act?—I would consider that the simplification of the Act would be of great advantage. We have had very little experience of working it in the north, but it is considered to be a costly process to get a claim substantiated under the Act, and a great many farmers who would claim are simply frightened from doing so, because it is getting to be a common experience—a great deal too common—that there are many losses in trying to establish claims.

54,865. Are you in favour of the suggestions of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes, I am.

Official valuers.

54,866. That is to say, simplification of the Act by the appointment of official valuators—one in each case I presume you mean?—Yes.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,867. By allowing compensation for cumulative fertility?—That would not apply to sheep farms—not to the same extent as arable land, although in a great many cases a great deal of money is being spent on improvements in the way of draining by the tenant and in the consumption of feeding stuffs and liming as well. They consider they have not a sufficient guarantee that the whole of the money expended there belongs to themselves—in fact that the great bulk of the money belonging to the tenant can be confiscated by the landlord.

54,868. Do you think that capital is kept out of the Highlands owing to the want of a sense of security?—I am of that belief.

State loans for improvements.

54,869. You have said that you advocate money being granted at a low rate of interest to the landowner?—Yes.

54,870. Not to tenants?—There would be considerably difficulty in granting loans to tenants. I think it would be a difficult matter to satisfy the Government as to the proper security required.

54,871. Has much money been borrowed by the landowners in the improvement of Highland estates?—A good deal has, I understand. I am not speaking with official knowledge. I understand it is the case.

54,872. Chiefly in buildings and fences?—Yes.

54,873. Are the farm buildings there good at present?—Yes. There is a very marked improvement in the state of farm buildings within the last 10 years.

54,874. But the cottages?—The cottages are very much neglected.

Railway rates.

54,875. You advocate the equalisation of railway rates?—Of course I mean by that that no preference should be shown to foreign-carried produce, as compared with home produce.

54,876. You think that the sale of foreign meat as home meat could be stopped by the branding of it as foreign?—I think so, that is my opinion.

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Marking of foreign meat.

54,877. That could hardly apply to small joints and pieces of meat sold by retail?—No, but the same purpose might be effected by registering the shops in which foreign meat is sold.

Agricultural education.

54,878. Do you think that the Highland farmer is keeping himself well abreast of the times in point of enterprise and intelligence?—I think so. I think that the average Highland sheep farmer shows as much intelligence and as much perseverance as the average Lowland farmer.

54,879. I suppose he has not, as a rule, had any scientific training?—No.

54,880. Is there room for that?—Yes, there is, certainly.

County Councils and agricultural education.

54,881. Are county councils doing anything in that direction?—Very little, not so much as they ought to do, in the opinion of a good many, and as far as the teaching of agricultural education is concerned it is simply waste of money. In the whole county of Perth there are only three or four schools in which agricultural education is taught to be of any use whatever.

54,882. You mean elementary schools?—Yes. It is taught as a specific subject, but in such an aimless sort of way it would be of no benefit.

54,883. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do the teachers know anything about it?—Very little.

54,884. (*Lord Cobham.*) Is anything done by the county councils for sheep farmers?—No; nothing whatever. They give grants to certain districts to be expended in a certain prescribed way, and it is left very much to the school boards, again, to see to the distribution of the money. It is handed over simply to the teacher, who possibly teaches agriculture as a specific subject in the school.

54,885. No attempt is made to instruct the farmers?—During the last year or two there has been a dairy class established in the eastern portion of the county.

54,886. As far as you are concerned, you have had nothing of this kind?—No.

54,887. Do you think that they could spend their money more advantageously than they do, in the encouragement of improved breeds, or anything of that kind?—Yes. I think they could spend it to much greater advantage than the way they are doing.

Particulars of witness' farm.

54,888–9. Do sheep farmers take much interest in that question?—Not much, hitherto. They are beginning to take interest in it.

54,890. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the proportion of arable land on your farm?—About a tenth.

54,891. Has that been profitable?—Oh, yes. It could not very well be otherwise, because the hill pasture extends to about 1,800 acres altogether.

54,892. And what crops do you grow?—Our land has grown oats, green crops, turnips, and potatoes, and after that oats; and then two crops of grass, one of which is pasture.

54,893. And worked with the sheepland, that has been profitable?—Oh, yes. These mixed farms have suffered less reduction in rent.

Decrease in number of sheep in Perthshire.

54,894. You are aware there has been a decrease in the number of sheep in Perthshire since last year?—Yes.

54,895. Something like 11,865?—Yes.

54,896. Has that been continuous for some years previously?—Yes; for two years back, I believe.

54,897. In spite of that, the price of wintering sheep has gone up?—Yes.

Cost of wintering sheep.

54,898. Because your own land is losing fertility?—Yes; and because it is recognised as good management to send as many of the good sheep off the ground as possible.

54,899. For change of air?—No; to avoid a heavy death-rate.

54,900. It is not due to loss of fertility?—Oh, no. What I said was, that there was a necessity for sending more of the young stock away than formerly, but it was always the case that this was done.

54,901. I thought you said it was due to the want of fertility in the pasture land that you found it necessary to send great numbers away at this time?—Yes.

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54,902. Would you kindly explain?—Oh, yes. Of course, in the first place it is considered necessary to send the whole of the young sheep away on most farms. A few may be kept, but it is getting more apparent, year by year, that most farmers who were only in the habit of sending one-year-olds send two-year-olds likewise.

54,903. Is that because they cannot bear the winter there?—Yes.

54,904. All the young stock is sent away?—Yes.

Deterioration of sheep.

54,905. You speak of want of constitution in your sheep. Is that shown by the increased death-rate?—It is, very largely.

54,906. And you say it is due to artificial conditions—to breeding and feeding?—A great many people think so.

Position of occupiers of mixed farms.

54,907. As a rule, have the tenants in Perthshire on the mixed farms made profits or otherwise?—There has been a distinct loss of capital during the last few years. Possibly they may be still holding their own, as well as any other class of farmers, but at the same time there has been a manifest sinking of capital generally.

Cost of wintering sheep.

54,908. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think some time ago your sheep went away at 1½*d.* per week?—Yes.

54,909. Now, when there is such a demand they charge you 3½*d.*?—Yes.

54,910. But will the tenant farmers not demand more for the young classes?—Possibly they do, but at the same time I think the sheep farmers suffer in a manner between them.

54,911. Regarding the arable farms?—Yes.

54,912. Regarding the sending away of sheep, the young sheep require, like all other animals, a change?—Yes.

54,913. And they come home renovated?—Exactly so.

Heather burning.

54,914. As to heather burning, there has been a good deal of dispute in regard to the game. Have you anything of that kind?—The proprietor has large rights.

54,915. Do they object to heather burning?—Yes.

54,916. Does grouse, as well as sheep, greatly improve by heather burning?—Most assuredly they do. There is no bigger mistake than to imagine anything otherwise.

Deterioration of sheep.

54,917. As to what you said about the softer condition of the sheep, does not that arise largely from the natural mode of keeping the rams in the house and feeding them?—Well, there is no doubt whatever but that is considered a very great tendency in softening the breed, and in destroying their hardness.

Hill drains.

54,918. As to hill drains, would they last more than 10 years?—They will last considerably more.

54,919. Are they substantially made?—Oh, yes, as a rule.

54,920. In the soft land will they remain open longer than 10 years?—Possibly not so long. On certain classes of land they will. But, more or less, drains when perfectly made are good for 20 years, while on others again they may be quite useless in 10.

54,921. Do you put parallel drains and sloped drains above the heather?—They run mostly parallel into a main drain, or into the natural channels. Sometimes they run across the slope of the hill.

54,922. The old-fashioned way was to have them more level?—Exactly so.

54,923. That helps to prevent the heather cutting into them?—Yes.

54,924. And you found that beneficial?—Yes.

Deterioration of sheep.

54,925. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you statistics as to the increase in the death rate of sheep, say, from the present day to 20 years ago?—No, unfortunately I have not.

54,926. But it is your belief that the death rate is higher?—Yes.

54,927. (*Lord Cobham.*) Does that show itself in lambing?—Not so much in lambing, as among the older sheep after wintering.

Consumption of Highland mutton.

54,928. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) There is a considerable change in the tastes of the consumer as to Highland mutton?—There is.

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54,929. Has that affected you sheep farmers in the north?—It may not affect us in the north so much as in the south, because in the north you cannot take advantage of this to the same extent as the south country farmers can. I refer to the breeding of wether lambs chiefly. We cannot possibly have them in the same condition in the month of August, and we are simply obliged to take an inferior price, although they may be equally well-bred. In the low lying grounds of the south they may have lambs six weeks further forward than we can.

Sheep-stock valuations.

54,930. In regard to the sheep stock valuations, have you a rule to go on for per-centage to be added to the value of the sheep as being home-bred stock? What do they add generally, the valuators?—The allowance varies in different counties. In Argyllshire, for instance, and the North, it is much greater than in Perthshire. In Perthshire the sum varies from possibly 4*s.* to 7*s.* and as much as 10*s.* per head.

Heather burning.

54,931. Is there any proposition of heather burning laid down in your lease?—No.

54,932. That is in the hands of the proprietor?—Yes.

54,933. But it is being better attended to than formerly?—Yes.

54,934. It is an advantage both for game and sheep to have a certain amount of heather for cover?—Oh, yes, certainly.

54,935. Have you heard anything being said as to restrictions in money loans lent to estates now in consequence of damage?—I have heard that to a very slight extent.

54,936. Are these views representative, as a rule, of sheep farming generally in Argyllshire, Perthshire, and Inverness-shire?—I consider they would be.

System of sheep farming in Perthshire.

54,937. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you keep a class of sheep—speckle-faced sheep?—Yes.

54,938. Is that the invariable class of sheep in the county?—Yes, it is the principal breed.

54,939. How old are your ewes when you first put them to the ram?—Possibly 16 or 17 months.

54,940. And in what month do your lambs fall?—In April and the beginning of May.

54,941. And about how many lambs do you reckon to the score of ewes?—We consider it a favourable result if we can manage 90 per cent.

54,942. Not quite one per head?—No.

54,943. When are they marketted?—In the month of August, as a rule.

54,944. Of the same year?—Yes, the wether lambs.

54,945. What kind of a price did they make last August?—A fair class of wether lambs from Perthshire would make from 8*s.* to 11*s.*

54,946. That is, perhaps, an average of 10*s.* each?—Yes.

54,947. (*Mr. Channing.*) About what is the average weight?—They were store sheep. Of course, they would not be very heavy.

54,948. How much longer are they kept before being marketted for mutton?—These lambs sold in August, if they are well cared for and strong and well-bred to begin with, might be fattened off towards the end of the following May. I know of Perthshire bred lambs sent south and fattened, and sent off about a month ago.

54,949. Is that process completed in the south?—Oh, yes, almost entirely.

54,950. They do not come back again?—Oh, no.

Depression in Perthshire.

54,951. On the whole I understand you to say that there has been considerable depression in your county—farmers have suffered a good deal?—Yes, that is the case.

Fall in rents.

54,952. And are they satisfied with present rents? Have they fallen enough to enable farming to be a living business without further reductions?—Rents are still falling. There is no upward movement in rents as far as I am aware.

54,953. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the price you received for those lambs in August fallen much of late years?—It has fallen very considerably, especially in 1892 and 1893. These same lambs which fetched 10*s.* last year sold in 1892 for 5*s.*

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54,954. They are doing better now?—Oh, yes.

54,955. What did they sell for before 1892?—Well, the price varied—possibly from 16*s.* would be the biggest price.

54,956. What was the average price some 10 years ago?—Last year's might be considered as an average price for the last 15 or 16 years.

54,957. Last year they were not very bad in price?—No; fair prices ruled, although they were not what one considers fair buying prices.

Price of wool.

54,958. Which part of your produce has fallen most in price? In what article have you lost most in consequence of the fall of prices in late years?—Prices of sheep and wool.

54,959. Wool would be the greatest?—Yes.

Position of occupying owners and tenant farmers compared.

54,960. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are there many occupying owners in the district you represent?—Comparatively few.

54,961. What is their position as compared with tenant farmers?—I do not think they compare very favourably with the tenant farmer. The tenant farmer has fared quite as well as any.

Demand for farms.

54,962. Is there much demand for farms in your district?—There is a fair demand for the smaller sized holdings. For the larger ones there is hardly any demand at all.

54,963. But for small farms there is always a steady demand?—Yes, although the rents have fallen in proportion.

Relations of landlords and tenants.

54,964. Are landlords and tenants on fairly good terms?—Oh, yes. There is no bad feeling as far as I am aware.

54,965. Generally they arrange the rent?—Oh, yes.

Sale of sheep.

54,966. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you sell off all the wether lambs every year?—Oh, yes.

54,967. You do not sell sheep at two or three years old?—Of course the same practice is not adopted on two farms. Some who occupy very high ground do not sell off till they are three years old.

54,968. Still, that is not the general practice with regard to the ewes?—The more common practice is to sell the wether lambs.

54,969. One reason for the decrease in the number of sheep was the very bad season of 1892?—Yes, that largely accounted for it.

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Effects of bad season of 1892.

54,970. And the prices in the autumn sales then were exceedingly bad?—Yes, they were the worst ever experienced, I believe, in Scotland. Some sheep only sold at a shilling or two. I saw good lambs sold for less than 2*s.*

54,971. Did that involve the sheep farmers in very heavy loss?—Yes, losses over which they have not got yet, and will not for many years to come.

54,972. Were there many remissions of rent owing to that?—No, there were very few remissions of rent. Except in one or two instances, there were none at all.

54,973. And I believe tenant farmers had to fall back on their own resources largely. Are most of these farmers men of considerable capital?—Yes, the larger sheep farmers in Perthshire are a most substantial body of men.

Size of sheep farms.

54,974. Are the farms larger now than ten or fifteen years ago?—There is not very much difference as far as I know, although there is a process of consolidation going on.

54,975. There is a tendency still to consolidate these sheep farms?—Yes.

Agricultural education.

54,976. About agricultural education, is there any agricultural education given at the Scottish Universities now?—Oh yes, any one desirous of becoming proficient in agricultural science can have an opportunity of doing so.

Price of wool.

54,977. (*Mr. Clay.*) The greatest reduction will be through the low price of wool?—Yes.

54,978. And it is to be lower still?—Yes.

Deterioration in quality of wool.

54,979. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you improving the quality of your wool?—I do not think so. I think we are rather going in the opposite direction, because there is no very distinct change in the class of wool of what is considered to be the profitable type of sheep. The wool is very much coarser than it used to be, and it does not suit the purposes of spinners so well as formerly; and I believe that has a great deal to do with the low price we are getting for wool.

54,980. Do you consider generally, that hill farmers have suffered as much as arable farmers in Perthshire?—I think the arable farmers have suffered more.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. W. Rutherford.

Mr. Walter Rutherford called and examined.

Mr. W. Rutherford.

54,981. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a tenant farmer?—Yes.

54,982. On a farm on the border?—Yes. I farm about 360 acres of land, and I am responsible for the management of 2,700 acres of arable land besides.

54,983. As a factor?—No. I am manager of a trust.

54,984. Is all that let on or near the border?—Yes.

54,985. In what county?—The county of Roxburgh.

54,986. You are a farmer of experience, having been connected with farms all your life?—Yes.

Depression in Roxburgh.

54,987. Is there much depression in that part of the county with which you are most familiar?—Oh, yes. There is a great deal, as shown by the large fall of rents and by the decreased fertility of the soil, and also by the paying off of labour. I can speak pretty freely on this subject because I happen to be in the manure and cake trade; and having a lot of customers who are indebted to us, we see their balances and we can judge of the depression—of how the thing is working.

54,988. Are they buying less quantities of feeding stuffs and manures?—They are, and that, unfortunately, towards the end of the lease. Just this last year some said "now we want something that will take it out of "the land. We wish to reduce the fertility, because if "we leave it full of condition we will be rented on our "own improvements."

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

54,989. So they are running it out?—Yes.

54,990. Are they claiming compensation for those manures used in this process?—I do not think so.

54,991. In such cases as these there is probably very little passing between the incoming and the out-going tenant?—Almost nothing.

54,992-3. Do you think that that is a very bad system from a public point of view?—It is bad from a farming point of view, and I shall tell you why. On four farms I manage we pay in rent and manures 3,244*l.* This year the amount spent on feeding stuffs was 3,030*l.* It was something the same last year, and I, as a practical man, have seriously to consider whether that is the best plan, because unless we are to receive ample compensation under the Agricultural Holdings Act, we are to be placed at a decided disadvantage at the end of the lease in this way. The effect of using all that cake and manure, &c. on these farms is to get them up to a state of fertility which has not been attained on very many of the farms around, and at the end of the lease a class of men whom we have in our part of the country, called "land suckers," will be brought in. A man whose object is to exhaust the cumulative fertility which has been left by another tenant and put it in his pocket may be called in, and he very naturally says, "I will give "200*l.* more a year for the next 10 years in order that "I may enter and suck this fertility from the land."

54,994. Do you think it is in the interest of the landlord to take such a tenant?—No, but necessity has no law. I believe that 10 years ago men of that stamp were greatly preferred—land suckers, as I call them, but I believe now that landlords are beginning to see that those men who offer high interest have no security, and that the capital of the land will be exhausted and put into the tenant's pocket.

54,995. To meet that do you endeavour to negotiate with your landlord a considerable period before the expiry of the lease?—Well, to tell you the truth, I have trusted a great deal to the landlords themselves. If you get into a good estate it is all right. I happen to

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farm on two very good estates. You are safe enough there, but if you are farming under a very small man who has a lot of bonded money, or on a large estate where there is a lot of bonded money, and ready money may be advantageous, a good farmer is farming at a great disadvantage.

Valuators under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

54,996. Would you amend the Agricultural Holdings Act in the direction frequently suggested?—Practically on the lines Mr. Hope has suggested, except that I should have a valuator over each county, who would be as conversant with the farms as he is with his own business.

54,997. You mean one for every average sized county?—Yes.

54,998. And more for a larger county?—Yes.

54,999. So that local valuators should always be employed?—Yes, I think so. One effect of that would be this: it would be a terror to evil-doers, to these land suckers who would know perfectly well that if they entered a farm they would have to pay for the privilege of exhausting the cumulative fertility in it.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

55,000. How would you judge of the comparative fertility of the soil at the beginning and end of the 19 years' lease?—I would say this, a practical valuator should go over that farm. The vouchers should be kept during the time of the lease—all the time, every year, the vouchers for cake, manure, &c. used on the farm; duplicates to be sent to the factor on the estate; reference to be made in general evidence as to, say, the cleanliness of the farm, the buildings kept in good order; and a comparison made of the fall of rent on that farm with other farms round about. Supposing a certain farm fell 20 per cent., and that the average fall round about was 40 to 45 per cent., I maintain that, to be fair to the tenant with 25 per cent. less of a fall, the difference, which is the tenant's, is really in the landlord's pocket, which at 20 years' purchase represents 4,000*l*. Take, for instance, this farm we are talking about. Suppose it were to be let to-morrow, I have no doubt it would make the same rent as at present is being paid, but that is not the average fall of the farms round about. The average fall is 40 per cent. to 45 per cent. This farm, perhaps, might fall not more than quite likely 28 per cent. The balance between the two is not caused by anything the landlord has done, but by the enormous amount of cake eaten on that land. Mr. Riddell, in his evidence, referred to the matter in regard to grass land. The cake is being used year after year, and it cannot be withdrawn from the soil. The valuator then forms his judgment in that way. A farm was let at from 1,800*l*. to 1,900*l*.; when the bad times came on, the rent was reduced to 1,300*l*. That was a fall of rather under 30 per cent., but there are farms in the district there, close at hand, that had falls of 40 per cent., while, with expended monies which landlords have to give, all these farms have fallen very nearly 50 per cent. in rent. Therefore, the fall on that farm would be only 28 per cent., while on the average of others it would be 40 per cent. to 45 per cent.

55,001. Do you think the valuator, by comparing the farm he is valuing with the adjacent farms, in addition to considering the vouchers during the period of the lease, could form a sufficient opinion as to the increase of the cumulative fertility of the farm brought about?—Yes; that is to say, without any preliminary scheduling of the land.

55,002. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say that in your neighbourhood the depression is, to some extent, due to deterioration in farming?—Yes.

55,003. And that a great deal of the land is run out. While that is going on, you would not take the difference between the land that is well-farmed and the land that has been run out as representing cumulative fertility?—You have got to make some allowance. I quite understand your position. I do not wish to compare a farm that has fallen 50 per cent. in rent, but one which has been fairly well farmed with one which has been exceedingly well farmed. Well, my late father-in-law took a farm 26 years ago; it carried something like 800 to 1,000 sheep, but by his exertions and by the money laid out on it, the farm is now keeping from 1,700 to 2,000 sheep. That shows that there has been a cumulative fertility there, and if that farm can keep all that growth in the stock, it has been caused entirely by the tenant for this reason, that what the landlord did was to spend money on the buildings, on the farm-house and cottages, while my late father-in-law spent his money on the stocking of the farm, on draining, liming, and boning it.

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55,004. (*Chairman.*) To carry out this system, local knowledge is absolutely necessary?—It is absolutely necessary.

Scheduling condition o farm.

55,005. Do you recommend in addition the scheduling of the farm by the valuator at the beginning of every lease?—I think that might be done. I do not think that is what the man could go upon, however.

55,006. If expense could be saved you would save it, of course?—Yes; but still it would have a certain advantage in this way, that it would let the valuator know in what state the farm was got.

Valuators under Agricultural Holdings Act.

55,007. Are these the main amendments of the Agricultural Holdings Act that you would like to see introduced?—Yes; it is practically in Hope's memorandum with the first clause deleted, namely, that a valuator should be appointed for each county. (*See* Appendix A I.)

Compensation for cumulative fertility

55,008. You would have nothing to do with the existing schedules?—I would not, because I can imagine this, that the man who is up in his business in this land-sucking—it opens up a wide area—may be using a great amount of cake, and at the same time be using sulphate of ammonia, or nitrate of soda, and superphosphate. He is practically exhausting at the same time, as he is putting fertility in; and I think that to give any compensation to that man, who, during the whole of his lease was using nitrates or sulphate of ammonia, would be ridiculous compared with the man, who had been boning his place and causing increased fertility.

55,009–10. Do you think a man can go on for 19 years running out his farm and make a good thing out of it?—I do not think he can do it now. I think in another 10 years there will be no need for an Agricultural Holdings Act under the present system, because the bulk of the best class of men are getting so frightened as to say "if we are to have no security, we must make preparation." There have been certain cases in the Borders that have shaken the faith of the best farmers in keeping their farms in a very high state of cultivation.

55,011. I assume that you have maintained or increased the value of your farm, and consequently there will be no reduction of rent, so that the landowner can afford to pay compensation; but in the case of many farms in England, there might be a very heavy fall of rent, notwithstanding intelligence and good farming on the part of the tenant?—Oh, yes.

55,012. Supposing that instead of your farm being re-lettable at the same rent it could only be relet at a much reduced rent, the landowner would still be called upon to pay the same amount of compensation to you under your scheme?—Not if the fall in rent were the average fall in the district. I cannot see how he should be called upon to do that.

55,013. If compensation has to be paid, although rents are falling, it is obvious that the landlord would have to pay out of some outside fund?—Yes, in the event of my leaving a farm the landlord would require simply to borrow the money.

55,014. Consequently his ruin would be only a question of time if such a state of things went on?—If the present state of things go on, and there is deterioration of the land taking place, it is only a question with a great many landlords of extinction.

55,015. In any case his extinction is only a question of time?—No, not in the case where there is a good tenant.

55,016. One who is able to maintain the rent?—Yes.

55,017. But in a great many parts of England, notwithstanding all the efforts of good farmers, rents have heavily fallen?—Yes. I do not consider that the land of our country has ever got a fair chance. The land of the country should be farmed to its maximum, year after year. No man should enter on a 19 years' lease and say "I have the first 10 years "to build up fertility, and the next nine to withdraw "it." That is a loss to the nation. There is no doubt about it.

55,018. (*Mr. Channing.*) He ought to leave it at the end of 19 years as good as ever?—It should be as good then as ever.

55,019. (*Lord Cobham.*) If that had been more largely the case, depression would have been much less than

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it is?—Yes, it would have been less, because the land would have been producing more.

55,020. How would you obtain the compensation in the case of a landowner who is quite unable to put the money down?—Supposing you were the sitting tenant and willing to go on in the occupation of the farm, but supposing your landlord was unable to pay you a lump sum to satisfy the award of the valuator, I suppose you would wish to continue the holding at a reduced rent, the reduction being sufficient to recoup you the amount of the award?—No. I would be perfectly willing to let the award lie over, but that in the event of the tenant ever leaving the holding the money should be handed over to him.

55,021. You would be receiving interest in the meanwhile?—Well, I would not say high interest, but I think that should be left as a sort of guarantee to the tenant. The landlord could say "Very well, I am "to put this man out; I know that this money has "to be paid, but as long as he does not leave the farm "this money will lie."

Fixing of rents.

55,022. And you would leave the fixing of rent, as at present, a matter of agreement between the parties?—Yes. In all this evidence I wish you clearly to understand that I have been uncommonly well dealt with by all my landlords.

Farmers with insufficient capital.

55,023. I think you wish, in addition to the discouragement of the investment of capital in land, to point out some other causes of the present depression. Would you just enumerate them?—Well, there is this in some parts. There is a want of capital amongst a great many farmers. There are a great many men taking a farm of 600 to 700 acres on the principle of, say, 4*l.* per acre of capital—2,000*l.* to 3,000*l.* That may be enough money to stock the farm with, but to do justice to the farm is a very different thing. That farm may also require cleaning, draining, fencing, liming and building, which the landlord, owing to his obligations, is unable to perform. This man, who is accepted as the tenant, is in very much the same position as the landlord, because he can do nothing for the farm, and the minimum of fertility is got instead of the maximum.

55,024. That is to some extent part of the subject we have already dealt with?—Yes.

55,025. You say farms are taken by men with insufficient capital; whereas you think that by an improvement of the Act sufficient capital would be encouraged to come in?—Yes.

Foreign competition.

55,026. You speak of the enormous area of fertile land abroad which is now competing with us?—Yes. For instance, take the question of barley. California can grow better barley than is grown in this country, and the extra price paid for it here will far more than pay the cost of transit.

55,027. A good deal of it has been developed by Scotsmen?—Yes, by our own kith and kin.

55,028. And by British money?—Yes.

55,029. And a great deal of it has not come back again?—Yes, that is quite true.

Freedom of cropping.

55,030. Will you take the other causes of depression?—Yes. There is one thing I would like to explain here with regard to the growth of the crops. On our second rate land an extra six bushels an acre would make all the difference between keeping that land in cultivation and allowing it to go out of cultivation. Going out of cultivation means that all the people and horses have to be paid off, but if by better farming an extra six bushels an acre were grown, that land could be kept in cultivation, and all the people employed upon it.

Freedom of sale.

55,031-2. Do you consider that there are too great restrictions on cultivation at present?—I would not, as a practical man, ask for an open lease. I would be perfectly willing to give a man any limit on cultivation, provided the land was not deteriorated. For instance, here is a case of it. In one of the farms we were not allowed to sell straw, but the proprietor has never enforced that clause. Last year on that farm the straw could have been sold off if we had wished. The value of the straw for making into manure was something like 10*s.* to 15*s.* per ton, but the value of the straw for fodder was 3*l.* 15*s.* per ton. It would be a great advantage to farmers if they were allowed whenever they thought fit to sell straw or hay from the farms, provided they replaced the fertility in the shape of manure. It would be no hardship to the landowner, but in a year like two years ago it would have been of immense advantage to the farmer. I think that factors and landowners might be very much more alive to the good of the tenant in allowing him to sell in the best market.

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55,033. But still if there is freedom of sale and a man sells more straw or other produce than is good for the farm he would be a sufferer at the end of the lease?—Oh, he would; but any good farmer who sold straw would buy back manure.

55,034. Could not that be left to the valuator at the end of the tenancy?—I think it should be a matter of agreement.

Freedom of cropping.

55,035. In regard to cropping, would you say the same?—Yes, that the landlord should have the power when he saw the farm deteriorating to step in and save himself.

Effect of law of entail.

55,036. You consider that the existence of entail has a prejudicial effect on agriculture?—I do.

55,037. You mean by tying a landowner's hands?—Take, for instance, a man who has no children from whom the estate passes into another's hands. That man says "Oh, I am only a trustee. I must try and "get as much out of this place as I can, because I have "no inducement to keep up the cumulative fertility of "this soil."

55,038. Do you think that the management of estates by trustees has been harsh, or oppressive?—I have not had much experience, but I think they should have much wider power. I think they really should have the same powers as the owner of the estate.

55,039. And not be placed in positions of such risk as they occupy at present?—No. I do not think they should.

Light railways.

55,040. Is there a demand for light railways on the borders of Scotland?—I believe that a system of light railways will do more good for agriculture than almost anything we can have.

55,041. How should they be worked?—In this way, that the money should be provided first by the State.

55,042. (*Mr. Channing.*) How much?—The whole of it at 2½ per cent. The landlords should give the land for nothing, and in the event of the railway not paying the 2½ per cent. a tax should be put on the district through which the railway passes. I give you my own case. If a light railway were made from Mindrum to Kelso, a distance of 12 to 14 miles, at a cost of, say, 4,000*l.* a mile, the saving alone in labour to the farms would more than pay 2½ per cent. on the money.

55,043. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think farmers would be able to keep fewer horses?—Yes. I will give you my own case. I have 12 pairs of horses going on this farm. If a railway were brought within a mile of the farm it would be a saving of 150*l.* per annum.

55,044. The stations being about what distance?—About three to five miles apart.

55,045. And is that the view of your neighbours?—There are near me a few farms, in fact, along the four first miles of railway there are four farms that would be easily worth 150*l.* more a year if a railway were there.

54,046. When you speak of light railways, what would you consider the cost to be per mile?—I should say about 4,000*l.* per mile.

55,047. (*Mr. Channing.*) Of the ordinary gauge?—Yes, in our district it could be done.

55,048. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think 2½ per cent. could be earned?—Yes.

55,049. (*Mr. Everett.*) What do you contemplate passing over the railway to and from the farms?—Take this farm I am talking about. It is just out of lease now, but in the event of it being retaken and limed there would be at least 8,000 tons of lime required. There would be on an average 150 tons to 180 tons of cake, and from 70 tons to 100 tons of manure alone that would pass over the railway.

55,050. What would go off from the farm by the railway?—There would be on an average upwards of, I should think, about 180 tons to 200 tons of corn leaving this farm, and there would be the carriage of, perhaps, 1,400 sheep and 80 to 90 cattle; and I, as a practical man, would be perfectly prepared, in the event of the money being spent or advanced for a light railway, and it not paying 2½ per cent. that a tax should be put on the land.

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55,051. (*Lord Cobham.*) And you would be able to pay substantial rates for the carriage of your produce?—Oh, yes; because there would be a saving.

55,052. It would require somewhat high rates?—I do not see why it should. I have not had much experience about the traffic, but if the half of the receipts would keep up the line or anything like it, it could easily be wrought.

55,053. (*Mr. Channing.*) The traffic brought on to the main line would not be considered merely in regard to the branch line, but it would bring profitable traffic to the main line?—Yes.

55,054. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are there many farms more remote from the railway station than yours?—Oh, yes, there are some much further off; but a railway brought to a farm that keeps 10 pairs of horses, and where the corn has to be driven five miles, it would make a difference of one pair and a half of horses, or 140*l.* a year.

55,055. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You do not keep them for that purpose alone, do you?—No; but on that farm there are one pair and a half of horses which do nothing else but cart.

55,056. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are the roads hilly?—No. The farms about me are very big—those that would be benefitted. There is one 1,200 acres, another 2,200, and another 1,500.

55,057. You do not think these railways, notwithstanding the prospects of profit, could be made by local efforts?—No, I do not think they could.

55,058. Or by the existing railway companies?—No, I do not think they would be made.

Decline of dairying.

55,059. Is yours a dairying country to a large extent?—No, but the reason I have put in is this, that owing to the enormous foreign competition the butter produced by the cows in our district has fallen so enormously in price—in fact, has been refused, being so badly made—that unless we are to have some system by which dairies could be set up at convenient centres, and the milk sent there and made into good butter to compete with New Zealand butter, it seems to me that the industry will in our district come to an end.

55,060. But you think that with greater skill in the manufacture of butter your country is well able to compete with foreign countries?—Yes, provided that skill were displayed in the shape of dairy-made butter.

55,061-3. Have you no factories or creameries?—There is one in the west part of the country which has been a fair success. On this farm where I am there used to be 14 cows. There are now either four or five, and workpeople—so low has the price of butter become—instead of producing butter to compete with the butter of foreign countries, and factory-made butter, are now commencing to feed young stock, such as calves. Well, if a man, instead of producing butter, begins and feeds three calves in the year—these calves are sold as veal—it is to have a very bad effect in regard to the supply of young stock, because the calves are getting their throats cut at quite likely six weeks or two months old, and supply of the raw material in the shape of cattle for feeding will become *non est.*

55,064. Has your county council established an experimental farm, or anything of that kind?—No, we had a lecturer some time ago; but the people who have cows have not the appliances to compete with this factory-made stuff.

Experimental dairy stations.

55,065. Should you recommend an experimental farm?—Yes, if two or three counties went together.

55,066. For dairy purposes?—Yes.

55,067. Has that been done in Scotland?—No.

55,068. Do you think the farmers have a good deal to learn on the scientific side of their business?—I do.

Farmers' style of living.

55,069. Lastly, you consider that there is still room for a good deal more economy in living by owners, and tenants of land?—What I mean by that is this, and it applies to myself. you had one witness here the other day whose evidence I read. He said that he was getting 10 per cent. from his investment. 3,000*l.* invested in land looks good at 300*l.* a year, and I believe a great many men have gone into land investment expecting to receive this 10 per cent. In our district we have a great many men who are not absolutely dependent on agriculture. I, myself, could never have stayed in my farm had not I had a business. But there are a great many of independent means, and I think that a great many young farmers have gone into farming thinking that as Mr. So-and-So can afford to drive about they shall be able to do this off a farm. But the fact is, that Mr. So-and-So is not driving off his farm at all, but off some other business. Therefore, if a man is to put 3,000*l.* into land he cannot expect 300*l.* a year.

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55,070. Are there many farms in your district of less than 100 acres?—Very, very few.

55,071. So that the farmers, for the most part, are men who have to exercise supervision rather than labour with their own hands?—The great bulk of them have to exercise supervision.

55,072. They naturally have lived in very much the same style as their fathers before them?—Oh yes, but there are a great many men in our district who are not dependent on the farms for their living.

55,073. Has there not been a great reduction in the style of living?—Oh, yes, there has been that.

55,074. But you do not think it has gone far enough?—Well, we will have to exercise far greater economy if we are to hold our own.

Schedule of Agricultural Holdings Act.

55,075. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) About these schedules in the Act, I understand you would rather like to abolish the schedules altogether?—Yes. I have not had experience of the Act.

55,076. Would you like the tenant, without asking consent, to have power to make rotations?—No, I would not.

55,077. That is contained in the schedules?—I think the landlord and tenant should try and arrange these matters themselves.

55,078. (*Lord Cobham.*) I think you mean that Part III. should be abolished?—Yes.

55,079. That the improvements for which the consent of the landlord is not required should not be in themselves subjects for compensation?—Yes.

55,080. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) But now I understand you to say that as to these permanent things, with the exception of laying down for permanent pasture, the consent of the landlord should still be required?—Yes.

55,081. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding the consent of the landlord for No. 1, less the permanent improvements which have been suggested, you say that in reference to these things that the landlord may refuse, and it should be left to the official referee to say whether they are desirable or not?—I, myself, would be in favour of getting the landlord's consent.

55,082. And if the landlord should refuse, would you leave it to the official referee to say whether that improvement should be left to the tenant to do it, if it were to be of advantage to the letting value of the farm?—Oh yes, if it were to be of that advantage.

55,083. You would allow the official referee to settle that point?—Yes, in the event of the landlord refusing.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

55,084. I think you said that if you improved a farm up to the last year of the lease, you then being the sitting tenant, you would let the compensation lie. Do you mean that you would not ask the landlord to pay the compensation, but that you would like to be rented on the value of the interest of the money of that compensation?—Oh, no. If that money were lying free of interest, then I do not see why the sitting tenant should be charged upon his own improvement.

55,085. It would come to this. Seeing that the farm was valued by an arbiter or valuator, and he would value the farm on the present condition of your improvements, and say there was 1,000*l.* exhausted on your improvements, you would then consider that there should be 6 per cent. or 7 per cent.—60*l.* or 70*l.* a year—taken off that valuation. In that way you would be paid an interest on your money—that you might have received?—I would say 40 per cent. to 50 per cent.—about 45 per cent.

55,086. And the 45*l.* met you in the capital?—Oh, no. I do not quite understand the question.

55,087. Say you have made compensation up to the value of 1,000*l.* If you had left the farm you would get full compensation from the landlord?—Yes.

55,088. If you took the farm would 4½ per cent. please you for the allowance?—Oh, no. If the 4½ per cent. were to cover the principal, if the 4½ per cent. were to cover this 1,000*l.* it would never do at all. It would

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require to be 8 per cent. deducted. I should say it would take, well, I really have not thought much about it, it would take the capital sum of 1,000*l.* spread over so many years. It would take 80*l.* or 90*l.* per year to exhaust that sum in that time.

55,089. As to dairying, you say it is not a dairy county, yours?—No, it is not.

Effect of fall in price of butter.

55,090. You say the process going on just now, as to the price of butter, has this effect, that the agricultural servants are obliged to fatten their calves for sale, so that about 50 per cent. goes to the veal market instead of being reared for keeping stock?—Yes.

55,091. That will act very much against the young stock of the farm?—Very much.

55,092. And you say that in a short time there will be difficulty for want of stock to feed?—Yes, there will be.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

55,093. In regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, I may say, although you agree with Mr. Hope, that the whole thing is to give good security, bring as much capital into the land as possible to enable the farmer to get his compensation out of it, as well as keep up the fertility of the soil for the benefit of the country?—Yes.

55,094. (*Mr. Everett.*) The Scottish farmers are large consumers of artificial manure, are they not?—Some of them are.

55,095. Do the average Scottish farmers use a good deal every year?—They do, as a rule.

55,096. Which would they spend most on—artificial manure, or feeding stuffs?—Artificial feeding stuffs.

55,097. You contemplate, I gather from your evidence, that high farming is the farming that will pay best, that is, you want the Agricultural Holdings Act improved so as to protect high farming?—Yes, I do.

55,098. Is it not a fact, in recent years, that low farming has paid better than high? Have not those lost least who have lent it least?—No, I do not think so.

55,099. Not in Scotland?—No. I think the men who have spent most money in sunk improvements on the land have lost the big bulk of their capital.

55,100. We have rather an impression that high prices and high farming go well together, and low prices and low farming in England. You would hardly go so far?—No, I would not.

Foreign competition.

55,101. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You give three main causes of depression; one, the enormous area of fertile land abroad, developed by capital from this country?—Yes.

55,102. That cause, would you say, has been a great benefit to the country as a whole?—Yes.

55,103. And you would not wish, if it were possible, to stop it in any way?—No, it is impossible.

55,104. Then your second cause is the high prices that prevailed some years ago?—Yes.

Stability of prices.

55,105. Still, you would not wish to do anything to bring back high prices, I suppose, temporarily?—No, because I believe that if we have them it might lead to the very same thing again.

55,106. What you would prefer would be stability of prices?—Yes.

Deterioration of farming.

55,107. And your third main cause is the deterioration of farming?—Yes.

55,108. Has not that entailed a very serious loss on the landlords?—Oh, eventually it comes on the landlord.

55,109. Yes, but I suppose it has come nearly entirely on the landlords, has it not. Have not tenants got the benefit of it where they have worked the land out?—Well, they have been enabled by this process of exhaustion to pay the rents they had promised.

55,110. You think that the rents were too high?—Yes.

Fall in rents.

55,111. What is the average rent now in your district?—Oh, I should think 25*s.* to 32*s.* an acre—as high as 2*l.* of course in some cases; but I think the average would be 27*s.* or 28*s.*

55,112. You said there had been a heavy fall?—Yes.

55,113. What was the highest price ever commanded?—Oh, 60*s.* is the highest. I should say 60*s.* land has come down to 2*l.*, and land at 40*s.* down to 27*s.*

55,114. And what you want to have is a system which shall reward the good farmer and punish the landsucker?—Yes, that is it.

55,115. But it is very difficult to get such a system, is it not?—I do not think it is so very difficult.

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55,116. Well, take first the landsucker?—Yes.

Penalty for bad farming.

55,117. Would not there be a disposition not to penalise him very heavily? Would it not be an invidious thing to fine him? It is always difficult to recover a heavy penalty. Would not an arbiter be indisposed to place a very heavy penalty upon him for bad farming?—Not at all. Why should he think he is an honest man?

55,118. Well, then, will the landsucker always be in a position to pay this penalty?—Ah! that is a very different question; but there is just this, that the landsuckers would become so well-known that the landlords would not take them.

55,119. You mean to say they will not take a man who has had a heavy penalty put on him in a particular farm?—They would not take a man who is well-known as a landsucker or reducer of land.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

55,120. I suppose, as you consider the deterioration of farming one of the main causes of the depression, if this system of paying for cumulative fertility and punishing for deterioration had been in force, and could have been worked perfectly well, it would be of benefit to the landlord, for he would have received more on account of deterioration than he would have to pay for cumulative fertility?—I think so.

55,121. Therefore, if a proper system could be devised, you think it would be to his advantage as well as to the advantage of a good tenant?—Yes.

55,122. You do not feel any doubt whatever about the practicability of such a system?—Of course, there are difficulties in all systems, but once it were in operation it should be comparatively easily managed.

Light railways and rating.

55,123. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are farms which are near railway stations let for more rent than those at a distance?—A great deal more.

55,124. How much?—I should think 5*s.* an acre.

55,125. Who gets the 5*s.*?—The landlord ultimately receives it.

55,126. Well, you advocate these light railways, and you will have the cost defrayed by the rates, I suppose?—I would have the cost defrayed, in the event of the railways not being able to pay 2½ per cent. for the money, by a tax being laid on the land.

55,127. Where would you draw the line, now? I mean to say there are farmers who are living near railway stations, and it would not benefit them in any way, would it?—I would draw the line here, that I would only lay a tax on the land which was actually benefitted—the district through which the railway passed.

55,128. How would you manage that? Say there is one farm within two miles, and another within 10 miles of the railway station?—Well, I think with 2½ per cent. that that question would not come up much. The question of taxation would be so very small. I do not think that any man would grudge it. The man who would receive most benefit would be the landowner. In the event of the currency of the lease coming to an end the man who would get the plum at the finish would be the landlord.

55,129. You do not in your scheme propose to make him do anything towards the erection of these railways?—Eventually it would come off him.

55,130. How?—Because the tenant would require to give less rent for the farm if there was this tax laid on. What I mean is this. Take my farm. In the event of the railway being able to pay 2½ per cent. for the money, and the cess coming to, say, 1*d.* per 1*l.*, that is 5*l.* per annum, that 5*l.* would be paid by the tenant, and if the tenant thought at the end of the lease he required to keep paying on this he would require to give 1,295*l.* instead of 1,300*l.*

Freedom of sale.

55,131. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you sold off the straw from your farm?—No, not off that farm.

55,132. Still, you advocate selling off straw?—Yes.

Light railways.

55,133. Would not that be one advantage of light railways to distant farms?—Yes, it would.

55,134. That is if you are placed at a distant farm as regards the selling off of produce or straw, and bringing back manure from the town?—Precisely.

55,135. It would tend to equalise agricultural prices and profits?—Yes.

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55,136. And you speak of the light railways being on the same gauge as ordinary railways?—Yes.

55,137. That, of course, is a saving as regards the handling of the goods?—Yes.

55,138. But would not the very narrow gauge with light rolling stock be of great advantage to many of the hill farms?—Oh, it might be in some parts, but the transit of sheep would be a very serious affair.

55,139. Has any action been taken as to light railways in Scotland?—No, not that I have heard of. The Royal Agricultural Society of England sent out a circular on the subject.

55,140. There have been no meetings to promote the matter?—No.

Compensation for cumulative fertility.

55,141. Now as to the assessment of the deterioration or increased value, does not the whole system depend on the approximately correct estimate of the condition of the farm at entry?—Yes.

55,142. Would you support that idea as a general rule?—Yes.

55,143. Mr. Everett asked you some questions about how far it pays. I understand you have been working some land on your own principle of cultivating it to the highest point?—Yes.

55,144. Do you find it pays?—I believe that to farm land in the best way possible, for a man who intends to remain a long time in the farm, it would pay. Taking one year with another, it pays rent better to have the farm in the highest condition of fertility than in a half-and-half or inferior condition. I can give evidence about the first part, but not the second, because I have never tried it.

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55,145. But it is your impression that you would make a profit out of the plan of having it in the highest condition?—Yes.

55,146. If you got the land into this highest condition, and it is transferred to a new tenant, the new tenant could not improve it any further?—No, the risk would be that it might deteriorate.

55,147. But he would get no compensation when he went out?—Oh, no, he would have something to pay for having done it.

55,148. But supposing he kept it up?—He would get no compensation.

55,149. You have had practical experience in this high cultivation of arable as well as pastoral land. I suppose you concur as to the treatment of pastoral land, that very high feeding is much more durable?—There is no doubt about that.

55,150. With regard to arable land suitable for high feeding and cultivation, that requires also not the same permanence of fertility but, still, a more durable fertility than if you did not treat it so highly?—Oh, yes, there is no doubt about that.

55,151. If in thorough good condition it would last longer?—Yes, there is no doubt about that.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. W. McConnell.

Mr. William McConnell called and examined.

Mr. W. McConnell.

55,152. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You are a farmer in Wigtownshire?—Yes.

55,153. Have you any other employment or business?—Well, I have taken to sending cattle into the neighbouring towns for the supply of butcher business.

55,154. Do you keep that shop under your own eye?—Yes.

55,155. It is not a question of co-operation with other farmers?—No.

55,156. To supply that shop do you have to buy cattle other than your own?—Oh, occasionally.

55,157. How long have you carried on that trade?—About somewhere like seven years.

55,158. How much acreage is on your farm?—Well, I have never had a definite measurement of it. I never had a map of it.

Size of farms.

55,159. But you will know very near what it is?—Just an approximation. It has been so often drained and altered and improved, and enlarged that I could not just exactly say. In fact, I can never make up my mind how much it is. There are something like 500 acres or 600 acres arable, and perhaps 300 acres of hill pasture.

55,160. How long have you had this farm?—My grandfather was in it.

55,161. And you never had a measurement made of it all that time?—No. It has been broken up out of its natural state—the most of it.

55,162. What is the general average of farms in the district for size?—Well, there are not many over 600 acres.

55,163. And they are down to small farms, chiefly dairy farms?—Well, I believe in the Rhins, but in the Machars they are not in a majority.

55,164. Is it chiefly Galloway cattle you have there?—Yes.

55,165. And the other is Ayrshire?—Yes.

Position of small and large farmers compared.

55,166. Is the land as well done now as it was 15 or 20 years ago?—Well, I consider it is better farmednow than ever I remember it.

55,167. What class of farmers are in the best position?—The large farmers are farming best.

55,168. And prospering best?—I could not say about that, but they are making a bigger struggle.

55,169. Is the experience there, as in many other parts, that the small farmer, whose family work without actual wages being paid, is probably doing at present as well as any?—Well, they have not so much capital invested, and they have not perhaps so much to lose, but consider the rents they pay.

55,170. Do they pay larger rents?—I do not know if they are even in as good a position as the ordinary ploughmen and their families.

55,171. They have a harder life?—I think so, and they live more frugally.

55,172. They work longer hours?—Yes.

55,173. Is the land, generally speaking, as highly cultivated?—I consider it is better cultivated within the last 15 years, they are using more feeding stuffs, and putting in more manure.

Position of agricultural labourers.

55,174. Then in regard to the agricultural labourers, you consider that their position is better than it has ever been?—Yes, considerably better.

55,175. And the average wage of your men?—Well, the average, including everything, would be equal to 18*s*.

55,176. And the higher grades of labour slightly more?—Yes.

55,177. Do they get cottages in your district?—Cottages, and firing, and gardening, and potatoes.

55,178. Then is that taken in in the average?—I have been taking that into consideration.

55,179. Are they engaged by the year?—By the year.

Crofters.

55,180. Is there a want of female labour?—Yes, there are not nearly so many as there used to be. I speak further on of this, but in my locality there was a district of crofts and these crofts have been all what you may call removed—the houses pulled down. They produced a fine body of labourers, but they are gone, and we feel their want very much.

55,181. What was the reason of these people leaving the place?—Well, I believe the real reason was this: when the estate was advertised it was said the crofters would pay 50 per cent. more rent, and that they had agreed to do that. The land was bought on the condition that the rents would be raised, but when the crofters were asked to pay this increase of rent they announced that they were quite unable to do so, and the result was that they had to leave. They must, they were informed, either pay the rent or go out.

55,182. What was the size of these crofts?—It was a very poor locality. Just what you would call a moor in our district, and they had built the houses on this moor, and made a home for themselves, and cultivated perhaps about 5 acres or 10 acres of land.

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55,183. That could not support their families?—It could not, but it was a home to them, and they worked in the neighbourhood.

55,184. Was there any want of labour for them in the district?—No, they were a high class of labourers, and they were most agreeable.

55,185. Have you plenty of cottages for labourers in your district?—Yes, they are improving very much.

Land out of cultivation.

55,186. I see you say there is no land out of cultivation?—No.

Changes of tenancy.

55,187. The changes of tenancy have been considerable?—Yes, in some parishes more than half of the tenants have changed since 1877.

55,188. Have the landlords taken the farms into their own hands?—No, they are all re-let.

55,189. (*Captain Thomas.*) At a reduction?—In many cases at a large reduction.

55,190. Why did the old tenants leave?—Because they would not pay the rent asked.

55,191. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Did they reduce the former rent in many cases before they left?—They were rack-rented in many cases, and in many cases it was a case of just what you would call bankruptcy with them.

Leases.

55,192. Is your tenure generally 19 years?—Yes.

55,193. Does that hold still?—Yes.

55,194. Have you been following out the breaks in leases?—Just of late the farmers are a little chary of going into a 19 years' lease.

55,195. Are they taking farms on even shorter notice?—Yes. They are scarcely taken now unless there is a break.

55,196. You believe in practical resident factors for the management of the estate?—Yes.

Letting of farms.

55,197. Then you consider the system of letting farms not the best one?—Far from it.

55,198. The rule is to advertise?—Yes, and to take in sealed tenders.

55,199. Is there any better way of getting at the value of the subject?—I think no man knows an estate unless he has practical knowledge. He should know the value of the farms. No factor should be anything but a practical man. He should refuse to go to the public for a competitive rent. He should fix the rent, and then select his man from among the offerers.

55,200. State what rent he desires?—Exactly; select his own tenant.

Restrictions in leases.

55,201. You consider that sitting tenants have been put to a disadvantage by restrictions in their leases?—Very much in some cases on some estates.

Rural depopulation.

55,202. The rural depopulation is going on a good deal in your district?—Yes, it is increasing.

55,203. Are they chiefly going into manufacturing towns?—Well, they have no place to live in. There are no houses for them in the country, except they go into villages, and then there are difficulties in getting houses there.

55,204. What calling have they generally taken up? Have you made any inquiry as to what they followed out afterwards?—Oh, well, they have gone into the towns.

55,205. Not into other agricultural districts?—No, into towns.

Low prices.

55,206. What is the reason of this depression of agriculture in your opinion?—There are various reasons. I think the primary reason is the reaction from high prices to low prices. If we had never known better times there would be less cry about depression.

Protection

55,207. Is there any agitation in your locality among agriculturists in regard to the question of putting on duties?—No, it would not be supported at all.

55,208. Is there any question about the necessity of dealing with foreign countries giving bounties for certain produce exported to this country?—Well, we are aware that there are bounties given, but as long as we have the best market in the world, where every ship can bring in her cargo, we feel that we have an advantage over the foreigner.

Marking of meat.

55,209. Are the farmers in your locality strongly of opinion that steps should be taken to see that the produce is sold for what it is?—Well, there may be a general idea that everything should be sold for what it is, but if you refer to beef——

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55,210. Marking, I mean?—Well, but the home consumer does not seem to appreciate the difference between the two classes of foreign and British beef, as far as the grain of the beef is concerned.

55,211. Is there much of this foreign meat comes into your district?—None.

55,212. Do you grow any barley down there?—No, but there are some farms on which barley is grown. The land which I cultivate is not classed for that.

55,213. The cost of production on what you have to bring to the market has increased?—Yes.

Quality of labour.

55,214. You find that the quality of the labour is not so good as it was?—No; still we have not great cause to complain. It is pretty fair.

Local rates.

55,215. Have you anything to say in regard to reduced taxes upon land?—Well, my view is that rates and taxes fall ultimately on rent; and the less taxes you have to pay the rent will come to more. But a system of rating tenant farmers on their rental is, I consider, unfair, compared with the landlord—half and half, as is the custom in Scotland. For instance, the school board rate, when it was inaugurated, the half fell on the tenant and the other half on the landlord.

55,216. But that is no grievance now?—Not if you take a new lease, but, of course, that Act was passed 23 years ago.

Farmers' income-tax.

55,217. Well, as to other rates—tenant farmers paying on the full rental?—That is the cost of the raw material, whereas the landlord, paying on the income of his estate, rent in his eyes is income from the capital invested in the land. On the other hand, if the tenant farmer has to pay on the cost of the raw material he should be only asked to pay in proportion to his income.

55,218. Do farmers in your district keep sufficient books to be able to prove their income in that matter?—Well, books are not very difficult to keep.

55,219. Are they kept?—Well, I should think there are far more keeping books now than formerly, the younger class of men keep books.

Reduction of rents.

55,220. Is there much in the way of reduction given?—On some estates the factor has been very considerate, and has no desire for the tenant to pay more than a fair rent.

55,221. Are they permanent reductions?—Yes, many.

55,222. Did you get the benefit of that in your rates and taxes?—In some cases, no.

55,223. Is the farm returned in the valuation roll at a higher rent than is yearly paid for it?—I believe so, and when a reduction is given it is given as a temporary thing, and the hopes were that that would have been continued, but the rent was never altered.

55,224. But surely, as a rule, where a permanent reduction is given, that would be entered at that legitimate rent in the valuation roll, and the landlord and tenant get the benefit of that?—Where there is a really new bargain it is entered correctly.

Tuberculosis.

55,225. Are you much troubled with tuberculosis in your quarter?—The dairy farmers in Wigtownshire are very badly troubled with it, I believe, and they have to part with their stock.

55,226. Have you any suggestions to make from your part of the country as to the future dealing with this matter?—I feel I am speaking the minds of a considerable body of farmers in thinking that they should bear their own troubles—the dairy farmers, because they have brought it on themselves. This work is carried on in anything but good conditions. There is insufficient accommodation. It is not astonishing, seeing they have in the past made big profits by dairying that they utilise every spare space about the farm and fit it up for keeping the cows, although it affords insufficient space and lacks ventilation. They seem at a loss to select sound animals even to breed from, and the result is pollution of the stock. My view is this, that the authorities should proscribe diseased animals from being milked and their produce sold, and in a very few years tuberculosis would be unheard of. The dairy farmers have a great deal in their own hands, by careful selection, better ventilation, and more living room.

55,227. Have you paid any attention to the practical carrying out of this tuberculin test?—Not in my own

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stock, but I know one or two gentlemen who have applied the test, and they are quietly disposing of their diseased cows when there is no restriction on the business—without any brand being put on them. They are quietly put away.

55,228. Well, but would you recommend some greater supervision as to these animals?—I think the sooner the Government takes it into their own hands and gets tuberculosis in the hands of professional men the better, because if farmers can test their cattle they can remove these diseased animals at option without a public brand being put on them; and as the thing is just now there is no doubt a lot of fraud being committed by disposing of diseased animals on the quiet in public marts. Further, all breeding stocks should be tested—all bulls and all milking stock—but I would not schedule the diseased animals the same as pleuro-pneumonia, nor give compensation unless the carcases were laid hold of by the authorities, and unless in cases where the Government made any use of them by submitting it to extreme heat and making them inocuous. They might thus give the owner a certain proportion for the value of the carcases, without incurring any extra charge on the ratepayer.

Agricultural Holdings Act and leases.

55,229. We were talking of leases. You think the 19 years' lease has not been favourable to the farmers?—Well, the 19 years' lease has, what you may call served its day. I believe it was the correct thing 40 or 50 years ago, when there was no Agricultural Holdings Act; but if we are to have a just and correct Act my view is that it should supersede leases altogether. Leases and an Agricultural Holdings Act cannot go together.

55,230. You would have the penal clauses, I see, made illegal?—Yes.

55,231. What safeguard would the landlord have unless he has these clauses?—He would have the Agricultural Holdings Act.

55,232. In your part of the country are these penal clauses put in force?—Well, I have never known them put in force, but when the Act is being put into operation they will form a counter-claim if there be any cause for it.

Official valuators.

55,233. You indicate here that you would have some person to interfere between the landlord and the tenant in regard to the question of rent?—Yes, I think a neutral valuator. My view is that under this present Act this is not recognised at all, and unless the Act will deal with the sitting tenant it lacks an important provision that would prove of great assistance to the tenant farmer, because at present he is asked to pay on his own improvements. He must quit his farm before he gets the benefit of this Act. There is pressure brought to bear on the sitting tenant to pay on his own improvements.

55,234. And you do not think that breaks in leases cover that sufficiently?—It does not cover it at all, and when you put on a valuator to value your farm he may be brought from any distance. He may be brought from East Lothian, and he must judge of the farm he sees before him.

55,235. In talking of these valuators you consider it is necessary to have a local valuator, one who knows the district?—He should know the district completely.

55,236. Is it the prevailing feeling among the tenants in your part of the country that there should be someone besides to deal with matters in connexion with rent?—Well, I cannot speak for that, but it is generally known that an improving tenant is punished. Of course, there are some estates on which a tenant farmer feels confidently that he is as safe as can be (that he would not be molested or punished) as safe as if he had the best Agricultural Holdings Act. But if there were a change of landlord or change of factor we do not know what five years might bring forth.

Appeal under Agricultural Holdings Act.

55,237. Your objection is one that is very common, the expense incurred in carrying out the Act?—Yes, the form of procedure, I think there should be no appeal.

55,238. From the single arbiter?—No. I think so, except on questions of law. That is a thing an arbiter cannot consider.

Compensation for increased fertility.

55,239. Is it, in your opinion, practicable to make a record of a farm at the beginning of the 19 years' lease that may be honestly gone upon when at the end of the lease you come to deal with the state of it?—The view I hold is this, that if a farm is let to an incoming tenant he should pay a rent according to the state of the farm as he finds it, that is with the added fertility of the last tenant taken into consideration. He would therefore deduct as interest a sum of money yearly that would recoup him for the money he paid the outgoing tenant. I am taking into consideration a case where the farm has been greatly improved. He should pay rent on the appearance of the farm, its nett value according to prices and produce. That fertility should belong to the incoming tenant, and he should have liberty either to exhaust that fertility or add to it, or keep it to its level. The fertility added by the tenant does not belong to the proprietor. It is not in his title. It is a separate item from rent pure and simple. The incoming tenant has a right to the fertility if he pays for it.

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55,240. You say you favour the principle of a tenancy changing hands as a way-going concern?—I consider that under the first section of the Act where it states that the improvements are to be valued to the incoming tenant that that is not viewing the improvements in a correct light, the true value of the improvements is what they are worth to the sitting tenant, the man who executed them.

55,241. And then the landlord has to pay that?—No; I do not say he has to pay one penny of that. It is the incoming tenant.

55,242. In the rent he pays?—No, for the landlord gets no increase of rent unless the times justify an increase by better prices.

55,243. Then, of course, neither the incoming tenant nor the landlord would pay anything, if there were no increase of rent?—No. I would not say that the rent has anything to do with it. There may be any amount of circumstances arising that would counteract what you would call factors in the calculation as regards the letting value. The mere letting value is not a correct criterion of the worth of the improvements executed by the sitting or outgoing tenant.

55,244. So you would go entirely on the valuing at the end of the lease of what you call the added fertility to it as regards the man going out?—Yes, not only the fertility, but any improvement that has lessened the cost of production. A practical tenant farmer might do many a thing before commencing to manure. That is one of the last processes of a good farmer. These items are never taken into consideration under the Act—clearing the land of stones, boulders, weeds, the better cultivation, the straightening of fences that a practical farmer has to do when he gets a farm out of order.

55,245. And you hold that that is not under the words "a good and proper farm"?—No; a man may do these things without being bound to do so or he might leave them alone, and no person blame him.

55,246. And is keeping land clean not included in "good husbandry"?—If you farmed well you can kill the weeds, because I do not believe a farm will be dirty if you are growing good crops; they kill the weeds. An incoming tenant might get a farm dirty and poor and the proprietor would receive damages from the outgoing tenant; therefore if the new tenant left it in good condition and clean he has good claim to be paid fair value.

Freedom of cropping.

55,247. In regard to freedom of cropping, you consider there should be no restriction, I think?—Well, perhaps, that is rather a large order; but my view is this, that if a man, say, applies one ton of bone meal on an acre of land he will perhaps double the white crop, double the green crop, and perhaps treble the grass. Now, under the leases drafted just now, if all this extra produce be consumed on that acre of land, it will never be in the same state as before this bonemeal was applied, because you would have doubled the produce, and the tenant farmer is bound to consume this on the land. I hold it would be quite sufficient and only equitable if the tenant farmer is only called upon to consume on the holding a normal produce. Some classes of land will perhaps yield 60 bushels to the acre, and some 30; but through added manures and feeding stuffs you may double, almost, the produce, or increase it 30 per cent. I hold it is wrong to ask a man to consume all the produce of the holding when that increase is due to his own capital. Although the ton of bonemeal may be exhausted, the extra yield formed by its use is always added to the farm, and I maintain that it would take a man's lifetime to bring that acre of land down to the state in which it was before the bonemeal was put into it. I do not know if ever he could bring

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it down if the produce be all annually consumed on the farm.

Allotments and Small Holdings Acts.

55,248. You state here that the Allotment Act as well as the Small Holdings Act has been a dead letter?—Yes.

55,249. Has there been any demand by the inhabitants of your county to put these Acts into force?—Yes. We had applications under the Small Holdings Act, but none of the landlords would come forward and offer land

55,250. But the county councils have powers?—Yes, but not compulsory powers. They have compulsory powers under the Allotment Act, but they have not yet been called upon to enforce them—at least, the system has not been inaugurated long enough to have it put into force.

55,251. Is there anything like a large demand for this?—Well, in my parish there is no demand as yet, but I know different parishes where there is.

55,252. How much land in your quarter could a man and his family make a living on as a small holder?—It depends on how he is rented, because a living all depends on the margin that is left after paying rent, manure bills, and so on.

55,253. Yes, but take the run of other men round about you?—Well, it takes a large farmer all his time to make a living in these times.

55,254. Then a man cannot make a living on a small holding if he got it for nothing?—Oh, if he got it for nothing he could live comfortably on a few acres of land.

55,255. How many?—You would require to know the yield of the land. In my quarter it is not the best of land.

Fair rents.

55,256. Then as to the remedies for depression, you say fair rents fixed on a basis of produce and prices?—Yes.

55,257. Do you think that rents, as a rule, have been too high?—According to the times they are.

55,258. Is that a very considerable factor in the position of the tenant farmer?—Viewed from a tenant farmer's point of view, it is. A man may have 5*l.* an acre invested in his land. It is quite possible to put 5*l.* an acre into it in increasing fertility of the land, and you can easily understand how his capital is lying, and he cannot put his hand upon it.

55,259. How do you propose to have these fair rents fixed—by what party?—I would have the Agricultural Holdings Act changed to take that into consideration—to find some scheme where it would apply to the sitting tenant.

55,260. I mean as an incoming tenant?—Very well, the incoming tenant would not get entry into the patrimony of the outgoing tenant, unless he had paid what capital had been spent in adding to the fertility of the land. At present a man will come forward and bid a very big rent for a farm in good condition, and you cannot exhaust one of these farms in 10 or 15 years if you consumed the produce on the holding. You could not exhaust it, because it will take longer to exhaust a farm than to build it up. You cannot build it up in five or six years; it may take 20, because if you increase the produce on your farm the first rotation you can see that you are gradually increasing the fertility of the soil. The normal yield of the farm would be perhaps a third of what is reaped.

55,261. I wanted quite as much to hear from you how you would propose to fix this fair rent. Are the landlord and tenant, to start with, to be led to come to an agreement?—I would only let this come into operation where the landlord and tenant could not come to any agreement. On many estates I know this would never be put into operation.

55,262. You would have an official valuator to fix a fair rent?—I say where the landlord and tenant would agree there is no necessity for an appeal.

55,263. You would do nothing more than at present?—No, there are many estates quite well managed, and it is only in the case of bad landlords, and bad factors, that there is necessity for this.

55,264. Would the man selected to be an official valuator be the man who would be applied to fix rent in the county?—Yes.

Technical education.

55,265. In regard to technical education has there been much done?—No, although we have given all our grant for that. But there is a feeling that technical education does not encourage a farmer as much as it should do, because through improved instruction if you are able to raise the price of produce to perhaps 10*l.* a ton, say cheese or butter, ultimately that will go into the hands of the landlords through competition. He must be an expert in his business where he can raise the normal prices of the produce in a district perhaps 10*l.* or 15*l.* per ton. That is the reason why the subject is not taken up so heartily as it should be.

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55,266. Do you think that that really is the reason?—I do think it is.

55,267. Is it largely cheese-making that is carried on in your part of the county?—In the Rhins it is, but in the Machars it is about half-and-half.

55,268. Does your produce compete favourably in the markets with other produce?—I think the butter does not compete. It is not graded the same as foreign butter.

55,269. Would technical education not tend to bring that about?—Yes, if you had centres where the butter was graded up.

55,270. But that benefit would be reaped by the tenant as well as the landlord?—Yes, for a time, but only for a time.

Railway rates.

55,271. Have you any fault to find with the railway rates in your quarter?—We often get carriage for a longer distance for less cost than for a shorter distance. It is pretty common that, but we have not so much cause to complain of that because we are on the seaboard.

Sale by live-weight.

55,272. Are live cattle sold in your part of the country by weight?—No.

55,273. Is there a growing feeling among farmers that that ought to be done?—No; it is rather the opposite. They think that the weighbridge is not by any means reliable.

55,274. All weighbridges?—Well, the system. There is no scale you can draft that will be a safe guide to the carcase weight of the beast. Carcases of cattle vary so much in their per-centage to their live weight. Whether you have a weigh-bridge, or scales, or simply judging by the eye, it takes a man of skill to arrive at a correct per-centage.

55,275. Do the farmers in your part not have a strong feeling that they would like to know what per cwt. they were getting for their cattle?—Well, it is all well enough to know that, but they are not satisfied that therefore they are getting correct carcase weight. Live and carcase weights are different things.

55,276. But these proportions are pretty well known now?—No. The carcases vary from 55 to 71 per cent. We had one notable instance at the Christmas Show at Ayr, where the Wigtownshire farmers competed. A bullock that weighed only 14 cwts. and 14 lb. was put third in his class, and his carcase was found to be heavier than a bullock that weighed 16 cwt., and they were both of prime quality.

55,277. Is it not a fact that farmers are placed at a disadvantage with butchers and others who are daily buying cattle?—The farmers in Wigtownshire are too many for all the butchers who can come round about.

55,278. Have they tried their hand at guessing competitions?—Well, I know they can make the most of their customers when dealers come round.

55,279. Have you paid any attention to these trials as to how near tenant farmers have come to the weight?—I have. I noticed that competition in London at the Christmas Show, where the live weight of a bullock was hung up above the head of the animal, and out of 192 competitors there were 38 guessed, I think, the weight based on a calculation of 57 per cent., and they were some 115 lb. off the carcase weight.

55,280. (*Mr. Channing.*) Which way?—Below.

55,281. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Does that not go to prove the necessity of practising that mode, and that they are in the hands of these butchers?—It proves that farmers under-estimated the weight, although in possession of his live weight and though they were in possession of a scale. You can have a scale based on 55 or 63 per cent—any scale you like to choose; but the difficulty is, when you find a bullock put before you, to know what proportion he will scale. If you knew the proportion you could arrive at it at once, but it takes a practical man to know the per-centage.

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55,282. How is it, in your opinion, that the opposition to carrying out this system comes chiefly from salesmen and butchers?—Well, the only reason I think is this, that they know more than other people. I weigh all my cattle at home. I bought a weighbridge on the idea that I would know more than other people—with the idea that I would test my manager. When he retailed a carcase, suppose he was to mark down in the stock book the weight of a bullock five stones less than I thought was the yield from the live weight, I could not take him before any court in the land for fraud, simply because he was weighed live weight. That would not be sufficient evidence in any court of law, although a sworn weigher had weighed him alive.

55,283. You say the variations are so great?—Are so great. I have tested the thing for hundreds of cattle, and I am thoroughly convinced it is no benefit to the practical farmer.

55,284. Have you taken the trouble to publish anything of that for the benefit of the farmers?—I have.

55,285. And this is in print?—Yes.

State loans to tenants for execution of improvements.

55,286. I see you say that State loans for improvements should be given to tenants. What security would they possibly be able to give?—No money should be lent for improvements except to the man who proposed executing an improvement that was worthy of an advance. The improvement itself should be sufficient security. I would lend no money to a farmer more than I would lend it to a shipbuilder unless I knew what the security was.

55,287. But the landlords make the permanent improvements in your part of the country chiefly?—I think it is the farmers who have made the permanent improvements in the rent they pay.

55,288. But I mean permanent improvements on the land?—Well, if a tenant farmer pays interest on the outlays he actually executes the improvements.

55,289. Is this interest generally charged now for improvements made in your part of the country?—Well, the interest must be always paid on the improvements. When the landlord says "I will throw off the "interest on the improvements," he is throwing it off on the rent. "Capital must always get its award. It "is the land that is deteriorating in value." That view is not a correct way of putting it, because although the landlord may say so the improvement is actually returning a yield, but it is the rent—the fee simple of the land—that has been reduced in value.

55,290. The general thing has been that the first reduction that has taken place in these times in the interest the tenant has to pay for all these improvements?—It is put that way, but that is not the correct way of putting it.

Agricultural education.

55,291. You approve of giving agricultural education in elementary schools?—Yes.

Management of estates.

55,292. (*Mr. Clay.*) You agree as to the estates being managed by practical factors?—Certainly. Men resident in the district, who know both the tenants and the quality of the land; men engaged in agricultural matters themselves; men who keep farms of 500 or 600 acres themselves.

Compensation to sitting tenant.

55,293. You are of opinion that sitting tenants should not be rented on these matters?—I hold that the Agricultural Holdings Act will be in a very short time null and void, because when this Act was passed it applied to all current leases, but when a lease has expired and a new one is entered into they put in clauses that counteract this Act entirely. If things go on as at present, in five or ten years the Act will be null and void if landlords have the power to contract themselves out of it. A tenant must quit his holding before getting the benefit of the Act. That is not of advantage to either landlord or tenant.

55,294. The sitting tenant has created a certain amount of fertility and should be considered in the matter?—Certainly. It is a serious matter for a man who commenced to farm, as many have done, perhaps, 40 or 50 years ago, when he felt he was under a certain landlord or factor, sure you would never be disturbed. The better they farmed they thought the more of you. The landlord may change, or circumstances may arise whereby you may have to go, and the sitting tenant is actually in many cases wanted to be removed. There is an endeavour to remove the men who have the biggest claim.

55,295. And the good old system of retaining tenants is not so common?—No; but in our county we have several estates managed in the best manner.

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55,296. As to the Agricultural Holdings Act, you only refer to the tenants who do not attend to their farms properly?—No. It is only in the case of landlords who want their pound of flesh to meet their liabilities with Tom, Dick, or Harry.

Fair rents and produce rents.

55,297. You talk about fair rent. What process would you adopt in having a fair rent fixed?—My view is this, that all land has a certain grade. You may have first class, or second class, or third class land, which will only yield a certain produce. A fair rent should be fixed on the average produce of the soil, *i.e.*, the normal yield—not fixed according to how it can be graded up by added capital to the land.

55,298. Who would you have to fix a fair rent?—It simply comes this way. You have heard of produce rent. Produce rent simply comes to a fair rent, because it is fixed according to the produce and prices if you have a proper scale to go by. At present it is the Fiars' Court that fixes this, but I would not entrust it to them, because it takes into calculation only the marketable grain sold, whereas there are many other circumstances that must be brought in.

55,299. Is there much difference in the paying of rent in so many sovereigns and the rent paid by allowing so many quarters of oats or barley?—No, but they are the annual produce of the soil.

55,300–1. But you may promise to pay on too many quarters of grain which the farm cannot produce?—Yes, but the sitting tenant can appeal to the official valuator if he thinks he is not getting recognition taken of what he has added to the soil.

55,302. Would the landlord allow the official valuator to come in without it being compulsory?—The sitting tenant could appeal to the valuator and say, "Tell me "how much the landlord has to pay me for added "value."

55,303. If the landlord were to say, "I will not have "the valuator to interfere with me," it will fall to the ground?—It all depends on the law. If it was made compulsory the landlord would have no option. If it was not made compulsory he might say, "I will not have the official valuator."

55,304. The landlord might say, "No, I will not have "him to fix this fair rent." What then? I understood you to say it is to be made compulsory. Would you have it compulsory?—Just the same as this Agricultural Holdings Act is compulsory.

55,305. And your opinion is that you will make it compulsory for the landlord to accept the official valuator to fix a fair rent?—Yes.

55,306. (*Mr. Dalton.*) At the commencement of the tenancy?—No. I would have a revision of rent.

55,307. When the tenancy is renewed?—Yes.

55,308. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do I understand you to say that where a tenant has been five years in occupation he would have the right to call in this valuator?—You urge having a revision of rent in five or seven years. Would you give the tenant, under his existing lease, the right to fix a fair rent at any time after he has made a bargain to the opposite?—If he has made a bargain for nineteen years he must fulfil it.

55,309. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are in favour of year-to-year tenancy?—Yes.

55,310. The tenant could appeal to the valuator any time he pleases?—Yes.

55,311. (*Mr. Channing.*) But not to repeat the appeal in less time than five years?—Something like that.

55,312. (*Mr. Clay.*) Could you found, on information, what improvements by the tenant farmer go to the landlord?—The improving tenant, yes.

55,313. And you think, if an official referee had the fixing of a fair rent, the tenant then would get allowances for his outlays?—He would have to prove his case.

Sale by live-weight.

55,314. Regarding the weighbridges, you do not seem to agree that the weighing of cattle should be by live weight?—No.

55,315. You say that the men who guessed the weight of the animal were 115 lbs. below its weight?—Yes. Those who guessed put their faith in this arbitrary scale. Some nine guessed within a stone of it, but they had been making it 115 lbs. less than what would have been good value selling it to the butcher.

55,316. But he would get all that was in the animal, would he not?—Not necessarily, because some animals have a far bigger per-centage of beef than others.

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55,317. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you said that at the beginning of the lease increased rates and taxes mean less rent?—Yes.

Increase in rates.

55,318. You feel sure they are always taken into account by both parties?—If I was going from home to bid for a farm it would be the first question I would ask.

55,319. Do you think they have increased of late years?—The tendency is to increase. The poor rate, however, is getting less.

55,320. Can you give the figures on your own farm?—No.

55,321. Can you say at all what they come to on your farm?—They will come to something like 1*l.* in 20*l.*

55,322. That is the tenants' rates?—Yes.

55,323. Do you think that that would be always taken into account when you take a new farm?—Yes, in the case of a man coming from a distance.

Classification in rating.

55,324. Have you a classification system in force in your district? Are the farms assessed on a lower value than houses?—Yes, in some taxes.

55,325. Do you think that is a good principle? Do you approve of that?—Well, where a rate has to be levied over an agricultural district, it is not of much account. We have changed that. The county council has changed that. We either changed it, or petitioned in favour of getting a change. If a rate was to be collected there was no use making a difference.

Allotments.

55,326. But you think in a district partly houses and partly land it is right?—Yes.

55,327. You say that the Allotments Act has been a dead letter in the district?—Hitherto.

55,328. But have no allotments been provided for the labourers voluntarily without having recourse to the Act?—I only know but one case.

55,329. Do you say that labourers generally have cottages and gardens?—Yes.

55,330. Good sized gardens?—Yes.

55,331. And they do not want allotments?—I do not think farm labourers do, but it is in the villages there is the demand.

55,332. Would they pay a fair rent for the allotments?—Oh, yes.

Competition for farms.

55,333. Is there any difficulty in letting farms in your district now on reasonable terms?—The difficulty of landlords and factors is not to take unreasonable rents.

55,334. There are plenty of people wanting to come in?—Any amount.

55,335. How do you account for that if the farms are doing so badly?—If we are born into the world we must get out of it the best way we can.

55,336. And they do better, I suppose, on farms than other businesses?—In Ayrshire, for instance, they plague us. The men seem to think they are not fitted for anything else than farming.

55,337. And they think it is better to farm in Scotland than to emigrate?—Well, I cannot say that.

55,338. There are plenty competing for farms?—Plenty, they are coming in shoals.

55,339. What is the average rent?—Somewhere about 15*s.* and 25*s.*

55,340. And these men have got enough capital?—I cannot say, they do not look as if they had much.

Effect of leases on cultivation.

55,341. Do you consider that your present system of land tenure in Scotland has led to high cultivation?—Well, the 19 years' lease encourages farmers to improve.

55,342. But you are rather wanting to go away from that arrangement now?—I think it has served its day.

55,343. If you give it up will cultivation deteriorate?—Well, with the 19 years' lease the farmer can improve during the first 10 years, and in the next 10 he reduces the farm.

55,344. I understand you want to do away with the 19 years' lease but you would not prevent owner and tenant coming to their own agreement in taking such a lease?—No.

55,345. You would not prohibit that?—No.

Restrictions in leases.

55,346. But you think that an annual tenancy is a better arrangement?—Yes, if there was a proper Agricultural Holdings Act framed, which would supersede all leases. They include clauses in their leases that no practical farmer should sign. These leases strangle agriculture.

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55,347. What are the clauses you speak of?—"The "green crop must be manured by not less than 40 cubic "yards of dung, or 30 bushels of bones." In order to see how that would work I sent down a sample of dung to be analysed, and the analyst sent me back a reply, according to the scale fixed by the Highland Society, that my dung was worth 9*s.* 7*d.* per ton. If I put down 40 cubic yards of dung per acre I would be putting 19*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.* into it. No one should be asked to sign a lease like that.

55,348. Has it been signed?—Yes, and those refusing are told they must sign it.

55,349. Is it as long as most of the leases we have seen in Scotland?—Well, there are 20 pages here.

55,350. Why have you such long leases in Scotland?—In order to strangle agriculture and the farmer.

55,351. We were told it was the lawyer's doing?—He will be paid so much per sheet here.

55,352. Are they all long like this?—Well, I never saw the like of this before.

55,353. Have you got any other similar clauses, clauses of the same sort?—Yes, there is another, even worse than that. "All such manures to be compen-"sated for in so far only as in excess of the manures "herein-before stipulated." Unless you apply 30 bushels of bone to the acre, or 40 cubic yards of dung, you have no claim at all.

Insufficiency of labour.

55,354. (*Mr. Channing.*) You seem to think that there is an insufficient supply of good labour?—Yes.

55,355. Is that partly due to the fact that some of the houses have been pulled down from time to time?—Entirely.

55,356. And is it in your opinion desirable to encourage the small holdings and crofts in order to have a larger supply of labour?—Certainly.

55,357. Do you think the population in the district would be useful to you?—The labouring classes leave the country against their will. There is a tendency to remain in the country if they could make a living.

55,358. Do you think it would be better for the farmers if they had this greater supply of crofter labour in piece-work on the farms?—Well, I am glad to say that the men who were in the crofts beside me were men who wrought as well by the day as by the piece-work. They were far better qualified to labour than most farm servants.

55,359. I mean by piece-work they would be attending to their own crofts at some part of the year?—Exactly.

Free sale of improvements.

55,360. I do not quite see what you mean by wishing to value the tenant's improvements at what the sitting tenant thinks is their real value. Do you favour the principle of free sale as in the Irish Acts, or object to that principle?—Well, I believe, as I say, in finding the value of the improvement as a going concern.

55,361. From your evidence I take it that the man who executes the improvements is the best judge of their value?—Yes.

55,362. You put the seller's price on the improvements?—I say that is the proper light through which to look on the improvements, you view improvements as if you were looking through a convex glass if you fix them at what they are worth to an incoming tenant.

55,363. The buyer would, therefore, wish to reduce the value?—Exactly.

55,364. You do not express any opinion as to the principle of free sale at all?—Well, I gave you my views that that is the correct and true way of looking at improvements and finding their marketable value.

55,365. But you do not want to give tenants who want a fair rent fixed the interest of selling his right in the farm in regard to the improvements?—Under the Act it gives a tenant power to pass his lease on to the assignee, and I do not see why, if he has that power, he should not have liberty to sell his improvements.

Compensation for disturbance.

55,366. Should it be found that the improvements are valued at the worst put on them by the incoming tenant, is it your opinion that there ought to be some compensation for disturbance to the out-going tenant?—Yes, because he has to part with the subject at less

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than its true value. That would be disturbing him, because you value the improvements on what it is worth to the man who does not know its actual value. I might execute an improvement to carry out my system of farming, and no sooner is a new tenant in than he might call on the landlord or factor to change it. Free sale requires no compensation for disturbance, but a forced sale does.

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The witness withdrew.

Dr. R. S. Gibb.

Dr. R. S. Gibb called and examined.

Dr. R. S. Gibb

55,367. (*Lord Cobham.*) Are you farming land?—Yes.

55,368. Where?—At Boon, Berwickshire.

55,369. Is the land in that district almost entirely in the hands of tenant farmers?—Yes.

55,370. Very little being retained in the hands of landlords?—Almost none.

55,371. The holdings are generally of substantial size, I believe?—Yes.

55,372. There being a system of mixed arable and pastoral followed?—Yes.

Extent of depression.

55,373. Have all farmers suffered alike in your opinion?—Yes.

55,374. Large and small and pastoral and arable?—During a period of years, of course, there are some years that tell more upon the feeding farmer than upon the breeding and *vice versâ*, but in the course of 15 years, I fancy they would have been equal.

55,375. Notwithstanding the losses that have been suffered, the labourers are still in full employment at good if not increasing wages?—Yes.

Position of labourers.

55,376. The quantity and quality of the labour at your command is very good?—It is very good. The quantity two years ago was rather deficient, but I think it was only temporary. We seemed to rest for a year, and then it got about the normal again. There was plenty of labour this year.

55,377. Is land going out of arable into pastoral?—Not to a large extent. The tendency is to leave the rotation pasture, perhaps, a year or two longer, and not to cultivate the fields at all at a high elevation.

55,378. That reduces the labour bill to some extent?—Well, it is compensated to a certain extent by the present day tendency to better cultivation than hitherto. I think labourers are as well employed now as during the last 23 years.

Improvement of cultivation.

55,379. Cultivation is actually improving rather than going back?—Yes, there is no doubt it is so in our district. The land was fresh in a great many districts, and it grew with less cultivation than it does now. You require to cultivate more thoroughly to get the same result, and I think the tendency is to better cultivation.

55,380. But the condition of the land at the same time has rather gone down?—Perhaps. I might explain that in our district there has been a great deal of land improved. Land that was in hill pasture, perhaps, about 20 years ago was taken up and improved all over the higher districts of the Lammermoors and slopes of the Cheviots, and on this land the tendency was to crop it out to begin with, and they are now finding that they have to cultivate better to get the same results.

55,381. Generally the outlay of farmers on the land has not diminished?—It has not.

55,382. Is more stock kept?—No, I do not think so. Our difficulty is in wintering. If you do not crop a certain quantity you cannot keep more stock.

Farm expenditure.

55,383. There has been curtailment of farm expenditure?—Yes.

55,384. That is to say that some farm requirements are cheaper?—Our feeding stuffs and manures are cheaper, and as a general rule the social condition of the farmer had to undergo a certain change. He is not able to live, perhaps, at the same high rate of expenditure as formerly.

Fall in rents.

55,385. Have rents fallen substantially?—About 40 per cent. on an average.

55,386. Some more?—Oh, there are some more, but I think these are exceptional circumstances.

55,387. Do the farmers act on the opinion that bad times are best met by producing more and better grain and stock for the markets?—Certainly.

Position of farmers.

55,388. Do you think that they are holding their own fairly well at present?—Well, if things continue as they are, I am afraid not. Capital is so very much reduced. Two years ago we had in our district a good year, which, certainly, helped a little. Last year was a bad one, and the result is, that I think it is taxing some to hold their own this year.

Reduction of farming capital.

55,389. How is the reduction of farming capital shown?—By, perhaps, the landlords meeting the tenants and not asking the rents for some months after the usual time, and by the cattle dealers, perhaps, allowing two or three months to pay store cattle that are bought, and in various ways. I do not think, as a rule, there is any tendency to curtail the manure bill. It may be to a certain extent, but not much.

Arrears of rent.

55,390. You think that, to some extent, farmers are getting into arrears?—No doubt they are in arrears in many cases.

Breeding and feeding.

55,391. Are breeding and feeding of stock both practised?—Yes. There is not much breeding of cattle. Breeding of sheep is a large industry, and feeding of both sheep and cattle. We do not breed many cattle. I breed myself, and think it is suitable, but in the district generally there is not a very great deal of cattle breeding.

55,392. Do you think it might be profitably expanded?—Yes, in districts where there is a lot of pasture. On land lying four or five years in grass, I think it is very suitable for raising young cattle. It certainly can be cheaper done there than in lower districts where the rents are higher.

55,393. Would you encourage that by mintaining the restrictions on the importation of foreign live stock?—I would like to see some fixity. For my own part I would be inclined to increase my breeding of cattle if I thought the restrictions were to be kept on the introduction of store cattle.

Over-production.

55,394. What would you conclude is the chief cause of depression?—Over-production is the cause in my view; producing more in the world than there seems to be a demand for. It must get an outlet somewhere.

55,395. Do you think that there has been a diminished demand?—There has been a diminished demand from the industries being depressed, along with other things. Foreign competition comes into play with regard to all this.

Position of agricultural labourer.

55,396. But as regards the agricultural labourer, his spending power has increased?—Yes, because the products that he buys—his meal, tea, and sugar are so much less.

55,397. Is not that the case with the working classes generally?—Well, it is, there is no doubt; but his beef and his mutton are also less; and that is why it presses upon us.

Spending power of the masses.

55,398. Do you think, in the last 10 or 15 years, the spending power of the masses of the population has markedly decreased so as to affect the position of the farmer?—I am not conversant with that. They certainly get things cheaper, but the tendency is to spend more upon other things. The man who used to spend nearly all his income on his family and their food—well, he has other things for spending it on. Some must have a bicycle, and all that sort of thing. Among the working classes this feeling prevails.

Local rates.

55,399. Rates and taxes, and charges on land, I suppose, are a grievance to some extent?—No doubt they are. It is a matter that, in my own parish, we do not feel. We are comparatively low rated, but in neighbouring parishes it tells very much against the farmers. We are 3*d.* in the 1*l.* all over, and in my neighbouring parish it is 1*s.* per 1*l.*

55,400. What remedy would you apply to this?—Well, my view is that we should not be taxed on our rental for these local rates any more than the doctor or the parson is. He is merely taxed on the house rental, whereas we are taxed on the whole rental of the farm. It is not a personal matter; it would not make much difference, but it seems to me to be unfair.

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55,401. Have your rates risen?—Not materially. County rates have risen very much.

55,402. How much?—About a third.

55,403. Has the whole burden of the rates increased?—Parish rates have rather decreased. We do not know what may be the result of the new parish council. The parish rates, on the whole, have been reduced in my experience; but I should fancy that the county rates have gone up perhaps one-third during the last 16 or 18 years.

Compensation for laying down permanent pastures.

55,404. I see you are generally in agreement with the recommendations of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture as to the amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act—especially as to permanent pasture?—I feel that this has improved the farm so much that it should be taken into consideration.

55,405. Have you laid down much of it?—Yes, about 200 acres.

55,406. Without any agreement at all?—My first lease was finished, and it seemed to be satisfactory what I had done, because my landlord considered it right. I was requested to leave in permanent pasture what I had laid down. We both considered it a decided improvement to the farm.

55,407. Do you think you have got your profit out of it, during the currency of the lease?—Oh, certainly. There was no direct loss. It was an advantage.

55,408. Did it come into remunerative value within a year or two?—It took perhaps 10 or 12 years to become of much value.

55,409. Is it your experience that it begins almost immediately to repay?—Well, it was paying the rent all through as well as it would have done if it had been in ordinary cropping rotation; but before it became to be a distinct advantage it would be 10 to 12 years old.

55,410-1. Are you still continuing the process?—Well, I have laid down all I consider necessary, or would be advantageous in the meantime. We have to keep a certain amount of land going in crop to provide winter food.

Freedom of cropping.

55,412. Should there be more freedom of cropping allowed?—Certainly, if you have restrictions as to leaving your farm in proper condition, and the clauses allowing deterioration in a simple way.

55,413. Should that be laid down in an Act of Parliament?—I think the landlord is certainly entitled to have a simple mode of claiming for deterioration, as a tenant has claim to compensation for himself.

55,414. But subject to that would you say that the Agricultural Holdings Act should remove restrictions upon cropping?—I do not think so. I would not like to see it regulated by Act of Parliament. I think it would regulate itself bye and by if there was a good deterioration clause. Then you would have sufficient ground to go to the landlord and say, "this is quite "unnecessary now," and you would be in a much stronger position to object to a clause in the lease for restriction.

55,415. Do you think landlord and tenant can agree now, and settle matters on fairly equal terms?—I think so.

Compensation of sitting tenant.

55,416. You agree with a recent witness that a good tenant is under a special disadvantage at the end of his lease?—Oh well, I think he is under a disadvantage. He has always the satisfaction of feeling right himself, but I do not know that you can obviate the matter very well.

55,417. Is it the practice to run out the land as the tenancy approaches termination?—Not to a large extent.

55,418. Do you think it frequently happens that supposing the tenancy continues or is renewed, the rent is fixed on the improvements of the tenant?—Yes, they certainly are. Under the old 19 years' lease a tenant who made these improvements and who had sufficient time to recoup himself would farm accordingly.

55,419. Do you think that the new condition of things is now better understood, and that the tenant in arranging for a new lease can protect himself?—I think so.

Cumulative fertility.

55,420-1. You would not introduce any legislative compulsion as to compensation for fertility?—No, I would be very much against it.

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55,422. Is there much complaint as to railway rates?—Not as to rates on the local railway. There is no complaint particularly in the district they have been readjusted. As a general rule, they are paid by the middleman, and the markets are fairly close at hand in the district. The buyer has the rates to pay as a rule.

Railway rates.

55,423. Is foreign produce carried into your towns at a preferential rate?—No; it is the general broad principle that tells upon the buyer who comes to our district, that he is handicapped at the end of the journey by produce that is brought there at a cheaper rate than his own.

55,424. That is not a special local complaint?—No.

Marking of foreign produce.

55,425. You agree with nearly all the witnesses as to the impropriety of selling foreign goods as home produce?—Certainly.

State loans for improvements.

55,426. You are in favour of granting loans for agricultural improvements at a lower rate of interest?—I think that would be of great importance to the landlords.

55,427. Would you grant loans to tenants on the security of their improvements?—You might have the security of the building, but even that would appear to me to be beset with difficulties, as the buildings are on another man's land. At the same time, some arrangement might be made; but I think you certainly should have sufficient security.

Agricultural education.

55,428. Has the technical education grant been devoted in part to agricultural education?—Yes.

55,429. With good results?—Very fair. As to the results, I may say that in the County Council of Berwick we at once handed it over and instituted classes all over the county for various things, but it mostly went for agriculture. Part of it went for fishing and cooking; but it was largely handed over to the committee of the agricultural societies in the district, and they have spent a good deal in dairy work, and on the whole it has done good. I would not like to say in every view that the good done would be considered satisfactory, but at present the good done is leavening throughout the country, and there is more demand for a continuation of the dairy classes to-day than four years ago, when the work began. We have, however, spent a portion of the money this year by giving a grant and a capital sum of about 1,000*l.* to a secondary school in the county of Berwick at which instruction is to be given in technical agricultural education and the allied sciences such as chemistry and botany, and where various subjects like these are to be taught. The institution is to be under the Duns school board with representatives from the Technical Education Committee of the County Council. This Berwickshire high school, we hope, will be useful in teaching young farmers the elements of their work. We have had no such teaching, and I think that it will be very useful, because we can put them in a certain way that they can benefit from the instruction that they would get, for example, at the University of Edinburgh, or at Glasgow, or wherever else they might choose to go.

55,430-1. Is there an experimental farm attached to that school?—No; the funds have not allowed of that.

Light railways.

55,432-3. You have heard what another witness said as to light railways? Do you agree?—We have a great desire for something or other of the kind in our district, and I think it would be looked upon as rather a typical district in the matter. We want a railway very much. My place is seven miles from the nearest railway station, and nine from the one from which you come to Edinburgh here. About 20 years ago we very nearly had the railway, and the calculation then made was that if we got a line for 6,000*l.* a mile we would be able to pay 2½ per cent. Had it not been for the landlords not being very wealthy, or the general public not being willing to subscribe, we should have had the railway. That being the case then, I have no hesitation in saying now that we would have a model place in which to put a light railway. I think the landlords certainly have not got any wealthier since then, and I do not think there is anything like so much money among the tenants, but there is perfect unanimity in favour of a light railway and of the community assessing themselves as a guarantee for a certain percentage on the cost, and no doubt the public, on the scheme being sanctioned by the Board of Trade, would subscribe at once, and the money be got.

55,434. Is the country well adapted for a light railway?—Quite. There is not a large road traffic, and it

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could go on the roads, or any of the methods employed. I do not think there would be any difficulty.

55,435. Do you think it would benefit the farmers much?—It is one of those things which would ameliorate their position very much, and would make a material difference to the number of the rural population who would wish to go away to towns and elsewhere. There would be very little desire with them to leave the country districts, provided they were within reasonable touch of the towns.

55,436. How many farm horses do you keep?—I have six pairs, 12 horses.

55,437. If you had a light railway, could you reduce that number?—Decidedly. I have all my carting for at least seven miles. I could do with two or three horses less, anyway.

55,438. (*Mr. Clay.*) You could do with a pair less?—Quite easily.

Laying down permanent pastures.

55,439. The permanent pasture has been a benefit to Boon?—It has been a very great advantage.

55,440. Indeed it was a mistake to plough up the pasture?—As things have turned out now, I admit, perhaps, that we should not have improved some heather ground.

55,441. You now feel it an advantage, pastoral instead of arable?—Yes.

Compensation of sitting tenant.

55,442. You made a remark about the old tenant in quitting. Is it a disadvantage sometimes when he comes to renew his lease in reference to improvements?—Yes.

55,443. You said he might recoup himself during the lease if he was not to get compensation?—That was under the old 19 years' lease. When I took my farm 23 years ago I laid out a considerable amount of money and so did my landlord, and we expected that within the 19 years we would be recouped. At least I did for my improvements, and he would expect to get an increased rent.

55,444. But in the process of recouping you, perhaps, took the advantage of not expending money on cakes and manure. Might that be the tendency?—It might.

55,445. So that he might get the whole out of his farm?—I grant you that in a general sense that would be the tendency.

Over-production.

55,446. (*Mr. Everett.*) You attribute the low prices to over-production?—Yes.

55,447. There has been a fall all round in prices of almost all kinds of produce, has there not?—Yes.

55,448. Is it not quite as likely that under-production of money has brought about that fall as over-production of commodities, looking to the fact that there has been a general fall all round? Have you considered that point?—No.

Demand for farms.

55,449. (*Captain Thomas.*) Is there much demand for farms in your district?—Yes; considerable. It depends a good deal on the farm. We have a class of farms about 300 acres to 500 acres, and there is another class that lie higher up among the hills that go on with an indefinite number of acres. There is not the same demand for them as there is for smaller farms.

Reduction of rents.

55,450. Have the rents been reduced?—Oh, yes, very much. Since 15 years I should think the reduction has been about 40 per cent. I think that is a reasonable figure to put the reduction at. You come across some that may be only reduced 30 per cent., but there are some over 50 per cent.

55,451. Have farms been re-let to sitting tenants at fair rents? There is no great grievance in this respect?—I do not think so.

Agricultural education.

55,452. (*Lord Cobham.*) Do you think farmers should be taught chemistry?—I am very strong on the point that there should be a large increase in the whole system of educating farmers. We in Berwickshire, as I stated, think we are on the right lines in beginning with our county high school, and from there we would look forward to our sons ultimately passing on to the University to complete their technical training as practical farmers.

55,453. Do you think you could get more than a very small proportion to master so difficult a subject?—I think that by-and-by they are pretty well bound to do it; those who do not do it go to the wall. We cannot help ourselves. The old-fashioned man buys his manure. He gets it home, and he finds it to be tremendously heavy when he takes some into his hand, and he says, "No, I won't buy any more of that." But the new man understands perfectly well through analysis when he buys it what he is doing. They should understand the science of plant-growing and be able to take up, for instance, the schedule of the Highland Society, understand what it means, and be able to calculate it, as perhaps not one in ten of our farmers in Scotland can do at present.

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55,454. But it must be left to the rising generation, must it?—Well, I think we can certainly do something with the present generation, but I look with far more hope to the results on the rising generation.

55,455. Do you find that the farmers attend the classes to any great extent?—There have not been very many for them to attend. I think the tendency would be now to open up classes. There is very much to be adhered to in the evidence of Mr. Gillespie given here with regard to agricultural education. It wants very very much encouragement, alike in money and methods of carrying it out.

55,456. You think we are behind foreign farmers?—Very very much behind. I do not care about comparing ourselves, but I think there is strong and urgent necessity for immediately taking up the matter of teaching our farmers. Perhaps we might go and give a certain amount of money to the crofters in various parts to help them to farm their land, but in the meantime they do not know anything about how to do it. They want some teaching to show them how to make a better job of what they are at. I think there is nothing more needed than experimental work and agricultural teaching all over the country.

Fertilisers and Feeding Stuffs Act.

55,457. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have you not in Berwickshire taken a very intelligent interest in keeping these classes up, more so than has been done elsewhere?—I think so, because from the very beginning we gave our whole grant for this purpose. There is one thing, perhaps, which I may be allowed to mention. I do not know whether you take any evidence as to the Fertilisers' Act. I happen to be convener of the Berwickshire Committee on this Act, and I certainly find that the Act is one that should be of great benefit to us, but in Berwickshire it is of no benefit at all from the mere fact that the machinery by which we have to go about the work is so difficult to be put in operation—that a man has to get permission to get a sample, and he might have to call in a neighbour or some witness to the sampling, and he has to put it all down in schedules, and so on. If the machinery by which this Act is carried on were very much simplified, as I think it should, the result would be it would largely be taken advantage of, whereas we have only had three analyses in the whole county.

55,458. The machinery has been found to be too cumbersome?—Yes.

55,459. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Have you thought out some way of simplifying that, such as the buyer and seller trying—— ?—There are a great many people who do not wish the chemist to know how the thing is bought or sold, and they say the analyst has no business to know your trade transaction, and why should the invoice of your order be sent to the analyst. That is quite unnecessary, and the general feeling is that if you buy manure, not only should the manure be right as a whole, but that every part of it should be the same. Provided the sample is taken from the bulk, it does not matter whether it was taken from one or from four bags. You put every ounce on its own piece of ground, and you expect every ounce to produce its own result which you pay for it to produce.

55,460. (*Mr. Channing.*) You do not take the precautions in this Act which are necessary to prevent an honest dealer in these things from being placed at a disadvantage. You would not object to the same precautions being adopted in the case of a seller of manure or feeding stuffs as in the case of a seller of milk or drugs?—I am not very well informed as to what regulations are necessary for milk and drugs.

55,461. The great merit of this Act is that it makes it essential for the seller always to give a sufficiently accurate description and guarantee of what the article is which he sells?—You mean that that is obtained by the invoice.

55,462. It requires the seller to properly describe what he is selling?—By sending the invoice.

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55,463. And that object could not have been obtained by agricultural societies beforehand. Now it is legal?—Would it not do to merely give a statement of what it is without sending an invoice, because that discloses the whole transaction?

55,464. The invoice obliges the seller to state the per-centages?—Is it necessary that that should go to the analyst? that is the point, I think. It is quite right the buyer should get it, but it is quite unnecessary that it should go to the analyst.

55,465. The reason of its going to the analyist would surely be that he would know what was guaranteed, and he would be able in his test to see whether it corresponded to the guarantee?—Make it simpler to him to analyse it.

55,466. You said, I think, that the tenant in the 19 years' lease really got paid for his improvements, and recouped himself out of the land during the latter half?—I said he expected to recoup himself. My experience is that he has not recouped himself at all.

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Effect of leases on tenant's improvements.

55,467. Is not that just an objection to the present system, that it does not encourage the farmer to keep to his position all the 19 years, after he has brought it half-way?—He is bound to make all out of it that he can.

55,468. (*Lord Cobham.*) Under the present reduced rents, do you think a man can see his way to be recouped?—I am not prepared to say. I would not advocate a 19 years' lease to be gone into at present, without a break.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. T. Russell.

Mr. THOMAS RUSSELL called and examined.

Mr. T. Russell.

55,469. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are Chairman of the Teaching and Staff Committee of the Glsagow and West of Scotland Technical College?—Yes, and Chairman of the County Council of Buteshire.

Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College.

55,470. How many students are under instruction in connexion with the college?—We have about 3,000. The reason why I asked to be examined is that we have been teaching agriculture in all the south-western counties during the past five years by specialists wholly, and we have been brought into contact last session with 3,000 of the local population in these lectures and classes.

Agricultural teaching in elementary schools.

55,471. Are you of opinion that agricultural education should be extended to the elementary schools?—No, I am not of that opinion. I think the age and the acquirements of the pupils is not competent to receive it. They have not got over what you call the elementary stages of an ordinary education.

55,472. Would you give them instruction in practical gardening?—Nothing at all in the elementary school, but your last witness, I think, spoke of giving it in a secondary school which might, I think, be done in the elementary stages of botany and gardening.

55,473. Do you think elementary schoolmasters are not competent to teach agriculture?—Not to any efficient extent. County councils have been giving grants out of the Residue Grant to board schools.

55,474. For the training of teachers?—No, for the education of pupils.

55,475. In elementary schools?—Yes, in several of the counties it comes under the Science and Art Department.

Agricultural education in secondary schools.

55,476. When do you think that agricultural instruction should be begun?—Not until about 17 or 18, till they are able to receive what you call the technical part of the instruction. In secondary schools it might be given as regards book-keeping and chemistry and kindred subjects; but when you come to the technical part of it you require men of sound knowlege and practical knowledge as well.

Peripatetic lecturers.

55,477. To what classes would you extend this education?—To all the agricultural population. They should be taught by specialists who have been trained specially for teaching it. Probably you would have one for botany, one for cheese-making, one for butter-making, one in veterinary science, agriculture, &c., and these men must be trained in central colleges.

55,478. How would you bring the instruction to the working classes?—By these men being deputed from a central institution to go round the country in connexion with county councils to give courses of lectures and have tutorial classes. That would bring them in contact with those who could not go to the towns.

55,479. Do you think that technical instruction can be given to labouring men by means of lectures only?—It is not labouring men altogether. You see there are farmers' sons, and even farmers themselves. A great many of them are attending the lectures.

55,480. I quite understand that, but you have expressed the opinion that it was to begin at the bottom?—Oh, yes, it must go through the whole community, but, of course, labourers will not take advantage of it. It might begin to give them an interest at our elementary schools, but that is only very temporary. It may give them an interest to go further on in the study, but not as a rule.

Provincial centres of agricultural education.

55,481. What is your idea of a central institution?—A central institution should be an institution in some of the towns; and it would be well if county councils should produce schemes of technical education, and have them approved by the Board of Agriculture. At present there are all sorts of schemes produced, and there is no uniformity in quality, and, therefore, I think it would be well if county councils produced a scheme, and had it carried on by specialists from the central institution.

55,482. What would be the districts for the central institution?—Well, Scotland at present naturally divides itself into about three districts. Looking at the south-west counties of Scotland, you would take Stirling and all to the south-west as having Glasgow for its centre, and probably Perthshire, and in that district you have the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College; and you have the east coast, which would be served by the Chair of Agriculture in Edinburgh; then you have the Forsyth lectures in Aberdeen, which would form the third district.

55,483. Including the Highlands?—Yes; these three might form central colleges.

55,484. Should they be provided by Government or by means of associations and counties?—They should be supported by associations and counties. It has been done in England. It has not been done anywhere in Scotland so far as I know. The Durham College of Science is supported by a grant of 500*l.*, and Cambridge University is supported. This shows that the Residue Grant could be applied here with great effect.

55,485. What would be the precise function of these centres?—They would be for the purpose of teaching specialists, and also farmers and others the higher scientific branches of agriculture, and likewise to provide these lecturers to go through the country.

55,486. Would you assist the farmers to come up?—Some of them might require it. We have in the college paid fares.

55,487. Do they pay fees?—No fees. It was done in regard to teachers, but that is what we rather objected to.

55,488. What is the length of the course for farmers?—They have generally one or two, and they may have three sessions.

55,489. A session being——?—About seven months.

55,490. Are you doing much in the way of teaching specialists?—We are preparing a number, and doing a great deal in the different counties in bringing it nearer to the homes of the people.

55,491. Your system is thoroughly well established?—Yes, it has been established now for eight years.

Experimental farms.

55,492. Have you an experimental farm?—No; we wish we had. We have no means of doing that. In this technical college in Glasgow they were taught principally mechanics and chemistry, but we were asked by the agricultural societies in the west to take up the agricultural department, and so we took it up, and, of course, there is an impression that the city funds should not be devoted to such work.

55,493. Is it not necessary that there should be an experimental farm?—It is very necessary.

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55,494. You do not confine your teaching to purely theoretical instruction?—Oh, no, but this teaching should go along with the practical experience on the farm.

Administration of grant for technical education.

55,495. Do you think there is a good deal of room for improvement in the administration of the grant?—Yes, there is no doubt about that. I think it should not be left optional to county councils to spend this grant on technical education. I think it should be made compulsory.

55,496. Nearly the whole of the grant is devoted to technical education in Scotland?—It is nearly so in England.

55,497. Is there much to be desired in systematising and harmonising the administration?—Yes. A good deal is spent in giving grants to small schools.

55,498-9. Is that being recognised and the expenditure becoming more concentrated?—Well, there is a tendency that way, and I think it will grow. I do not see why county councils should give grants for teaching cooking. That is an elementary subject, and is provided for by the educational grant. It is outside, I think, altogether the purposes of technical education.

55,500. Have you investigated the practice in England?—Yes; they have done very well in England, and have organised schools generally under the authorities. In Manchester they have a technical school supported by the corporation, and the money is all being spent there on technical education.

55,501. And you say that the Treasury ought to supplement this grant?—I certainly think they ought. 8,000*l.* for agricultural education is quite inadequate. There is a Chair in Edinburgh here, and one in South Kensington, London, and these are the only two supported by Government.

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State grant for agricultural education.

55,502. There is a further grant, is there not, of 15,000*l.* a year?—There is a grant of 15,000*l.* given to university colleges.

55,503. You think we should follow the example of foreign countries in largely increasing State aid for agriculture?—I think so. Agricultural education is as much technical education as any branch of trade or profession. Mechanics were very much in the same position 20 years ago. Agriculture is just 20 years behind mechanics in this respect.

55,504. The answer, I suppose, to any large demand for public funds for agriculture would be that it is contrary to the practice of this country to rely upon State aid rather than private enterprise?—Oh, but they have done it already.

55,505. Do you think landowners only will ultimately largely benefit from this?—I think the whole community would be benefitted ultimately.

55,506. Do you think that Parliament would be induced to take that view?—Of course I have my own views in regard to these grants made by Parliament. It is a mistake that they should give through so many sources. If I had my own way, the grants should be given through one source.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. P. Wright.

Mr. R. Patrick Wright called and examined.

Mr. R. P Wright.

55,507. (*Lord Cobham.*) You are a Professor of Agriculture in the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College?—Yes.

Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College.

55,508. What agricultural education do young farmers get at present?—The great majority receive no more education than what their fathers happen to be able to give them, or what they can pick up by chance. The father may chance to be a poor farmer, and it necessarily follows that he cannot educate his son to be a good farmer. The general tendency of the training commonly given to young farmers is rather to train farm labourers than farmers. What I think is the chief feature recognised as essential in the training of the young farmer usually is that he should be taught the mechanical art of farming, that is to say, the arts of ploughing, sowing and reaping, but not the reasons and principles sufficiently, so that, for example, if he is taught one or two methods of sowing seed, he is not instructed fully when he should adopt one method in preference to the other. And then the education is defective, because he is only taught to know what his father knew before him.

Defective training of farmers.

55,509. How does this operate in special departments of agriculture, such as cheese-making and butter-making?—The effect on cheese-making is that the manufacture has been extremely irregular, as it still is in butter-making, and one of the largest merchants in Glasgow wrote about a month ago that, owing to the instruction given in Kilmarnock dairy school and elsewhere, he considered that the quality of cheese had improved in the past 10 years to the extent of 5*s.* per cwt., or 48,000*l.* per annum in Scotland, and he thinks it might still be improved 4*s.* per cwt., or 40,000*l.* a year.

55,510. Do you consider that if our butter was as well made as the Danish our producers ought to command the market?—If the butter was of equally good quality and uniformity the home producer would certainly have an advantage over the foreign producer.

Effects of deficiency of technical training.

55,511. Would you continue what you were saying, and show the mischievous results of want of technical training?—Well, with regard to the calculation of the costs of crop cultivation, I think that is a very important branch of farming knowledge, because it is the business of the farmer to grow those crops that give a profitable return, rather than those crops that do not pay. Now the calculation of the cost of growing crops is somewhat complex. It is rather difficult, and I think I would not be exaggerating in saying that there is hardly one farmer in 500, who is really capable of making an exact calculation. The majority of farmers even do not know the method of setting to the work. You have to enquire into the cost of keeping horses, the cost of men's labour, and a variety of details, in order to arrive at a correct estimate. At present, so far as they are able to calculate these costs themselves, it is the result of long and extensive experience, whereas the method of making such calculations can be easily imparted in a proper course of technical instruction. The same inability prevails as to the feeding of cattle and sheep, and this has an unfortunate effect, as it affects the price of store cattle. I do not think the high prices of store cattle that prevail are entirely the result of the relations of supply and demand, but they are in some measure, at least, the result of an inability to estimate what price ought to be paid for a lean animal, so that a profit will be got after feeding. If it be known that an animal has to be kept so many weeks, and at a certain cost, before becoming fat, it can be better estimated what price ought to be paid for the lean animal.

55,512. Do the Scottish farmers generally rely on a sort of shrewd guess?—Yes, and commonly take animals as they can get them at the market price. Then as to the character of their crops. That, I think, is a point of very great importance. I refer to the importance of the young farmer getting precise or detailed information as to the different kinds of crops grown. For example, as to oats; the young farmer finds one or two varieties grown in his own district, but if he sees the names of 10 or 15 other varieties he has no means of knowing which is best for his district. Now we know that in most cases the difference between the varieties are so great as to make a very distinct difference on the amount of produce and the profit the farm may yield. As to the proper use of foods that, again, depends much on a knowledge of science and scientific terms. The science of using foods depends, for example, partly on the relation of what is called the albuminoid to the non-albuminoid kinds of food; and with a slight knowledge of chemistry an ordinary feeder is enabled to form an approximate idea as to the proper utilisation of foods. That is a point on which education is very much required. One unfortunate result arising from the ignorance of chemical terms is, that when useful experiments are published practical readers are quite unable to appreciate the value of them. I am thinking especially of one practical experiment conducted a few years ago in regard to the feeding of cattle by the chemist of the Royal English Agricultural Society, and of all the farmers I have met in the country I do not think one per cent. appreciated the value of the experiment.

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Mr. R. P. Wright. 12 June 1895.

55,513. Are there no proper newspapers which could produce these results in a non-technical form?—Farmers do not care much for these published reports.

55,514. Would not the knowledge of these results assist them?—Yes, but not having the elementary knowledge of chemical terms they find the reports difficult to understand.

Tuberculosis.

55,515. Is the prevalence of tuberculosis in dairy stock largely due to ignorance of sanitary conditions?—I think so. It is one of the elementary facts of medical science that the tuberculosis disease in man is largely induced by impure air. I think that there can be but little doubt that a great many of the byres in the country are hotbeds of disease and infection.

Agricultural teaching in elementary schools.

55,516. Do you agree with Mr. Russell in thinking that these subjects cannot be taught in childhood?—Not adequately, so as to be of great practical value; but they may be taught in schools so as to interest the pupils, and make them more willing to attend classes afterwards.

55,517. (*Mr. Channing.*) Up to what age would you make that reserve?—As a matter of fact, instruction given to young farmers has little practical value unless they have had previous opportunities of learning practical farming. I do not think that even boys of 16, going from school to college, could acquire sufficient benefit from technical instruction.

55,518. (*Lord Cobham.*) So that school teaching is not so much inadequate?—Well, it is preparatory.

55,519. As giving it earlier?—That is so.

Provincial centres of agricultural education.

55,520. You have heard Mr. Russell's opinions as to college centres. Do you agree with the evidence he gave?—Yes. That is the system that is encouraged by the Board of Agriculture—to encourage a certain number of provincial centres under the Government with the view of having this complete course of instruction at each centre, and of making each college a means of diffusing instruction in the surrounding counties. A central college with classes in its own buildings is quite insufficient, because only a small per-centage of farmers will attend it. Evidence has been laid before the Commission that a complete course of agricultural education requires the institution of elementary schools, of secondary schools, and of central colleges to which pupils would be sent from the secondary schools by means of bursaries. This scheme, though popular among many, is quite insufficient. Each county might by means of bursaries send one or two pupils annually to a central college, but that number is quite insufficient for the education of the general body of farmers. Each central college, besides carrying on classes for such students, should also be the means of carrying instruction to farmers in all surrounding counties.

Peripatetic teaching.

55,521. Are you in favour of peripatetic teaching under the control of central colleges?—Decidedly.

55,522. How would you test the value of the instruction given?—To a certain extent by examination, but only to a limited extent, because farmers of a certain age have got out of the habits of study that are necessary for examinations, and the courses of instruction have to be arranged rather with the view to their practical effect than with the view of gaining certificates.

55,523. Have you provided most of the teachers now employed by the county councils?—Very largely, those required by the counties in the West of Scotland.

55,524. Have they been successful and appreciated?—Yes, generally. In some counties they have failed to do much, and in others they have succeeded remarkably well.

55,525. Is there much reluctance on the part of the farmers to attend the classes?—That depends greatly on the nature of the scheme adopted locally.

55,526. And a good deal on the teacher?—Oh, yes, a great deal on the individual teacher. At first, I think, it requires the influence of intelligent local men to get the majority of farmers to attend classes.

Agricultural experiment stations.

55,527. How would you provide for experiments?—We have provided for this, by arranging a certain number of experiments in each county for several years past. Farmers are generally willing to give small sections of land for the purpose, and I think the establishment of small experiment stations is the most successful method of bringing agricultural instruction within the reach of farmers, provided the results be popularly explained and lectured about.

Mr. R. P. Wright. 11 June 1895.

55,528. How would you conduct these small stations?—Well, in the present season we have arranged for a large number of such experiments to be conducted by farmers, but under the superintendence of committees appointed by county councils and otherwise. The schemes of experiments are drafted and designed by the specialists in the college, and an inspector is sent round to see that the experiment is actually carried out.

55,529. Is it done at a moderate cost?—Yes, it can be on this method, but a central experiment station cannot be carried on except at a great cost.

Agricultural lectures.

55,530. (*Mr. Channing.*) How would you get people to be gathered together to get the benefit of the lectures?—You require to lecture locally in the neighbourhood where the experiment has been carried out.

55,531. (*Lord Cobham*) Do you give prizes to encourage students?—In certain cases where classes have been formed prizes are given.

55,532. Do you think that is necessary?—I think it is desirable where the classes are sufficiently numerous.

Agricultural experiment stations.

55,533. Your central station, I suppose, would be a station for Scotland?—No, I should say a station in connexion with each college, three in Scotland. I think that quite an essential feature of the college work, and, indeed, the best means of bringing agricultural education within the reach of farmers.

55,534. Is there no experimental station at present?—There has been a very important work carried on by the Highland Agricultural Society. Unfortunately, that station was carried on apart from a teaching or educational staff, so that while the results have been very valuable, and reports have been published in the transactions of the society they are not read by the great majority of farmers, and even though they were read they would not be generally understood. Work of that kind must be carried on in connexion with a teaching staff.

Beneficial results of agricultural experiments.

55,535. You attach the utmost importance to this method of agricultural education?—I think it is by far the most effective means of making farmers acquainted with the results of agricultural science.

55,536. Could you produce examples of the important beneficial results that could be obtained?—I think I can mention two examples. There is one relating to hay. It is grown in Scotland sometimes without any manure at all, and frequently also with only a slight manuring. In experiments carried on in 1893 by the Glasgow Technical College with various kinds of manures, one gave a clear profit of 3*l.* 19*s.* per acre, as compared with an acre to which no manure was applied. That particular method of manuring is one which I do not think is carried on in a single farm in Scotland; yet it was clearly and conclusively shown that such profits could be obtained. Then in 1894 the same course of experiments was carried on, and it was found that by this same method an additional profit of 3*l.* per acre was obtained as compared with the profits obtained by the very common practice of manuring with nitrate of soda alone. The production of crops is capable also of being very largely increased by the proper use of manures. Then I may mention a second result with regard to the utilisation of farmyard manure. All farms where there are live stock produce a large quantity, and this is a subject on which farmers have much experience, yet I find generally that the opinions of farmers themselves are by no means absolutely fixed as to the best method of utilising their farmyard manure. We tried in 1893 farmyard manure in a turnip crop, and one method of utilizing it gave a return of 4*s.* 6*d.* per ton, while another method gave 7*s.* 6*d.* per ton. I have calculated that on a 50-cow dairy farm there may be 500 tons of manure, which utilised in the one way gives 112*l.* 10*s.*, and in the other 187*l.* 10*s.*, equal to a difference of 30*s.* per cow, or from 15 per cent. to 30 per cent. of the rental of the farm. In 1894 we tried an experiment with the application of farmyard manure to the hay crop. In one method employed it gave a return of 2*s.* 10*d.*, while in another method it gave 5*s.* 5*d.* per ton. In the commonly practised method of applying the farmyard manure a return of 70*l.* was obtained for 500 tons, in the other method 135*l.*, or almost double. I mention these examples to show now greatly the returns in farming may be affected by the skilful or unskilful use of manures.

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Foreign agricultural experiment stations.

55,537. Do the results of experimental stations in other countries confirm you in your view of the importance of them?—Very much so. The usefulness of these stations is universally recognised on the Continent and in America. I do not know whether you have had statistics placed before you as to the American or German colleges, but in America, for example, I see there are 60 colleges wholly or partly agricultural which receive about 350,000*l.* from the Government, and about 200,000*l.* from the Governments of the separate States.

55,538. I suppose that is supplemented by fees?—The colleges have the fees in addition to this. This is the amount of Government aid alone. Then in addition to these 60 colleges there are 54 agricultural experimental stations receiving 140,000*l.* from the Government, and 30,000*l.* from the various governments in the separate States.

55,539. Is America the country in which the largest amount of assistance is given?—It has the largest gross amount. But in France one agricultural institute alone receives a State grant of 10,000*l.*, and another of 8,000*l.* In Germany there are 11 agricultural colleges and stations in receipt of an Imperial grant of 3,000*l.* each.

State grants for agricultural education.

55,540. Do agricultural colleges in England supply the place of these institutions to any extent?—They would do so if they were adequately supported, but the total grant made to the Board of Agriculture to assist these colleges amounts to 8,000*l.*, which is distributed among 11 colleges and three dairying institutes. Most of these are insufficiently supported. A number of them are still in large measure dependent on voluntary subscriptions. The Kilmarnock dairy school received last year, out of a total of 1,640*l.*, 346*l.*, or about a fifth of its income in voluntary subscriptions from landlords and others, and its entire abandonment has been frequently spoken of owing to want of sufficient support. The Glasgow Technical College is very much in the same position, and the abandonment of its agricultural department has also been seriously considered. I would suggest that the Treasury, instead of giving 8,000*l.* to the Board of Agriculture should give at least 100,000*l.* for distribution to agricultural and dairy colleges and institutes in Great Britain.

Demonstration farms and secondary schools.

55,541. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is it considered a good plan to have secondary schools for lads of say 15 to 20, with demonstration farms in Scotland?—I think a demonstration farm could hardly be conducted satisfactorily in connexion with a secondary school.

55,542. Are the results of these figures you gave us just now the difference of values?—Precisely, the produce is accurately weighed.

Foreign Agricultural schools.

55,543. (*Mr. Everett.*) You tell us that agricultural schools are better supported in Germany and France than they are here?—Yes, that is so.

55,544. But I think the Governments of those two countries have found it necessary to help their farmers by protection?—They have also assisted them by protection, but I would not say that the assistance was required because of the education. It is given because the fiscal policy of these countries is protective, and not because the farmers specially needed help.

55,545. Is it not the case that Scotland and England can show the best farming in the world?—I very much question it. It is commonly so said by complimentary speakers at public meetings. I have seen tracts of the Rhine valley which are farmed as perfectly as any that I have ever seen in Britain. In regard to practical work I believe our farmers are as good as any in the world, but in scientific knowledge they are distinctly behind the Germans.

55,546. In agricultural practice, practical experience is the test?—Yes.

55,547. Science sometimes skilfully attempts to explain what—is it not often a case of what is right in one season is quite wrong in another season, and on another soil?—It is part of agricultural science to teach that that is so.

Cost of cultivation.

55,548. Now as to calculating the cost of crops, is it not the case that our rotation of crops are so inseparably mixed up together as to make it impossible accurately to settle the cost of one crop?—It is not so impossible as to define the calculation of value. The result enables you to decide whether a crop can be profitably grown, or otherwise.

55,549. Still the calculation enables you to decide what crops to grow and what crops not to grow?—Yes.

55,550. (*Mr. Clay.*) Should not young farmers learn at home before going to colleges?—I am satisfied of that.

Agricultural experiment stations.

55,551. You spoke of experimental stations in America. Would you like to see something of the same kind carried out here?—Unquestionably.

55,552. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) What amount of ground would you require for these experiments?—About half an acre for local field experiments, but a central station would require to be two or three hundred acres.

55,553. Referring to what you proposed under county council committees, that amount of land you would get for very little expense?—Farmers grant it quite readily.

55,554. Could you give us any idea roughly of what it would cost to carry these experiments out here?—That depends on the particular scheme adopted, but I should think that you might perhaps get a college to undertake to conduct experiments of that kind for an expenditure of 6*l.*, 7*l.*, or 8*l.* for each experiment.

55,555. Including the sending of a lecturer, who should be conducting the experiments and taking his class by turns?—Yes, but the cost may be less if a considerable number are carried out at the same time.

Adjourned.

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One Hundred and Fourth Day.

Thursday, 27th June 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., IN THE CHAIR.

Viscount COBHAM.
The Right Hon. Baron RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, M.P., K.C.B.
ROBERT GIFFEN, Esq., C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq., M.P.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
WALTER HUME LONG, Esq., M.P.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., *Assistant Secretaries.*

Lieut.-Col. H. R. Hughes.

27 June 1895.

Lieutenant-Colonel HUGH ROBERT HUGHES recalled and further examined.

(For previous evidence see page 131.)

55,556. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have told us, I think, in the course of your examination, that you manage estates in England as well as in Wales?—Yes.

Landlord's expenditure on improvements.

55,557. On the last occasion when you were here you said in reply to me, that permanent improvements in Wales were usually made by the landlords?—Entirely.

55,558. And the tenants would not be able to make them?—They do not and cannot as a rule.

55,559. Would you say the same thing from your experience with regard to England, namely, that the tenants would not be in a position to make the permanent improvements?—Certainly, they would not.

55,560. We had evidence given by some witnesses recommending great changes in the laws which govern the relations between landlord and tenant. Do you happen to have seen the evidence given by Mr. W. Smith dealing with this question?—Yes.

55,561. Have you read it?—I have.

Fixity of tenure and land courts.

55,562. You are aware that he proposes to establish by law what is called fixity of tenure, and a land court for the purpose, amongst other things, of fixing fair rents?—Yes.

55,563. Now, if his proposals were adopted in England, what would be the effect on the making of improvements; would the landlord continue to make these improvements as heretofore?—Certainly not; their interests would be quite different; they would not go on improving.

55,564. You think that would make a considerable difference with regard to the future making of improvements?—Certainly; I do, indeed.

55,565. As far as your knowledge of English estates is concerned?—Yes, certainly.

55,566. You told us that the tenants could not, and would not, be able to make those improvements themselves?—Certainly not; it is quite out of the question.

55,567. They have not got capital enough?—They have not the means.

55,568. Then the result of any such legislation in England would be injurious to agriculture in your opinion?—Very greatly.

55,569. Do you think it would tend to aggravate the serious depression now existing in England?—It must do—it could not be otherwise—very greatly.

55,570. I want to ask you, from your general knowledge and your wide experience, whether you think it would tend to prevent outlay on improvements by landlords, and to aggravate agricultural depression if these principles were adopted in legislation and applied generally to Great Britain?—I do think so.

Price of cattle and sheep.

55,571. I think you told us in an earlier part of your examination, that the depression in Wales in your opinion was greatly owing to the fall in the price of cattle; am I right in that?—It varies so very much, it is very hard to answer that question. The price of cattle varies so very much. I have brought with me to-day the figures of what have been the prices for years.

55,572. Have we had those figures?—No. I asked my own salesman, and he declined to make me a list—he begged to be excused, saying, "I cannot do it, it "fluctuates too much." On the other hand, I got prices of cattle from two most reliable men in Montgomeryshire, where things go very regularly, and I shall be happy to give those figures.

55,573. (*Chairman.*) Have you got a list of prices of cattle year by year?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A. XI.) That is a list of three-year Hereford bullocks as sold and bred in Montgomeryshire.

55,574. Are those lean stock?—All store stock of which those two men have supplied me with a list.

55,575. This document only goes down to 1885?—I beg your pardon. That was compiled by a tenant of Lord Powis, and the other is a tenant of ours, and they are reliable men. I will give you the prices of Welsh sheep for Montgomeryshire for 60 years from a man of the name of Owen, of Mathafarn, who is over 80, and he is also a very reliable man—that is for Welsh sheep. (*See* Appendix A. XII.)

55,576. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I find that according to these figures there has been a rise in the price of sheep subsequently to 1869?—Certainly.

55,577. And that rise continued till the end of 1889?—Yes, 1889 was a very good year; things looked very much better all round, and there were great hopes in 1889.

55,578. From 1890 to 1894 there has been a certain fall again in prices?—A very severe fall.

55,579. And in 1895 there has been a rise?—A temporary rise with the spring, undoubtedly.

55,580. What do you attribute that rise to?—One cannot tell; it came in the natural course of things, and there was a very sharp demand for cattle. In many instances the men who bought them will then have their fingers burned with this drought.

55,581. Did you suffer from the drought in Wales two years ago?—Heavily; and it made a great deal of difference.

55,582. That would account for the recent rise in the price of cattle?—It is impossible to tell what leads to the rise and fall in prices, they go up and down. I have an interesting statement giving the price of wool in Wales since 1856; and here also is a very important document with reference to tub butter. (*See* Appendix A. XIII.)

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Lieut.-Col. H. R. Hughes. 27 June 1895.

55,583. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) In quoting the price of cattle, did you refer to beef or store cattle?—To store cattle.

Price of butter.

55,584. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The prices of Welsh tub butter, I see, have been steadily falling of late?—They got down very low, and it is a very bad thing for those farmers, because they look forward to having a quantity of that to sell for the Christmas rent; they feel very much the fall in butter. They cannot get the prices they used to have for this butter.

55,585. It is not due to the quality of the butter, the butter being worse?—Not at all.

55,586. Is the butter good as a rule?—That butter is very good. The time of bad butter in Wales is in the spring.

55,587. Do you attribute the fall in prices to the competition with foreign butter?—Yes. Shrewsbury was generally the place that the butter was sent to from North Wales, and now they could not sell it.

55,588. You said it was very hard for them, because they looked very much to the sales of their butter to pay the rents?—Yes; very much so.

Reductions in rent.

55,589. Have many reductions in rent been made in proportion to the fall in prices?—A great many reductions. But I am getting myself very much more into the way always of trying to consider every case on its own merits.

55,590. Do you consider that this fall in the price of butter will lead to further reduction in rent?—Yes; it must do. My life will be slavery till Christmas now.

55,591. Do you mean in examining into the case of each tenant?—Yes; you cannot do it unless you go into every field.

Rates.

55,592. Have you any suggestions to make to the Commission with regard to any remedies you could propose for the depression?—I have nothing further to add to what I gave in my original evidence. I feel strongly myself that every man has either purchased or inherited land, and he must stick to it, and what I ask is to have the burdens looked into and matters equalised. We think that the rates, and so on, come heavy upon the farming interest.

55,593. You look chiefly as a remedy to a diminution of local burdens?—I do very much. I have gone a good deal into the question, but I have never interfered with what is called the poor rate. My evidence was meant to apply to rates generally. I have collected a good deal of information now upon it, and it shows exactly how it is that all those extra rates tell in so many cases; with the actual poor rates it is less. Mr. Dalton asked me about it, and I really had not attended to it. I never go to the board, but I have found a great deal out since he put the question to me, and what is actually called a poor rate is less as a rule. One subject that I ventured to allude to is the areas of boroughs, and that is a very serious question. It is a case of this kind. Where land is purely agricultural, and the next neighbour just over the hedge does not pay one of those rates, he gets no benefit whatever. My own case, and that of a neighbour, are cases in point. There is one tenant (I looked out his rent), Mr. Hughes, of Kinmel, is the landlord. His farm happens to be in the borough, and he gets no benefit whatever from that. The rent of that farm used to be 800*l.* a year, and a tenant made money out of it to my knowledge, and it is now reduced to 600*l.* a year, and the man pays 46*l.* per annum of extra rates because he happens to be in the area of the borough. Then take my own case. I had this drawn out. On the farm that I have held of my own, the rent before I had it was about 400*l.*, and I am now assessed at 600*l.* on my own improvements. Of course my rates go up greatly, and my out-goings at that rent come to 168*l.* per annum. These are the cases that want looking into. Now in the borough of Shrewsbury, the town rates there come to 8*s.* 6*d.* per acre.

55,594. (*Mr. Long.*) What is the rent of the land where the rates amount to 8*s.* 6*d.* an acre?—I cannot tell you. It is held by a cousin of mine, and he pays 8*s.* 6*d.* per acre on town rates.

55,595. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the rate in the £?—He does not give me any further information than that.

55,596. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have you got the rental per acre on this land that pays 8*s.* 6*d.*?—No, I have not. I have here Bangor and Carnarvon. Those, with your permission, I will show you. I can tell you those men feel the rates. (*See* Appendix A. XIV.)

Lieut.-Col. H. R. Hughes. 27 June 1895.

55,597. (*Mr. Little.*) You were speaking of rates in boroughs where agricultural land was within the area of the borough, and where land is charged at the full value, is it not?—For certain rates it is, and others at one-fourth.

55,598. Those will be district rates?—The general district rate.

55,599. The general district rate is one-fourth of the amount, and the borough rate is charged on the whole?—Yes.

55,600. And those boroughs include a large quantity of agricultural land in their area?—Yes, and that is saddled with the town rates without any advantage whatever.

55,601. (*Mr. Elton.*) Is there no advantage in value to the land from being close to a town?—Not in these days; it is no advantage.

55,602. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The general district rate is considerably higher than the borough rate?—Yes; owing to different things there are these rates on most of the parishes near Wynnstay, and also the parishes that that property is in; it is all contained in this document. (*See* Appendix A. XIX.)

Improvements by tenants.

55,603. (*Mr. Clay.*) Did the tenants in Wales make the permanent improvements on the farms, as a rule?—They do nothing whatever; they will not put a screw into a door; they will not do anything.

55,604. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Is that on your own estate?—Yes, but all my friends say the same.

55,605. You are not speaking of the district generally?—All the estates that I know about they will not now do anything. I do not know about the small owners, but I can assure you that they will not do anything at all on large estates.

55,606. (*Mr. Clay.*) What have the landlords done for the general improvements?—A great deal.

55,607. What per-centage on their rental are they laying out in their properties?—Well, a very large per-centage. Of course, in that case, it depends on what state you find your property in. If it has been kept up well the outgoings are smaller, but if the property is in bad order the demand is tremendous to make them satisfied.

55,608. As a rule, are the tenantry on the properties much changed, have they many changes going on?—Very few changes.

55,609. Have the farmers been making money?—They did, but not of late.

Rent.

55,610. Are they considered to be high rented?—No, I do not think so.

55,611. Who puts the rent on—who values the farm?—Where there is an application made for rent to be considered, I always do it myself.

55,612. Do you farm yourself?—I have done so for 35 years.

55,613. Do you find it profitable?—In many ways. I have to manage that, and I have the control of Sir Watkin's home farm too.

55,614. Have you been renting the tenantry upon those farms?—No. Mine is a business; it has nothing to do with real farming; it is a speciality.

55,615. You say you put a rent upon the tenants?—Yes, what I believe to be an honest rent—what the land ought to do under good management.

55,616. Are the tenants satisfied with those rents?—They are.

55,617. You say the rents of the farms were kept pretty well up till 1890?—Yes.

55,618. Through the increased price of stock?—They had temporary reductions.

55,619. To what extent—what per-centage of reductions had they?—In some cases to 25 per cent., but that was very exceptional; from 10 to 15 is what you may take as an average.

55,620. And then you say from 1890 to 1895 the prices of sheep and cattle have gradually been decreasing?—Yes; it was very low in 1892 and 1893.

55,621. Can you say about 1894, whether there was a rise?—A trifle; there was more inquiry, and then it got right, and last autumn it was much better.

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55,622. For the present moment what is the prospect?—It was good in spring, but no doubt this drought will alter the market very heavily—it is bound to do—the grass is drying up.

Future prospects.

55,623. What effect will this drought have upon the general prosperity of Wales?—It is sure to keep prices down.

55,624. What per-centage will it take down sheep and cattle?—I could not say that.

55,625. Are you, as a land agent, ready and willing to meet the depression owing to the drought?—We have always hitherto endeavoured to meet the farmers.

55,626. Well, you have gone on also to give us evidence that the price of butter has rather seriously diminished?—That is in the country; it is serious.

55,627. Has the tenant farmer, with this depression, and less prices, any prospect of remedies?—None. To tell you the exact truth—the men have not said so themselves—I know it is so, but the men have not complained to me.

Farming capital.

55,628. Are there men with sufficient capital to farm the land?—That again it is impossible to answer. Very much depends in our country upon the men. Some begin with small means and work up, and some men have saved money.

55,629. As a rule have the men sufficient capital to farm the land?—Not what I call sufficient; certainly not.

55,630. Has not the capital of the farmers gradually decreased?—I know that it has in many cases, but of course it must not all be put on the land; a man may not know his business.

Rent.

55,631. Is it the case that a tenant farmer may be paying more rent for the land than it is worth; is it not a legitimate inference that the landlord may be taking too much rent from him?—Well, it his business to go to the landlord and have that out.

55,632. Does he get it out of the landlord?—I am sure we have always dealt with every case, and I think it is a well-known fact that the Welsh landlords have been most liberal.

55,633. I do not know anything about the Welsh landlords?—It has come out, and it is well known, that they have been extremely liberal.

55,634. I do not know about the Welsh landlords, but have they not been taking more rent from the tenant than they should have done to leave him a living profit? If the tenants are getting poorer is not it the case that the landlord is exacting too much rent?—The men who have put things wrong were those who, when tenants had been going on old rents, altered their rents in the time of prosperity, during the seventies. Those men have made the greatest mistake of any men, and that is my opinion.

55,635. Is that the rule in Wales generally, have the majority been making mistakes?—Many of those who altered their rents have bitterly repented it. There was never a more unwise step; but those men who have stuck to their farms on their old rents have managed to get on.

55,636. Does the landlord, as a rule, live on the property?—Most of them.

55,637. Do they give practical attention to their properties—I mean in addition to their agents?—Many do, and some do not at all. Many of them are proud of their estates, and look after them.

55,638. The landlords do not live above their means?—I could not say that; I am not a banker.

55,639. Do not the tenants and landlords live above their means?—I could not go into that.

55,640. But you will have a general idea about it?—I should be sorry to give an opinion one way or the other. With great deference to you I do not think I am called upon to do that.

55,641. But as a rule the tenants have not been making money, have they?—Well, it is very difficult for me to answer that. Many of them will make money out of brickdust, it is something marvellous how some of them do it. But tenant farmers, as a body, are not so well off as they were.

55,642. Have they not been paying too much rent to you as land agent?—Never, to my knowledge.

55,643. If they are getting poorer, does it not show that that is so?—If you come to that you cannot re-adjust everything in a moment; we must work on together. Our men know that I have always met them, and am prepared to meet them fairly, and go into their troubles.

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55,644. I am not asking you as an individual, but I am asking you as to the general position of tenant farmers in Wales?—I know on all good estates it is the same feeling, and it is acknowledged over and over again by substantial men, how they have been treated on other estates.

55,645. On all the other estates they are not so liberally treated?—I cannot say that.

55,646. Are the rents in proportion to the fall in prices?—The circumstances are so different, I cannot answer that.

(*Mr. Long.*) I find in Colonel Hughes' proof here; "The effects of the depression: my experience is, that "the large owners have suffered heavy diminutions of "income, while the expenditure upon their part, neces- "sary to maintain their estates in a profitable state, "has increased materially." If that does not point to a reduction of rent, I do not know the meaning of rent.

(*Witness.*) May I read those figures of permanent reduction; there is one of my friend Canon Haygarth's, in which the rent was 247*l.* and is now 200*l.* Then we have rents of 180*l.* reduced to 130*l.*; 98*l.* to 80*l.*; 66*l.* to 56*l.*; 46*l.* to 38*l.*; 26*l.* to 21*l.*; 200*l.* to 160*l.*; 72*l.* to 55*l.*; and 60*l.* to 50*l.*

55,647. (*Chairman.*) Does that refer to the estate that you manage yourself?—I have had these in my hands.

55,648. (*Mr. Long.*) In the summary of your evidence, there is a paragraph which runs as follows: "On farm "buildings and repairs on Sir Watkin and Lady "Wynn's estate, the amount spent during the six "years ending 1893 was 61,980*l.*; on gates, fences, "woods, &c., 16,579; and on draining 3,621*l.*, or a "total of 82,181*l.* in addition to giving rebates amount- "ing to 30,026*l.* or a total of 112,207*l.*" Does not that 30,000*l.* mean the reduction of rental which has come back to the farmer in the shape of rebate?—Yes, and a loss of income.

Reduction of rents and value of produce.

55,649. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have the rents of farms been reduced according to the fall in produce by which the tenant has to make the rent?—I think he would be a bold man to give an answer to that question. We do not know what is coming. We men who are mixed up with agriculture, live by the day; we cannot prophecy, and we must go according to circumstances.

55,650. I ask a simple question, to which you can answer "yes" or "no."?—I have given an account of my stewardship on every estate. I have got all my reductions here. I would not attempt to speak for the future. I would be very much surprised if any man, with any experience, would do so.

55,651. I am speaking not of the future. Have the rents on farms in Wales been reduced according to the reduction of produce grown and sold off the farm?—I think it is generally admitted, except in certain circumstances, that the rents have always been fair. But the fall in prices has upset us now, and no man knows now what is going to happen. It is impossible to do it.

Cattle breeding.

55,652. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) As regards the cattle in Wales, have they deteriorated in quality of late years?—I do not think so, as a rule. There is no wiser step in the world than for landlords to send out good strains; it is the very wisest step that men can take to keep good strains of blood among the tenantry.

55,653. Has that been done?—Yes.

55,654. You do not put down the fall of prices in cattle and sheep to the deterioration of the quality of the animal?—No; still, we must go on improving. You must drive that into them.

55,655. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You sell very large quantities of milk for retail?—Yes, I do myself; that is the farm that I was talking of.

Effect of milk selling on the land.

55,656. Do you consider that you are enabled to maintain the condition of the land with the sale of that milk?—I have improved it, because by my system of gross-cropping; I am getting better every year, my manures are tremendous.

55,657. You apply immense quantities of manure then?—Yes.

55,658. You think it necessary, in dairy farming, to do so?—You must go on that system, because you sell all the milk, and if you do not feed the cattle the farm would get worse.

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55,659. Do you think that the ordinary farmer who sells his milk off the farm, maintains the condition of his land?—I should say, not as a rule. They must supply the draft that is taken away by the milk.

Prices of cattle.

55,660. (*Chairman.*) You have put in various returns of prices; in the first place, you have put in returns of the prices of three-year-old Hereford bullocks from Vaughan Hughes, of Pentremawr and Llanbrynmair, and those returns do not show, comparing 1894 and 1895 with 1871, any very serious diminution of price, in 1871 the price being 14*l.* per head in 1872, 15*l.* 10*s.* per head; then it rose somewhat to 17*l.*, then dropped to 15*l.* 14*s.*, and in 1880 it went still lower, but in the years 1894 and 1895, the price was 13*l.* a head?—Yes. I may tell you that the men who prepared those returns are the best men I could get. (*See* Appendix A. XI.)

55,661. There seems to have been a very serious fall in 1893?—Very. We mentioned that the last time I was here.

55,662. That, I suppose, was due to the drought in England?—Yes; there was no demand then.

55,663. It was due to the absence of any demand for store cattle?—Yes.

55,664. Then in 1894 and 1895 it rose from 7*l.* 10*s.* to 13*l.* per head?—Yes.

55,665. Therefore the price has risen very considerably again?—Yes.

55,666. Your next return gives the prices of black cattle sold by Edward Vaughan of Llyssyn?—Yes. It is near rather a well known place called Cann Office belonging to Lord Powys. That man has been a judge at a great many shows. (*See* Appendix A. XV.)

55,667. What are those black cattle, are they store cattle?—Yes.

55,668. That return does not show any reduction?—No, it does not.

55,669. According to it, in the year 1880 the price of two-and-a-half and three-year-old bullocks was 15*l.*; in 1883 it was 19*l.*; in 1890, 13*l.* 10*s.*; then it rose in 1892 and 1893 to 14*l.*; in 1894 to 14*l.* 10*s.*; and in 1895 to 16*l.*; therefore the price in 1895 was higher than in the year 1880?—Yes.

55,670. Then for barren cows the price seems to have been also about the same all through, namely, 12*l.*?—Yes.

55,671. For two-year-old heifers the price was 10*l.* in 1880; 8*l.* in 1890; 10*l.* in 1894; and 11*l.* 10*s.* in 1895?—Yes.

55,672. On the other hand the price of wool appears to have been reduced considerably?—That is dreadful.

55,673. It has fallen from 1*s.* 1*d.* per pound in 1856 and 1*s.* 2*d.* in 1858, to 8*d.* in 1892, 7½*d.* in 1893, and 7*d.* in 1894?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A. XVI.)

55,674. From another return, store sheep appear to have increased in value?—They have held their own well with very small exceptions.

55,675. Taking the average of the years from 1833 to 1839, the price was 12*s.* 9*d.*; from 1840 to 1849, 12*s.* 10*d.*; 1850 to 1859, 13*s.* 11*d.*; 1860 to 1869, 16*s.* 6*d.*; then from 1870 to 1879, it was 1*l.*; from 1880 to 1889, it was 1*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.*; 1890 to 1894, it was 18*s.* 7*d.*; and in 1895 it was 1*l.* again?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A. XII.)

55,676. Therefore the price at the present time is as high as it ever has been?—It was very good this spring.

55,677. And very much higher than in the years 1833 to 1869?—Yes, it is higher than in the old days.

55,678. On the other hand the price of butter has been reduced from about 1*s.* 1*d.* and 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* in 1889; 10*d.* in 1894; and 9*d.* in 1895?—Yes.

55,679. Taking the prices all round, they do not appear to me to show a very serious fall as compared with a good number of years ago?—That is so, taking them all round.

55,680. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose the prices of store cattle depend very much upon foreign importations?—There are circumstances happening at various times which affect the price, but taking prices all round in that district they cannot complain.

Rent.

55,681. (*Chairman.*) Now take the Wynnstay Estate: the rental that you have given us in the précis of your evidence shows a gradual increase of the gross rental from 40,000*l.* in 1862, to 46,000*l.* in 1880?—Excuse me, there were purchases and sales, there has been a great deal of that which should be taken into account. Practically, no rents have been raised, but we have bought and sold. We could give all the figures for a large estate like that, but no one would read them. When pieces have come into the market we have bought them. (*See* Appendix A. XVII.)

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55,682. Was there some addition to the estate between 1862 and 1890?—Certainly. I, myself, bought for Sir Watkin in 1889 an estate that cost 30,000*l.* It belonged to the late, rather notorious, Mr. George H. Whalley and it was bought from his mortgagees.

55,683. Still the increase of rent between 1862 and 1890?—The rents have been maintained.

55,684. One moment; the increase of rent between 1862 and 1880 was no less than 6,000*l.* a year, or about 15 per cent.?—I think, if you will forgive me, I said that the Merionethshire rental was very unadvisedly raised in the sixties.

55,685. But the Merionethshire rental was only 5,000*l.* a year, if I recollect aright?—It was 5,500*l.*

55,686. And the increase of rental between 1862 and 1880 was no less than 6,000*l.* a year?—I know there were a great many purchases; and I could get them out of the books. I am prepared to say that there have been no rises in the estate except in Merionethshire.

55,687. Have there been any purchases since 1880?—There was a very large one, comparatively speaking, which was that made in 1889 and on which 30,000*l.* was paid.

55,688. That was in 1889 then?—Yes.

55,689. I thought you said between 1862 and 1880, when referring to that?—The rises in rents in Merionethshire were in the sixties; the big purchase of 30,000*l.* that I made was in 1889 and there was another one of 6,500*l.* in that year.

55,690. That I suppose would mean a rental of a little over a thousand a year—not much more would it?—It did make more.

55,691. How much—fifteen hundred a year?—It was a wonderful purchase. The second mortgagees asked me 77,000*l.* for the property, I offered them 30,000*l.* It is a long story, but I said they might go where they liked, they would not get more; in six months they came and took 30,000*l.* for it. That estate pays over 4 per cent. and that has made the average of the others better.

55,692. That would be twelve hundred a year instead of a thousand?—Yes, that is a fact, but then the circumstances are peculiar and that case makes the other purchases look a bit better.

Reduction of rents.

55,693. It does not appear that even admitting that, there has been any considerable reduction of rent since 1880 to the present time?—You must take in what we have talked of, I mean what we have given back, which comes to 31,000*l.*

55,694. I am referring to permanent reductions of rent?—The permanent reductions of rent you have on one of the papers I have handed in. (*See* Appendix A. XVIII.)

55,695. The permanent reductions of rent amount to a thousand pounds a year exactly, upon a property which is rented at 46,000*l.* a year?—Yes. That is entirely accounted for by the small farms.

55,696. It is about 2½ per cent. reduction of rent upon an estate rented at 46,000*l.* a year, that has been the reduction of the rent?—Yes.

55,697. And that has been largely, as I understand, in one county, Merionethshire?—Yes.

55,698. In the other districts it appears that there has not been a considerable reduction of rent?—That is so. If I live, I am just going over a farm where I know a reduction of 100*l.* a year is what they are certain of.

55,699. I am now speaking of the past, and in the past there has been no reduction beyond that, and that has been mainly in Merionethshire?—That is so.

55,700. With regard to abatements; you spoke of the total sum representing your temporary abatements?—Yes, it is 31,000*l.* up to last October. There would be 10 per cent. given last winter.

55,701. Over how many years does that sum extend?—There were no reductions until the present Sir Watkin came into possession.

55,702. When was that?—In 1885.

Abatements of rent.

55,703. Therefore, from 1885 to 1895 the abatements have been about 30,000*l.*?—They have been.

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55,704. Representing an average reduction of about three thousand a year?—Yes, on the whole. We let them down by 5 per cent., then we got our rents in the year 1890, and then we went back to the reduction in 1892.

55,705. Which of the years did you make abatements in?—They began in 1885, and they went on to the early rent of 1889 when we gave 5 per cent. just so that they might not be drawn up too quickly; then in 1890 and 1891 we got the full rents, and in 1892 we went 15 per cent. down.

55,706. In 1893?—The same; I think we gave it for five half years from then.

55,707. In 1894 what was it?—In 1894 we gave 10 per cent., then we gave 10 per cent. again in the autumn on all the old rents, and 5 per cent. on the adjusted rents.

55,708. Then, practically, one may say that the permanent reductions have been small?—They have been small. There has never been a case applied for that has not been attended to.

55,709. But looking at the whole estate the permanent reductions have been small?—Yes.

55,710. The temporary reductions have been given sometimes for two or three years in succession?—They are not to be compared with those on other estates; I do not think they are at all big as compared with other estates.

55,711. Not big?—No.

Estate expenditure.

55,712. The expenses of the estate have somewhat increased, have they not?—Enormously. I think I have explained to you that after I took the estate up, and I felt what the times were, I told Sir Watkin and Lady Wynn that it must be done; and that was the cause of it. I told them it must be done, the times were altered, and the estate was very much out of repair; and accordingly we set to work.

55,713. This return that you put in does not show any very enormous increase in the expenditure—take the years 1874 and 1875?—(*See* Appendix A. XVII.) You called my attention to that, I think, when I was here before, and asked how it had gone up some two or three years. I made inquiries and looked up the books, and I found that a local agent broke out tremendously about that time. It was his doing, and I believe it was the cause of his losing his place. On a certain estate he let out tremendously, and they lost confidence in him, and he had to go. The outlay since I began has been going on very steadily indeed, and shall have to go on. I do not mince matters at all; we shall have to spend enormously for years to come in order to maintain the rental.

55,714. You speak of an enormous increase, but these figures that you put before us do not show any very enormous increase: take the years 1874, 1875, and 1876?—Those were the years that I think you spoke of last time.

55,715. I know, but I am referring again to them. In 1874, 1875, and 1876 the expense of fencing, gates, and woods amounted to an average of about 2,000*l.* a year, and the expenses on the estate, buildings, and repairs amounted to about 8,300*l.*, or something like that; then during the last three years they have amounted to about 3,000*l.* a year for the one, and about 9,000*l.* a year for the other. One can hardly say that is an enormous increase, although it is an increase?—Well, I will withdraw that word, but it is an increase if you keep steadily on at it.

Tenants improvements.

55,716. I think you said that for some period, I have forgotten for what years, the tenants had effected permanent improvements themselves?—There is no question about that; formerly tenants did do an immense deal themselves.

55,717. Up to what period?—I should say that up to 1870 they did a great deal.

55,718. What kind of permanent improvements did they do up to that time?—They always did a lot of small things. Men have told me now as I go about, and have shown me what they have done themselves.

55,719. What kind of things, drainage?—Sheds and different things.

55,720. Buildings?—Yes.

55,721. Did they erect cow sheds?—Not big things.

55,722. Cow sheds?—Yes, small ones.

55,723. And drainage?—They did in those days, no doubt of it.

55,724. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Did not the removal of boulders represent a great deal?—Yes, but then those are all used for building in that country; they get the boulders up and build with them.

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55,725. (*Chairman.*) They did drainage, I think you said?—Yes.

55,726. Practically, the tenants up to that period did the work themselves?—It was the custom then; they did not ask for things from what I can make out. In my experience it is quite different.

55,727. They did the work themselves?—Yes, I believe so as a natural thing.

Landlords' improvements.

55,728. Of late years the improvements have been more effected by the landlords?—Absolutely, entirely.

55,729. Why did that change take place?—Owing to the change of circumstances. I fancy that it is changing all over the kingdom. The men find that they cannot do it, and the landlords have had to do it or lose their rents.

55,730. Was it on this account that the rents have not been reduced, and they could not do it?—I do not know that exactly. It is a fact that now it has become so. Many other things change in life as well. That is the custom now; it has got into that, and now tenants expect to have everything done for them.

55,731. Yes, but the change is a somewhat remarkable one?—Very, but you see this is the force of circumstances.

55,732. At one time the tenants effected these improvements themselves, and now the permanent improvements are done by the landlords; why did that change come about?—The race of farmers is different, and many things have changed. You cannot account for everything; it is the way of life.

55,733. Has it not arisen to a large extent on this account, that the rents on the estate have not been reduced in proportion to the depression, and that the tenants are not able to afford the expenditure upon the permanent improvements which they had at one time done?—I do not think so.

55,734. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The landlord relieves them of a burden which they formerly bore?—Yes.

54,735. (*Chairman.*) Is that not the explanation of the matter?—The landlords do it. They do not complain of their rents.

55,736. I think you said, when you were here before, that the tenants could not effect the improvements?—I say so to-day, too.

55,737. They are not well enough off to do it?—Their circumstances are altered beyond doubt; but whether they are well off or badly off now, you will not get a tenant to do it.

55,738. Does it not come to this—that in the more prosperous times they were paying the rent they then did, and they were able to afford to expend money upon improvements, whereas of late years rents not having been reduced in proportion to the depression, they are not able to afford money to expend upon improvements, and it has fallen to the landlords to do so?—I do not think you can put it on that ground. Habits have changed, customs have changed, and all that.

55,739. You say that tenants now cannot afford to effect these free improvements?—Certainly not.

55,740. If the rents had been reduced the tenants would have been able to continue the practice that they formerly had followed?—I do not think so for a moment.

55,741. Why?—Well, there is change all round. It is not the custom now. It has got into this way, that everything is done by the landlord.

55,742. The question is how it got into that way?—I cannot account for it, there is a change all round.

55,743. Whereas the tenants up to a certain period had been in the habit of effecting improvements, they of late years, in consequence of their being badly off, have been unable to effect improvements?—Circumstances have altered everything. It is not absolutely what you say; you will find men now who are able to do it, but who will not do it.

55,744. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it not the same in England?—Yes.

Reduction of rent and value of produce.

55,745. (*Mr. Long.*) At one period in your evidence, when the Chairman was asking you some questions as

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to the reduction of rent by landlords, I interrupted with a question which he disallowed. I do not know whether you have carried it in your mind; but what the Chairman was asking you was, whether the reductions in rent were equal to the reductions in the value of produce to the tenant farmer. To that you felt some difficulty, I believe, in replying?—I did.

55,746. Is it not the fact that if the tenants previously to the bad times were in the habit of doing considerable works for themselves, which now the landlord does, when you are considering what the reduction of rent has been, you ought in fairness to consider what also has been the relief of burdens which used to rest on the tenants, but which now rest on the landlord?—Certainly we ought to.

Landlords' improvements.

55,747. In other words, where the landlord does each year what the tenant used to do, that ought to be added to the reduction of the rent?—Certainly. As I have said in my evidence, although one man may get a reduction which apparently is a big one; yet another man on another estate, where so much is done for the tenants, may get nothing reduced; still, he is far better off than the first?—As you said afterwards, it varies with estates so tremendously what we do for some tenants. Really, the reduction of so much a year is no good. It just carries fellows on and pleases them, but it is a very unsound way of doing business.

55,748. The Chairman endeavoured to suggest to you that the reason why tenants no longer do improvements themselves was, because they were over-rented; is it not the fact, so far as your experience carries you, that not only in Wales, but generally over the country, the carrying out of improvements has been transferred from tenant to landlord?—Most certainly.

55,749. Not merely on account of the inability or difficulty of the tenant, but also because it is found better that the landlord should do the improvements himself?—Yes, the landlord gains in the long run, most certainly, by doing his own improvements.

55,750. Is it not also the fact that the creation upon large estates, of estate-shops, with proper builders and labourers and workmen, has been very much a recent creation?—Undoubtedly, and a good staff of men kept.

55,751. And that has led to this transference to a very large extent?—Yes.

55,752. Landlords have found that they prefer to carry out their improvements in their own way and at their own expense?—Undoubtedly.

55,753. And under their own control rather than leave them to the tenants?—Yes.

55,754. Therefore it would not be correct to suggest, as the Chairman did, that this transference has been due to the charging by the landlords of too much rent?—My answer was that it was attributable to a great many things. There is a change in circumstances all round. Now there is a proper staff kept on all good estates, and the work is done by the landlord; it is admitted to be done and is done by the landlords all round.

Reduction of rent and value of produce.

55,755. When you are asked whether the reduction in rent has been proportionate to the fall in prices you naturally find it impossible to reply to such a question?—I could not reply to it. It is what I call a high and dry question. That sort of question does not apply to the management of an estate.

55,756. Is it not the fact that that is a question which essentially from a practical agriculturist's point of view can only be answered in each individual instance when all the facts of the tenancy and of the holding are understood?—Quite so; and that the agent is responsible for to his employer.

55,757. For one reason, because at the same time one man by taking advantage of a market may get a price which another loses by selling a fortnight later?—Quite so.

55,758. Consequently it is extremely difficult to arrive at an answer to the question which has been asked of you whether rents have fallen in proportion to the fall in prices?—Yes. Then a man's knowledge of his business comes in too.

55,759. In addition to that have you not to take into consideration the inventions in the shape of machinery?—Yes.

55,760. And various other causes which affect agriculture?—Yes.

55,761. So that it will be impossible for any practical man to answer that question fairly to all classes?—No, you must go by circumstances.

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55,762. (*Chairman.*) There is one other question I want to put to you with regard to rates. I think you stated in your evidence the other day that the local burdens had generally increased?—Yes. Since then I have gone into the question of the poor rate.

Rates.

55,763. You were good enough to supply the Commission with a return on this subject?—That shows that the poor rate has not increased, and that it is less in some places. But I think I said that I never interfere in those matters. Since then I have got it all up, and as I have explained, they are less in some places. It is the new rates and these extra rates which vex the farmer now.

55,764. This return which you have been good enough to supply does not relate only to poor rates; it relates to all rates apparently?—May I ask which return that is?

55,765. It is the return headed "Rates paid in dif- "ferent parishes on the Wynnstay Estates since 1875." The return refers to the poor and other rates—apparently all rates?—That is for all the parishes; we took that out of the voucher book. (*See* Appendix A. XIX.)

55,766. If you look down the list of parishes you will see there has been a decrease in the great bulk of them instead of an increase?—I have said so to-day. I have said that the actual poor's rate is less, and I attribute it in a great measure to better management.

55,767. But it is not merely apparently the poor rate but the aggregate of all the rates that is less?—The actual name of poor rate is such a misnomer. You never know where you are with it. I think in these days to have a rate collected for the relief of the poor and applied to all other purposes is a national disgrace.

55,768. I thought just now you drew a distinction between the poor rate and the other rates?—I have given in accounts of all the extra rates where they affect towns, and in the actual country rates I have shown that they have not increased.

55,769. But they have been reduced?—In some places they have been reduced.

55,770. Apparently in the majority of cases they have been reduced?—Those returns are very fair returns; they are all taken out of the voucher books.

55,771. Of course, one draws a distinction between parishes which are practically towns like Llangollen and Ruabon, where the rates are heavy, and purely rural districts; but apparently from this return in the purely rural districts the aggregate of the rates has been reduced?—Yes.

Charges on landlords' outlay.

55,772. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I believe you never adopted the practice of charging the tenants either principal or interest on the landlord's outlay on permanent improvements?—Never. I have here four rents on one estate in Shropshire which I will give you. One man's rent was 805*l.*, and it has gone down to 669*l.*; and other's was 620*l.*, and it has gone down to 500*l.*; the third's was 670*l.*, and that has gone to 480*l.*; and in the fourth case 380*l.* has been reduced to 272*l.* That is in a grazing district.

Reduction of rent and value of produce.

55,773. (*Lord Rendel.*) In reference to an answer you gave just now to Mr. Long on the subject of the reduction of prices and the corresponding reduction of rent, I think I understood you to say that you could not take into consideration a reduction in the prices of produce in determining questions of revenue?—Not on a broad principle. I think in every case we should be guided by circumstances.

55,774. That is to say, you would consider generally the reduction of prices, but you would not attempt to establish any ratio between rent and price?—I would not attempt to do it, or rather I would not set up that I could do it to such an extent as that. I do not think any man could.

55,775. You think that it is not possible or practicable to arrange rents in reference to prices?—Not solely on that point.

55,776. There are very considerable surrounding circumstances which you must always take into account?—Collateral circumstances weigh all round. I have here some returns which confirm those that I have already handed in. They are all county rates, and they are all right (*handing in returns*).

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55,777. You have a very large number of rents brought under your notice, and I suppose yearly you have a certain number of them in reference to which questions of readjustment arise?—Yes; I never refuse to go into them, never.

Readjustment of rents.

55,778. And in determining on all those cases you have a very wide variety of conditions to consider?—Certainly.

55,779. Including not merely the value of produce and the conditions of the land, but the character of the tenant and other circumstances?—Yes; all the circumstances.

55,780. At present the adjustment of rent on this very large property under your control is a matter that necessarily rests upon your personal judgment and your personal capacity and your personal relations with the tenants, and knowledge of their character?—I am responsible for it.

55,781. That is the whole system on which the rent is re-adjusted throughout that large estate?—It is.

55,782. And you are aided in that matter by a not inconsiderable number of sub-agents who, I suppose, report to you?—They do, but I never go on that. If I am wrong, I am wrong, and if I please them I do so, but I am responsible myself, personally.

55,783. You take any evidence they can give you?—Certainly, everything; whatever the local agent may say. Then to the best of my power I endeavour to arrive at the right sum.

55,784. And at present the whole system is one of benevolent discretion on your part?—I hope it is.

55,785. (*Mr. Long.*) Is there no discretion reserved to the owner of the property; does the owner of the property reserve no discretion to himself to accept or reject the recommendations made by his agent?—Certainly, if he thinks fit to do it; but of course Sir Watkin never does; he always——

55,786. Is guided by you?—Always, entirely; because of course that is what it is my duty to do, and he does not pretend to know anything about land at all. I always keep him posted——

55,787. With all the local considerations?—Certainly, to the best of my power. I always try to keep him up in them, but then you know a man cannot do everything. In fact, if a man does everything, what does he keep an agent for?

55,788. I only want to get from you that one answer arising out of Lord Rendel's question?—Certainly. It would be a great relief to me if I could do more.

Continuity of tenancies.

55,789. (*Lord Rendel.*) On this very large estate there has been a remarkable continuity of tenancy—for generations I believe?—It has an extraordinary record.

55,790. There is a very great attachment on the part of the tenants to their farms?—Yes. I never could have realised it until I knew it. If it had been told me before, I should not have believed it until I had gone among them.

55,791. You would therefore in determining the rent, have to consider how far a tenant was affected by this attachment to his farm?—I should certainly think of it, but then we never disturb anyone if they are going any way right; and they know it.

55,792. And the whole estate is in a very contented condition at present?—Yes, most certainly.

Estate expenditure.

55,793. (*Mr. Little.*) In answer to the Chairman you rather withdrew an expression which you had made use of about the enormous expenditure on improvement. I have compared the figures given in your statement. If you look at them, I think you will find that in the first five years the total expenditure in improvements amounted to 25,000*l.* odd, or an average of little more than 5,000*l.*; in the second five years they were 23,800*l.* or an average of 4,800*l.*; comparing the later periods 1884 to 1888 with these the expenditure had risen to 44,000*l.* and in 1889 to 1893, they had risen to 70,000*l.* for five years, so that were you not premature in withdrawing the word "enormous." Is it not an enormous rise from 25,000*l.* in five years to 70,000*l.*?—It is an enormous expenditure. (*See* Appendix A. XVII.)

55,794. There has been an enormous rise?—Yes, a very great rise. That estate means—I put it in a short way—1,773 roofs, so that it is in a way enormous to keep those going when you have got an estate in as bad order as could be; but having made that one spurt that we did for five years, we can now go on. It is a matter of a man's life to get the estate into what I consider an estate ought to be.

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55,795. I see in your statement that during the last six years 41 per cent of the rental has either been given back or spent in improvements?—Quite true.

Reduction of rent.

55,796. Then the Chairman asked you about reductions of rent; I suppose the rents would be considered by you to be moderate, when the bad times came; they were not the highest rack rents?—No. I know of rents close by that were much higher.

55,797. Therefore the reduction did not become necessary so soon as on rack rented estates?—No.

Sale of farms.

55,798. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Have any of the farms on the estate been sold?—No. We have not sold any. We have sold since my time several public-houses and we have sold bits at Ruabon for accommodation, and shall continue to do so whenever it is wanted, but this is on the Llangollen side (on the other side we should not sell an inch), which is a commercial district now with works, and I think one ought to meet those men if they are prepared to pay.

55,799. Are there many sheep lands on the estate?—We take that into calculation at so much a head.

Estray courts.

55,799*a*. Do they all mix up together?—There is a right of so many sheep and you put them at from sixpence to eighteenpence per head according to what you think the land will do. That is how it is done.

55,800. Do the sheep, when they are on these farms, go astray?—No doubt they do, but then by degrees that is improving, because we have put up miles and miles of fencing, and it has been a grand thing for the country and stops a great many quarrels.

55,801. Is there a collector of stray sheep on these farms?—No, there is not, but on the Crown Manor, of which I am steward, and have been for years—my father was before me—we have regular bailiffs who collect the sheep, and there is an Estray Court held and those sheep are sold and accounted for to the Commissioners of Woods and Forests.

55,802. Who collects them, the bailiffs?—Yes.

55,803. Who appoints the bailiffs?—I do.

55,804. And these bailiffs get paid, do they not?—Four shillings, I think it is, and one shilling for the lambs. They have to keep them till the Estray Court.

55,805. Is it not a fact that in some places the sheep are put in rather a dark place?—I will not say what it is, but the practice is going out, and in a few years more the whole thing will die out; it is gone to nothing now practically but it used to be a big thing. Lord Penrhyn has several Estray Courts. They are most particular at the Woods and Forests about giving in all returns. In my manor the recorder does it, and I hold two courts, one in June, and one in November—the Estray and the Leet.

55,806. Is it not rather tempting to these men to collect the estray sheep?—They would swear anything.

55,807. For that 4*s.*?—The thing is done thus at the time. The sheep are brought in and accounted for, and then all these farmers put their ear marks into a basket, they bring up the sheep, and there are two judges who are farmers, and they decide whether the mark put in the basket corresponds with the ear mark on the sheep. These men will come 40 miles for one miserable sheep, which is not worth more than 5*s.*

Milk prices.

55,808. Is the price of milk now the same that it used to be?—We have two prices for milk, one in winter and one in summer.

55,809. What is the winter price?—Fourpence for retail.

55,810. And the summer price?—Threepence. There are contracts of course, which are lower, but that is the standard price. That is for proper pure milk that has never been in a dairy, and for milk which has been so thoroughly cooled that it will keep for two or three days.

55,811. That has been the price really for many years, I believe?—Yes. I believe it was 6*d.* in Blaenau Festiniog before my supply went there; I have always been told so, and that has brought the others down.

55,812. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do they fetch it, or is it 4*d.* delivered?—Delivered. In the slate district of course they cannot grow milk. It is all rock there, and they grow nothing but gorse. The doctor has told me

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what has been the difference to them of having a good supply there. They had nothing but tea, and the milk they had for 6*d*. a quart was wretched stuff. It began when the London and North-Western Railway opened their line through Bettws-y-Coed, from Conway, and it quite took the people by surprise. It is now different, because the Great Western Railway go up there also, and there is much more competition. The medical men have often told me that in that district, where there is a large population and no milk, how much the children have suffered.

Tenure.

55,813 (*Mr. Dalton.*) Are the tenancies on the estate of which you have been speaking year to year tenancies, or tenancies for terms of years?—They are year to year tenancies.

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55,814. Have they always been so?—Yes.

Tenants' improvements.

55,815. Is it not more businesslike, where you have a year to year tenancy, that the improvements should be carried out by the landlord?—I uphold the system; I would rather the tenant did not do the improvements, I do not want the tenant to do the improvements. When a tenant comes to me I consider whether the improvement asked for is for his benefit or not, and then I arrange it accordingly. I do not like the other way of doing it; I think it is your estate, and you ought to do it yourself.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. T. Roberts.

Mr. Thomas Roberts called and examined.

Mr. T. Roberts.

55,816. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer residing at Aber near Bangor?—Yes.

55,817. And you come here mainly for the purpose of showing the effect of foreign competition on the price of wool?—Yes, that is one thing.

55,818. Are you also an agent?—Not at present, but I have been.

55,819. What sized farm do you farm?—673 acres.

55,820. How long have you held it?—15 years.

55,821. Under what landlord?—Under Lord Penrhyn; there is a mountain run for a thousand sheep besides.

Price of wool.

55,822. Now, from the year 1880 to 1894 has there been a fall in the value of Welsh mountain wool?—Yes, there has.

55,823. What was the price in 1880?—It was 1*s*. a lb. in 1880.

55,824. What is it now?—They are offering 6½*d*. for it at present, and that was the price last year as well.

55,825. (*Mr. Little.*) Is that washed wool?—Yes, it is washed.

Prices of store sheep.

55,826. (*Chairman.*) What has been the price of store sheep?—Store sheep last year were a bit better than in 1893. When I first took the place I was getting 35*s*., and that was about the average price that was paid in the district; they were paying 35*s*. each for wethers four years old, and in 1893 they dropped to 18*s*., but last year we made 23*s*.

55,827. You have got the prices for each successive year for a term of years, I believe?—I have in my own accounts, but not here.

55,828. It is necessary to take several years together for the purpose of getting an average, is it not?—Yes. It was in 1880 that I started, and the price fell down in 1882 to 28*s*. by a sudden drop; then it went down gradually from that until in 1885 and 1886, when we had another big drop to 24*s*. and 25*s*.; and then it came down eventually in 1893 to only 18*s*.

55,829. The last witness gave us some figures that showed that taking the average of years the price of store sheep had rather been maintained, or had rather increased as compared with the rate a good number of years ago?—I suppose he would not be talking of the Welsh mountain sheep; I am talking here of mountain sheep.

55,830. What do you say has been the fall in draft ewes?—From 18*s*. to 10*s*.

Price of wool.

55,831. (*Viscount Cobham.*) How much was the fall in sheep due to the fall in wool?—I could not exactly say that it was the fall in wool entirely that caused it.

55,832. How much of it would be due to the fall in wool?—They only clip about 2½ lbs. to 3 lbs.—2½ lbs. is about the average for Welsh sheep.

55,833. (*Mr. Little.*) At what time of the year are they sold at the price of which you are talking?—On the 1st October.

55,834. There would not be much wool on them then?—Not any then; the wool is taken off in June.

Price of mountain sheep.

55,835. (*Chairman.*) Do you think the price of mountain sheep has fallen more than that of other sheep?—No doubt it has.

55,836. How do you account for that?—There is such a quantity of foreign meat that is brought over. In 1893 there was so very little grass that the buyers from various counties that came down to buy our store sheep had no keep for them. That was the cause that they went down so very much in 1893.

55,837. That, of course, was an exceptional fall?—Yes.

55,838. You are speaking of a general fall apart from 1893, and the figures that we had from the last witness showed that with regard to other sheep there had not been a considerable fall?—I have taken these figures from my own accounts.

55,839. What I want to arrive at is, what causes are there which account for the fall in the price of mountain sheep when there was not a fall in the others?—The mountain sheep, no doubt, have fallen like those, because I have the amounts for every year. I have been selling a large number of them.

55,840. Along the range of mountains between Holyhead and Shrewsbury, is there a large extent of ground?—Yes, there is.

55,841. How many sheep graze upon that?—About 45,000.

Turning out sheep to graze.

55,842. Do a great part of the parishioners turn out sheep without restriction of number on that range?—With the exception of the manor of Aber and the parish of Llanllecid. The manor of Aber is Lord Penrhyn's, and Lord Penrhyn keeps a bailiff to see that no more are put on than are entitled under the agreements that the tenants hold. The same applies to Llanllecid. Nearly the whole of Llanllecid parish belongs to Lord Penrhyn, and he pays a shepherd to look after the interests of the other tenants there, so that one tenant does not send more than his share.

55,843. (*Mr. Little.*) Does "parishioners" in this case mean that every inhabitant in the parish has a right?—No, only tenant farmers in the manor have the right.

55,844. (*Chairman.*) But unless they make some arrangement I suppose there is no stint—no limit, to the number each can turn out?—Outside the manor of Aber and the parish of Llanllechid that is so.

55,845. I presume that at law there is some restriction in number which each is entitled to turn out, but that there is no means of enforcing that?—I do not think there is anything in the law that prevents that as far as I can see.

55,846. I thought the number which they turn out would be in proportion to the land which they occupy, but unless there is some machinery for the purpose of enforcing that, each farmer could turn out as many as he liked?—That is so, and in fact there are many people that turn out sheep on the mountain who have no land whatever, and who are simply resident there.

55,847. Therefore, what it points to is the necessity for some machinery for limiting the turning out of sheep in proportion to the acreage of land which they have got?—Yes, quite so.

55,848. And to prevent unauthorised people turning out sheep when they have no right to do so?—True.

55,849. You consider that it is owing to this unlimited manner in which people turn out sheep that it is difficult to carry out any scheme for the improvement of the quality on the whole?—Yes, it is so.

55,850. The rams are not taken off the hills at the same time in the various localities, and often rams bought at high prices serve the stock of other owners?—It happens in this way, that these rams are allowed

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to ramble about the mountain, and the ewes are drawn on the 28th and 29th of September, and by the time we are able to get the ewes down a good number of those have been served before they come off the open mountain.

55,851. Then, in your opinion, would it be an advantage to make regulations of some kind to prevent the unlimited turning out of sheep?—Yes.

55,852. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Cannot that be done under the existing law for the regulation of commons?—It has been tried. Of course, awards have been made, but those that have had the awards made in their favour have not enclosed, and the land is left open to this day.

55,853. Perhaps they were mere regulation orders, not enclosure orders?—They were not enclosure orders, they were simply awarding certain portions to various owners who have never enclosed their portions.

Deterioration of mountain sheep.

55,854. (*Chairman.*) Do you think there has been some deterioration of the mountain sheep?—No doubt.

55,855. Perhaps that accounts for the fall of price to some extent?—To some extent it might, but not entirely.

Price of butter.

55,856. Now go on to dairy produce; what has been the cause of the fall in price there?—No doubt that is due to the importation of foreign butter and margarine.

55,857. What have you observed there to be the course of prices?—The prices have gone down. In the year 1881, the lowest price touched was 1*s.* 9*d.* a lb., and it went up to 2*s.* 1*d.*; between that and 1886, it went down to from 1*s.* 2*d.* to 1*s.* 6*d.* a lb., and since the latter year it has been going down to 10*d.*; in fact, we had no more than 10*d.* during the summer, and 1*s.* 4*d.* was about the highest price during the winter months.

55,858. Has that arisen from more people going into dairy farming?—It is because more foreign produce is thrown into the market.

Bad seasons.

55,859. Now with regard to the seasons, what have you to say?—The very hot weather of 1893 ruined the sweetest and finest grasses in the pastures, and consequently they will not carry anything like the number of head of stock that they used to do before; and although the growth was very considerable last year it was not nearly so rich.

55,860. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is the present season a very bad one in the same way?—It is worse than in 1893 at the present moment for the time of the year.

55,861. (*Chairman.*) Then was the effect of the severe frost of last year serious?—It was very serious all round the coast of Carnarvonshire.

55,862. And it is now coupled with the continued drought of the present summer?—Yes.

Demand for labour.

55,863. Then with regard to the increased cost of production, is the demand for labour greater than it was?—Not more; the amount of labour is not more on the farms, but the price of labour has risen.

55,864. That is due, I suppose, to the increase of slate quarries?—Yes, there are so many of them in the county, and there is, consequently, a good demand for labour.

55,865. They come into direct competition with the agricultural labour market?—Quite so.

Wages.

55,866. What should you say has been the rise of wages there?—It has been about a couple of shillings a week; 16*s.* was the usual rate eight or ten years ago, but now it has gone up to 18*s.*

Hours of labour.

55,867. Have the hours been reduced?—The hours have been reduced from 14 and 15 hours a day to 12 in some parts, and in a few districts they have been reduced to 10 hours a day. When the men are working overtime they are paid by the hour.

Labour on small farms.

55,868. I suppose that a large number of the small farmers do not employ much labour, do they? They work themselves and their families?—Not so much in Carnarvonshire; of course, the small farmers do. On a farm, say, from 20 up to 60 acres, the work is very much done by the farmers' families; but as regards the larger farms they employ outside labour.

55,869. What is the general character of the farms in Carnarvonshire; are they large or small?—Small.

55,870. Are the majority of them under 60 acres, with the exception of farms which have hill pastures with them?—They are about, I should think, 40 to 50 acres: that would be about the average.

55,871. Then as I have said, the result must be that there is no very large amount of labour employed by the farmers?—Not so very great as in other counties, no doubt.

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55,871*a*. Now with regard to agricultural education, is it well provided for in the county?—Yes, very well.

Agricultural education.

55,872. Have there been any experimental plots for grasses and crops in different districts of the county?—Yes, there have.

55,873. But for the unfavourable seasons you think, as I gather from your brief, there would have been considerable advance?—Yes, there is no doubt there would.

55,874. Is there also a dairy school worked by the University College?—Practically worked by the College.

55,875. Does this school travel from place to place?—Yes, it does.

55,876. Do a considerable number of pupils attend the classes?—Yes.

55,877. Do you think good has been done by that?—There is no doubt whatever of it.

55,878. As I understand the main difficulty of late has been the unfavourable seasons?—That certainly has had more to do with it than anything else.

55,879. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has agricultural education been encouraged by the county council?—It is done by the University College. Of course, the county council find the money, but it is carried out by a scheme connected with the University College at Bangor.

55,880. Was that in operation before the county council, or has the whole scheme been developed by the county council?—It was, in fact, in force before the county council. They had a grant from Government before, but, of course, after the county councils were appointed and had the money, the Government withdrew its grant. They were giving about 800*l.* a year, I think it was, to the college towards agricultural education, but when this new scheme arrived, of course they withdrew that, and the county councils now vote the money.

55,881-2. Is there more being done than before?—No, not more.

Quality of butter.

55,883. You say that the butter produced is not able to compete with the foreign butter?—That is so. It is in this way: there is such a demand for butter in the district; there are so many people resident, owing to these quarries, that there is an enormous quantity of butter brought in from other districts. I mean foreign butter and margarine, of course, affect the prices of the whole produce.

55,884. Even if the Welsh butter was the best, would you say that it would still be affected by the quantity of low grade butter?—Yes, I have no doubt it would.

55,885. As a matter of fact, is the quality of butter produced in Carnarvonshire good?—The bulk of it is good. Of course, you will have exceptions; it is not very uniform; that is the worst part of it; you will find some beautiful specimens and samples, and you will find a good deal of inferior quality as well. There is a want of uniformity in it.

55,886. You have got no factories, I believe?—No.

Enclosure orders.

55,887. I understand you to say that where enclosure awards have been made, the object of the Enclosure Acts has been frustrated by the enclosures not having been actually made?—Exactly so.

55,888. That is to say, the owners have grudged the money?—They have not carried out the enclosure.

55,889. Have there been any regulating orders, I mean orders not for enclosure but merely for ascertaining and enforcing the rights of the different classes of commoners?—No.

55,890. Are you aware that that process is open to you?—I do not know of it if it is.

55,891. There have been one or two such orders?—I am not aware of it.

55,892. Do you think that the enclosure of hill commons ought to be facilitated?—I think so.

55,893. Do you think that it would be a benefit to the country?—There is no doubt that it would do a great deal of good in open districts, such as Carnarvonshire.

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55,894. Is there no local feeling against such enclosure?—No.

55,895. Not on the part of the public?—No.

55,896. Nor on the part of the tourists who frequent the mountains?—Of course they have a right and they are using their right as it is. The only disadvantage is that it is such a large area, and stock move about and go from one district to the other, and although there is no division wall yet stock are charged for when they trespass from one place to the other, because they are handed over to these collectors of estrays.

55,897. If the owners do not think it worth their while to spend the money required for enclosing how would you get that object carried out?—Unless it were possible to get powers to compel the owners to enclose, I do not see how it could be done.

55,898. (*Mr. Clay.*) Under what proprietor do you hold?—Lord Penrhyn.

55,899. He is an extensive proprietor there, is he not?—Yes.

55,900. Has he done well to his tenants?—Very well indeed.

55,901. So there has been no reason to complain?—No, not as far as his lordship is concerned.

Abatements of rent.

55,902. Have the rents fallen much of late?—They have not been reduced at all, it is only abatements that are granted.

55,903. Is that put into the valuation roll; do you pay assessment upon these abatements?—No, it does not appear at all; we pay on the full rent, we do not get any relief whatever from the assessments.

55,904. Is that a very businesslike way of doing it?—It would be far more satisfactory if the rents were lowered, no doubt.

55,905. How long have the abatements gone on?—Since 1888, and they have varied various years. In the first year we had 10 per cent.; in 1889 we had 15 per cent.; and then we had 15 per cent. every year with the exception of 1892, when we did not get any abatement at all. In 1894 we got an abatement of 25 per cent., and this year it is an abatement of 15 per cent.

55,906. The tenants will be generally living under a sort of uncertainty, not knowing what they will get?—Exactly; we do not know at all whether we are going to get any abatement until within a few weeks of the date for paying the rent.

55,907. Is that principle not very apt to dishearten people about improving their farms?—I do not think so, because we have such faith in our own landlord.

55,908. As a general principle?—As a general principle I certainly think it would, myself, dishearten them.

Reduction of rent and value of produce.

55,909. Have the abatements they have given you back been in proportion to the price of farm produce?—No.

55,910. The wool and the sheep seem to have very nearly fallen a half?—Yes.

55,911. And a reduction or remission of rents has not been given in proportion?—Not taking everything altogether, not taking the value of all the stock, I mean the value of horses and cattle as well as sheep and wool. I maintain that those have dropped 30 to 35 per cent.

55,912. Still, to make it a profitable business in farming, you require another reduction double that you are getting?—Yes, about that at the present time.

Bad seasons.

55,913. You say the drought in 1893 was very serious with you?—It was very serious indeed.

55,914. But do you not think the present drought has a more serious aspect than the drought of 1893?—At the present time it has a much more serious aspect than it had at this time in 1893.

55,915. If it goes on, as it seems likely to do just now, how do you contemplate the position?—It will be a very ruinous matter for the farmers in our county. I know for a fact that there were a great number of them in very great difficulties to provide their rent last year, but how they will do it this year will be a puzzle; I do not know how they will be able to do it.

55,916. Will they not have as much difficulty in providing feed for the stock as in providing their rent?—Yes.

55,917. So the two together will be a calamity?—And a very serious one, too. You will be surprised to see now, at the present moment, beautiful cattle, well-bred ones, turned on to the mountain simply because the low ground has been parched up by the drought, and by the effects of last winter's frost.

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The drought and cattle feeding.

55,918. You had an outlet for your cattle in 1893, I think, when a number of the black cattle came north to Scotland?—Yes, it was so.

55,919. And you got a price for them?—Yes, fortunately.

55,921. But now, as the drought is so severe in Scotland, your market there will be shut up?—I do not know what will become of the Welsh cattle in that case.

55,921. Where do you expect they will go to?—They will be slaughtered as they were then, and sold at whatever price they can get.

55,922. The prospects of depression are becoming more serious every day?—Yes.

55,923. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) After the manner in which the landlords have treated the tenants in your district of late, would you look forward to their taking into consideration the question of this drought, if it continues ruinous?—We fully believe that in the cases of Lord Penrhyn and Mr. Assheton Smith, who are the two principal landlords in the county, and the Honourable Frederick Wynn, they are sure to do so; we can rely upon them.

55,924. So that, in that way, matters would equalise themselves, so far as it is possible for them to do, in any part?—Yes, no doubt.

Demand for farms.

55,925. When farms become vacant with you, is there a demand for them?—Yes. For the smaller farms, I suppose, there is not a county in England where there is such a demand as there is in our county; but where large farms are in the market there are very few applicants.

Tenure.

55,926. Do you hold under a yearly notice, or under lease?—Under a yearly notice—subject to a six-months' notice, really.

55,927. So that you are able to get quit of your liability in regard to the farm by a very short notice?—Yes, just so, if you wish it.

55,928. (*Mr. Little.*) Do you breed all your sheep?—Yes, all.

55,929. Do you breed cattle?—Yes.

Tithes.

55,930. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are the tithes paid by the landlord or by the tenant?—By the landlord.

55,931. Do the landlords charge the tenants?—After the last Act the landlords fixed a sum for tithe, and it has been added to the rent.

55,932. Are the farmers satisfied with that, knowing that the tithes are gradually going down?—Of course, they see the possibility of not getting the benefit of the fall in the amount of the tithe.

55,933. What would you suggest to remedy that?—I think it would be a very good plan to have a review of the amount of tithe, say, once every three years, so that an adjustment might be made, provided a tenant had paid more than the actual tithe due.

Stray sheep.

55,934. Is there much difficulty in connexion with these stray sheep that are on the common?—Yes, indeed, there is; they travel about so much.

55,935. How are they collected?—They are drawn to the various districts. For instance, taking the north side of the hill, the sheep on that water-shed are all drawn for three or four days—four days, provided the weather is favourable; it can be carried out in four days; they draw them down togther, sending men up in the night; they go up at 12 o'clock at night on Monday to start, and then they draw a certain portion of the mountain into various pens in the hollow; then all the sheep are drafted out, and sent into the farms of their owners to be washed, and to be sheared.

55,936. How are the stray ones selected out of the lot?—All the stray ones are left in the common pen in the middle, and after all the owners have picked their own sheep, the collector of estrays is present, and he takes charge of all the sheep in the pen that are not claimed.

55,937. What does he do with them afterwards?—He takes them home to his farm.

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55,938. To his own farm?—Yes.

55,939. Does he sell them, or does he advertise them, or what does he do?—He advertises that an exhibition of these stray sheep will take place on a certain date. That is published in all the local papers, and if they are not claimed on that day, by six o'clock, or whatever hour is fixed, according to the notice, then they are the property of the collector of estrays.

55,940. Is the exhibition held in a favourable field, or in rather a dark one, as a rule, in a dark quarry, for instance?—They put them in buildings, as a rule.

55,941. Why?—It is to the advantage of the collector of estrays not to get the sheep claimed at all; it is to his interest not to have them claimed.

55,942. That is really a grievance, is it?—Yes, that is a grievance.

55,943. Who appoints this man?—It is the High Sheriff.

55,943*a*. How much does he pay him?—I rather think it varies in the various neighbourhoods. I think they pay a certain fixed sum that has been decided upon through the Under-Sheriff.

55,944. I think you misunderstood my question; I should have put it in another way—how is this man paid?—He simply gets what stock there is unclaimed, he gets those entirely to his own possession, and he sells them.

55,945. Does he pay for the privilege of being collector of estrays?—Yes, I believe he pays a certain sum.

55,946. And he is appointed by the High Sheriff?—Yes.

55,947. And the Under-Sheriff receives this money?—I believe he does, from what I understand.

55,948. So this man is really not very anxious to find the owner of the sheep?—No, it is to his interest not to find an owner.

55,949. Are these men well versed in the ear-marks?—Yes.

55,950. Do they really know to whom the sheep belong?—No doubt they do. Of course, there are sheep that nobody knows to whom they belong; dogs sometimes take a piece of the ear, and that spoils the ear-mark, and then the owner could not tell anything about it.

55,951. And the collector claims it?—He gets that one.

55,952. What are his fees?—They depend, of course. Sometimes sheep stray into private grounds, and then the owners make a charge for the keep for a certain period. The charge that the collector makes for those that get into his hands if the owner is found is from 1*s*. to 3*s*. each.

55,953. That is in addition to the charge made by the man who has kept these sheep?—Yes.

Quality of butter.

55,954. Do you consider Welsh butter equal to other butter?—It is very good.

55,955. How is it that the English visitors who come down to the Principality prefer Danish butter, and buy it even when they can get our own butter all round the coast?—They have an acquired taste, I think; that is the explanation of it. As a rule the Welsh butter for the custom at home is made rather salter, and the visitors that come down prefer a certain quantity of salt which they have been accustomed to, and they get exactly what they want by buying Danish butter, and so they buy that in preference. Of course they would run a risk in buying in the local market, where you may get a very uneven sample; you may get some very good butter, and you may find at times something very inferior, unfortunately.

55,956. I suppose in some farms they make butter of the same quality all the year round, pretty well?—Yes.

55,957. But they have got their customers?—Yes.

Price of butter.

55,958. And they get a much better price?—They get much more money than the Danish butter is sold for.

55,959. They do?—Yes; they get 2*d*., 3*d*., and 4*d*. a pound more than the Danish butter is sold for in the shops.

55,960. So that really if we had a factory or something of that kind down in your district where a large quantity of butter of a uniform quality could be made, then do you think the English visitors or others would take to it?—If they could make it to meet their tastes. No doubt it could be made so, but there is such a demand for it locally that I do not think it would answer in our county at all to make it so. There is an ample demand for good butter, and there is no difficulty whatever in selling it.

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55,961. The price is very low, and you say in your proof it has been selling for 6½*d*. a pound?—That is at Wrexham, and not in our district.

55,962. Butter from our district goes up to Wrexham, does it not?—Not from Carnarvonshire.

55,963. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I presume that would be the wholesale price?—That would be the wholesale price when buying a large quantity to go to Liverpool.

55,964. And your farmers are mostly able to sell by retail in the immediate neighbourhood?—Yes.

55,965. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) What prices are they getting at the present time?—It is 1*s*. per lb. now.

55,966. And pot butter?—That is not sold at this time of the year.

55,967. Is there much of that made in the winter?—Yes, it is made in the autumn.

55,968. That is sold for how much?—From 1*s*. up to 1*s*. 2*d*., according to the quality.

Adulterated butter.

55,969. Is the butter adulterated, do you think, in that part of the country?—Yes, no doubt it is.

55,970. How, in which way?—They mix margarine with it; they buy margarine at from 8*d*. to 10*d*. a lb., and mix it up with the butter.

55,971. And that really does a lot of harm to really good butter?—Yes, it is certain to.

55,972. Have we inspectors in that district?—Only the police.

55,973. Do you suggest any other kind of inspectors for butter?—There was a meeting of our dairy school, and the directors there passed a resolution in favour of putting all the markets under the supervision of the inspector appointed either by the Inland Revenue Office or under the Board of Agriculture.

55,974. On account of the adulteration?—Yes. The police do not look very closely into the matter.

Tenure.

55,975. Do tenants prefer six months notice in Carnarvonshire to 12 months?—I do not think they can have a choice in that respect.

55,976. It is not optional?—No, they agree to take it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act and agreements.

55,977. Have the landowners contracted themselves out of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

55,978. (*Mr. Little.*) How?—By sending notice to the tenants before the Act came into effect.

55,979. That was the Act of 1875?—And with the one that followed notices came after that contracting out.

55,980. Have they given compensation by a substituted agreement?—Yes.

55,981. Giving compensation for improvements?—Their own agreement really is in most cases in a great many points more favourable than the Act itself.

55,982. Those have been entered into since the passing of the Act then?—No, they were entered into before.

55,983. Have you signed a fresh acceptance of the agreement?—Yes, we signed a new agreement.

55,984. Since the passing of the Act?—Yes.

55,985. Then that is a substituted agreement which you say gives greater security than the Act?—In some points.

55,986. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Would you prefer it to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Really, I would just as soon have my agreement as be under the Act—in fact, I think it is better.

55,987. Your agreement is better?—Yes.

55,988. But that is not the case throughout, is it?—No, it is not.

55,989. Nearly all the landowners in Wales have contracted out of the Act, have they not?—Nearly all of them, at least in Carnarvonshire and Anglesea.

Size of farms.

55,990. (*Lord Rendel.*) You farm, I think, 673 acres?—Yes.

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55,991. And you have a sheep run for a thousand head?—Yes, besides that.

55,992. Is that an exceptionally large holding?—It is.

55,993. Are the average holdings about you very much smaller?—The average is very much smaller, although there are a few good sized farms, three or four good sized farms besides mine lying just along the Menai Straits towards Bangor.

55,994. But that is peculiar to a special district?—Yes.

55,995. And a very limited one?—Yes.

55,996. As a rule the farms are very small?—Yes.

Sheep runs.

55,997. I think you said that the fencing of sheep runs was still in progress, but it was still very incomplete?—It is not in progress now.

55,998. It is arrested?—It is arrested and entirely stopped.

55,999. That is a very important improvement, in your view, is it not?—It is indeed; I think it would be a very great advantage were it possible to continue it.

Demand for labour.

56,000. You speak of the demand for labour as having been steady, owing to the slate quarries?—Yes.

56,001. Of course the slate quarries have been very long in existence?—Yes.

Quality of labour.

56,002. Do you think that the quality of the labour and the condition of the labouring class have been raised by this demand for the slate quarries?—Yes, no doubt.

56,003. Would you say that there is a marked difference between the labouring population of your district, and that of some of the adjoining districts?—Yes, a very marked difference.

56,004. They have a greater vigour of intelligence and physical condition?—Yes, no doubt.

Quality of butter.

56,005. With reference to the butter, you see a marked improvement since the operations of the dairy school started by the North Wales College?—Yes.

56,006. And that operation has only been comparatively recent?—Yes, it started about eight years ago.

56,007. The progress made encourages you to expect a great deal?—There is no doubt of that, in regard to the dairy produce of the district.

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56,008. And that there is a promise of an exceptional price being obtained for Welsh butter in the locality, provided an improvement in the management and making of butter is established generally?—Yes, and provided all these dairymaids would only attend these classes.

Agricultural education.

56,009. Are you acquainted at all with the efforts which are being made by the Mid-Wales College, and Aberystwith University College?—I am not.

56,010. Have you any reason to doubt that the same effort is being made in most parts of butter-producing Wales?—There is the Lleweni; I suppose it is the leading dairy now; that is in the vale of Clwyd. There is another close to Newtown, I understand, the Sylfarn.

56,011. You think the population is availing itself with great eagerness, and with considerable success, of the attempts to instruct them in these matters?—Yes.

56,012. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) I think you have been a judge at the Royal Show of these Welsh mountain sheep?—Yes.

Deterioration of mountain sheep.

56,013. Can you account for the deterioration in the breed?—What has injured the stock on the whole has been that there is, of course, no restriction whatever, and people can buy any class of stock they wish. A number of gentlemen came over and took land in the district of Trefriw, and they brought over black-faced Scotch sheep, and they spread all over the hill, and their wool is much more coarse than that of the Welsh mountain sheep.

56,014. The Scotch sheep did not do so well?—Not nearly so well.

56,015. Would you say that the tenants are fairly satisfied with the rents they are paying in the Principality, I do not mean on Lord Penrhyn's estate, but taking North Wales generally?—I would rather not enter into that.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

One Hundred and Fifth Day.

Friday, 28th June 1895.

PRESENT:

The Right Hon. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE, M.P., in the Chair.

The Right Hon. Baron Rendel.
The Right Hon. Henry Chaplin, M.P.
Sir Robert Nigel Fitzhardinge Kingscote, K.C.B.
Captain Owen Thomas.
Francis Allston Channing, Esq., M.P.
Robert Giffen, Esq., C.B.
John Clay, Esq.
Cornelius Neale Dalton, Esq., C.B.
Robert Lacey Everett, Esq., M.P.
John Gilmour, Esq.
William Cutlack Little, Esq.
Charles Whitehead, Esq., F.L.S.

Herbert Lyon, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. Crawford, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

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Mr. Edward Miall Nunnelley called and examined.

Particulars of witness' farm.

56,016. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer residing in Northamptonshire?—Yes.

56,017. Whereabouts?—In East Northamptonshire.

56,018. What is the extent of your farm?—690 acres.

56,019. How long have you held it?—Only half that acreage for some time, 345 acres, and I then took another farm.

56,020. Who do you hold under?—Under the executors of the late Mr. Manning.

56,021. What is the rent?—Do you mean of the whole, or the farm that I occupied longest.

Rent.

56,022. Take the farm which you have taken longest, and show us the rent you originally paid, and the reduction that has been made?—That is 324 acres.

56,023. What was the original rent?—I took it in 1878 at 36*s.* per acre.

56,024. That was about the period of the highest rents then?—Just the very highest.

56,025. And you took it on a yearly tenancy?—Yes.

56,026. And when were the rents reduced?—My rent has been reduced several times; I cannot say the exact year; about 1881 was the first, and two or three times

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since. The last reduction has just been made, and now it is down to 16*s.* per acre. I have no fault to find with my landlords as regards the reduction of the rent.

56,027. Have they met you fairly?—Fairly and liberally; exceptionally well, I think.

56,028. Has your assessment for local rates been reduced in the same proportion as the rent?—Yes; in our union they now take rent almost entirely as the basis.

56,029. From time to time, as the rent has been reduced, has the assessment been reduced?—Yes.

Character of farm.

56,030. What is the nature of your farm; is it arable?—About three-fourths arable, nearly the whole of which is clayey land—stiff land.

56,031. Very stiff land?—Yes.

56,032. Suitable, I presume, for growing wheat?—Yes.

System of cultivation.

56,033. Have you made any change in the cultivation?—I am now laying down into pasture a good deal, with the intention of leaving it for three or four years.

56,034. You have extended your rotation?—I have altered it, really almost entirely, in that way.

56,035. You have extended it from four years to seven or eight, I suppose?—My intention is, to lay it down on the eight-course system, four years pasture and four years plough; where you can plant the seeds to stand; it will depend upon that.

56,036. (*Mr. Everett.*) What kind of seeds do you lay down?—For the purpose I generally have them ready mixed from one of the firms, Webb's or Sutton's; for a one year crop I mix myself.

56,037. (*Chairman.*) Then you have cows, have you not?—Not much; I do not dairy; I hardly dairy at all.

56,038. What do you do with your grasses?—You will see from that I have only 100 acres, and I crop more for sheep than for beasts; and as to the beasts, I generally buy young stores and stall feed them a little, or sell them off as stores, after a year or two.

56,039. Do you grow more wheat or barley?—I cannot grow much barley—I am giving up wheat and laying down to pasture instead, but that change is just coming into operation. Up to now I have grown as much wheat as ever—up to the last year or two.

Price of wheat.

56,040. You have found serious losses by the low prices of wheat?—I have had serious losses from the low prices of wheat. My receipts have gone down very considerably; but so long as I could get 30*s.* to 32*s.* a quarter, I considered that it would do as well as any other crop.

56,041. Even as low as 32*s.* per quarter?—Yes.

56,042. I suppose to enable you to grow that grass land, you got compensation in some adjustment of the rent?—I had got my rent very much lowered, and we practically cut down our expenses.

56,043. In what way did you cut down your expenses?—By endeavouring to do with a little less labour, and labour is a little cheaper; and we get the benefit as regards artificial manures, and cake, and food, from their being cheaper than they were a few years ago.

56,044. Taking those into account, with the reduction of rent, you could grow wheat even at 30*s.* or 32*s.* a quarter?—I think so.

56,045. When it came to 26*s.* and 24*s.*, and still lower, last year, to 20*s.*, it was a falling concern?—Yes.

56,046. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was not some actually sold at 16*s.*?—Yes, inferior samples, but good wheat was sold at 18*s.* to 19*s.*

56,047. (*Chairman.*) It has gone up lately; what do you consider the price is now?—25*s.* to 26*s.*, but it did get up to 28*s.* about three weeks ago.

56,048. If it should go up another 5*s.* or 7*s.* you could do fairly well with growing wheat?—I believe I could grow it as well as anything else.

56,049. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you take the straw into consideration?—I am at liberty to sell anything, but practically I sell very little.

Reduction of rent.

56,050. (*Chairman.*) I think you said you have no reason to complain of your own landlord, because the reductions have been reasonable and proper?—Yes.

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56,051. Is that generally the case in your neighbourhood or not?—I think I have been exceptionally well treated. I do not think, as a rule, that tenants who have remained in their farms have had nearly so large a reduction generally speaking.

56,052. Have there been many changes of tenancy in your district?—A great many.

56,053. Do you think that the incoming tenants get better terms than the sitting tenants?—Decidedly.

56,054. But when on an estate a change of tenancy occurs, and the new tenant comes in at a lower rent, do not the other tenants on the estate get the same reductions?—Not as a rule. But I have never been on a large estate; the farm that I am on is the only property of the trustees of Mr. Manning, and I could not say what is the rule on the large estates. I believe the rule is to reduce the rents, but in the case of reletting them they take whatever rent they can get.

56,055. But in such cases, would not the other tenants on the other estate claim, and generally get, the same reductions as were conceded to the incoming tenant?—No, I think not.

56,056. But you cannot speak with any knowledge on the subject?—Another witness from Northamptonshire does rent on a very large estate, and probably he knows better.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

56,057. Do you consider that there should be any change in the law on the subject, so as to secure to the sitting tenant a proper reduction of rent?—Yes, I do, decidedly.

56,058. In what direction?—I consider that the sitting tenant ought to be as much protected as the one who leaves, that if a sitting tenant has farmed his land so well as to keep up the value of the land in spite of the general fall in value, he should be entitled to claim for what I may call his capital outlay.

56,059. (*Mr. Channing.*) You mean the remaining value of it?—Yes, the value at the time.

56,060. Not the whole capital outlay?—I do not care whether it is the whole or more than the whole; I have always contended that a farmer should be paid the value of an improvement, and not the cost of it. If he spends 1,000*l.* for an improvement that is only worth 100*l.*, I think he should be entitled only to 100*l.*, and any proportion of the 1,000*l.* which he may have foolishly expended, he must lose that himself. If he improves the value of the land by his own good judgment to the extent of 200*l.* or 300*l.*, I consider that he is entitled to the full 200*l.* or 300*l.* of extra value that he has given to the land.

56,061. (*Chairman.*) Confining ourselves not to the question of compensation to be paid to the tenant when he goes out, but to the position of the tenant who desires to remain, what provision do you think should be made to secure to him that consideration to which you think he is entitled?—I think that he should have the same consideration as if he were leaving; that is that he should be entitled to claim compensation for the improvements that he has made in case of any fresh tenancy commencing.

56,062. That is to say, supposing the landlord increases his rent, he would then be entitled to say, "You "shall not increase your rent without compensating me "for the improvements I have already made"?—Yes.

56,063. But supposing the reverse case, that the tenant wants a reduction of his rent, and gives notice to the landlord to quit, on the ground that he thinks his rent too high, what is then to be the position?—My idea is this: that a tenant should say that he wants his rent reduced. The landlord may say—I know cases in which it has been said—"Your land is worth the "money in the condition in which it is; it is worth the "rent that you pay." The tenant rejoins, "Perhaps "it may be, but it is owing to my outlay that it is in "that condition." I say that he should be entitled to claim a fair valuation, and to be paid the value of his improvements, and he may then go on paying what the land is then worth; if he is to continue to pay a higher rent than the land would otherwise be worth, because he has made it worth that money by the improvements, then he is entitled to receive the value of those improvements before he goes on paying the higher rent; if not, he is paying rent on his own improvements.

56,064. Let us understand the process. The process would be that the tenant would say to the landlord, "My rent is too high, and I claim a reduction"?—Yes.

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56,065. If the landlord refused, the tenant would then give notice to quit and would claim compensation, and then when that process is over, a new bargain would be made, and the tenant would be, according to your view, in a position which would enable him to insist upon a reasonable reduction of rent?—I do not say that it would be a reasonable reduction of rent; it may be that he is not entitled after being paid for the improvements. He would be in the position of a new comer, and would have to give what the farm was fairly worth.

56,066. Your process does not involve any reference to an arbitrator of what the rent should be?—No.

56,067. The only thing that would go to the arbitrator is what the compensation should be on the termination of the tenancy?—Yes.

56,068. And if, therefore, the landlord took the tenant at his word, he might say, "You may go and take your compensation," and then he would be still entitled to get what rent he could from someone else?—Yes.

Arbitration on rents.

56,069. You are not in favour of arbitration on rents, that is the judicial determination of rents?—I should hardly go so far as that. If it could be fairly provided, I think it would be a good thing.

56,070. Do you see difficulties in the way?—Yes, I do.

56,071. I presume you consider that there would be some difficulty in compelling a tenant to pay rent that he objected to?—I do not see how it is possible.

56,072. If you have an arbitration on rent it must be equal to both parties?—Yes.

56,073. And if the arbitration rent is more than the tenant would offer, then the tenant would be compelled to pay beyond what is a right one?—Practically, you could not compel him; he would leave.

56,074. That is an objection to the scheme?—That is so.

56,075. That is a serious difficulty in the way of a judicial determination of rent?—It seems to be compelling the landlord where you could not compel the tenant.

56,076. It would be unequal between the two?—Yes.

56,077. You have now stated your opinion as to what should occur in the event of either landlord or tenant desiring an alteration of rent, supposing a tenant desires an alteration of any other condition of his tenure, do you think that then the agreement should not be altered without the tenant being paid compensation for his improvements? Is that the form you want?—I leave it to the option of the tenant or the landlord. I say that the valuation should be made if either party claims that it should be made. But if it is simply a minor alteration in the terms neither party would care to go into the question of compensation.

56,078. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand that, upon the determination of the tenancy by giving a notice to quit at the option of either party, in any case there must be a valuation?—Yes.

56,079. (*Chairman.*) Are the views which you have expressed with reference to judicial rents generally the views of the tenants in your district?—I can hardly say. I may say that I am rather a prominent member of our Chamber of Agriculture, but never discussed the judicial rents so much as the Agricultural Holdings Act, and I can hardly say.

56,080. There has been no general expression of opinion upon the subject?—Not a sufficiently general expression of opinion for me to say.

56,081. Has not the matter been discussed at length by your Association?—I think not, not with regard to judicial rents.

56,082. And there has been no determination upon the subject?—No.

56,083. There has been no general demand for it at all events?—I think not.

56,084. Or any form of arbitration on rent?—No, I think not. I may say that some farmers have individually expressed their wish for it, but that is not so general an expression of opinion for me to say that there is a general wish for it.

56,085. Then you would say that it is not quite accurate to say that there is a general demand in your district for the arbitration on rents or the judicial determination of rents?—I think not.

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The Agricultural Holdings Act.

56,086. What changes in the Agricultural Holdings Act would you recommend?—On that point I am perhaps in favour of radical changes. I do not mean radical in the political sense so much as going to the root of it. In fact I think the changes that I should like to see are so great that I should sweep away the Act altogether, and simply give to every tenant a claim for the fair value of every improvement he has made which adds to the letting value of his holding.

56,087. How is that to be ascertained?—In the usual way by valuers.

Compensation for improvements.

56,088. The value which has been added to the holding?—You must leave that, as you leave it now, to the valuers.

56,089. In the case of a fall in rents how would you determine that?—You must leave it to the valuers the same as now. They have to fix it now, and they would have to fix it then. They know what the fall of rents is in the neighbourhood.

56,090. Would you take into account the fall of rents and even although there has been a general falling of rents, yet, if the nature of the improvement has been such as to prevent a still further fall, the arbitrator would be entitled to give to the tenant the benefit of that further fall?—Yes.

56,091. That is the way you put it?—Yes, I should give the value of the improvement at the time that the tenant leaves the farm, no matter what it has cost him, and no matter what improvement it is. As a radical I should sweep away all restrictions whatever. I consider it so necessary for the good of the country that the land should be cultivated as well as possible that I should give the tenants entirely a free hand to do almost exactly what they like, with the reservation to the landlord to prevent them doing any injury to the land. If the tenant chooses to do it now, the landlord could not stop him now, more than then. If the tenant chooses to knock his buildings down the landlord could only come upon him for damages.

Permanent improvements by tenants.

56,092. Would you allow the tenants to make permanent improvements?—Yes.

56,093. To erect a house and buildings?—I should allow a tenant to do anything that he chooses.

56,094. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Without any limit on the outlay?—Without any limit on the outlay, except that a landlord should apply for compensation for the deterioration of the holding.

56,095. Apply to whom?—To the court which may be fixed—to the judge.

56,095*a*. Where would he apply now?—The tenant has no right. But supposing a tenant were going to put up a building which a landlord thought would be to the deterioration of the holding, what would be a landlord's hold on him?

56,096. The tenant would not do it, because he would have no claim for compensation?—All the alteration I would allow would be this: that he would do it with the knowledge that if it was an improvement he would be paid for it, and if not, he would lose his money.

56,097. (*Mr. Channing.*) And he would have to face that when the time for valuation came?—Yes.

56,098. You would not go into the question of whether a suggested improvement was suitable for the holding as to the purpose for which it was done?—I should not.

56,099. (*Chairman.*) Would it not result in this, that the landlord, as to permanent improvements, such as you contemplate, would carefully watch and give notice to quit as soon as he saw something done to which he took exception?—It might, but even so I do not think it would. No landlord could turn his tenant out before that improvement would in all probability be completed.

56,100. There would be the risk to the tenant that the arbitrator might take a view that it was not an improvement?—Then the tenant would lose his money. I would leave it to the tenant.

56,101. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Would you allow the tenant to claim compensation by this new change in the law for improvements made after a notice to quit had been given?—No, certainly not.

56,102. (*Chairman.*) Do you think that tenant farmers would, as a rule, effect permanent improvements?—Certainly not; they would not when they could get their landlords to do it.

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56,103. Then it would only be where the landlord refused to do it that the tenant would avail himself of the privilege?—That is all.

56,104. Would it not be sufficient to make the improvements where the landlord refused to do so?—That makes the law so much more complicated that it would be better without it.

56,105. That is the law with regard to drainage at this moment?—Yes, and what is the effect with regard to that? I have never heard of a single tenant where he has availed himself of that.

56,106. Is not that on account of the state of the law that the tenants as a rule are not willing to spend money on permanent improvements?—I should say both. I think no tenant could practically carry out that clause with any safety to himself.

56,107. It seems to me not to be a very complicated clause, namely, the tenant is entitled to ask the landlord in writing, I presume, "Are you willing to effect drainage which is necessary for the land." If the landlord replies in writing that he is not able, or not willing to drain the land, then the tenant without further consent is able to effect the drainage himself. Is that a complicated process?—You are omitting the most complicated part of it. The tenant must commence the work within a time from the notice, not less than so long, and he must give notice to do it and must carry it out in that way—any little failure would upset it.

56,108. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But I thought you said all restrictions should be swept away?—I am now speaking of the present state of the law with respect to drainage.

56,109. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would not approve of the drainage clauses being applied to these permanent improvements?—Yes, to make it the law of the land that every tenant should receive on the termination of his tenancy the value of all the improvements he has made.

56,110. (*Chairman.*) Did you communicate your view to the Assistant-Commissioner, Mr. Hunter Pringle?—Yes, I had a long talk with him, and he stayed with me one night.

Arbitration on rents.

56,111. You did not indicate anything in favour of the arbitration on rents?—I do not remember that I did.

56,112. I only wanted to know that?—I do not think I did. We were talking all the evening, and I cannot say.

Rates.

56,113. Coming to another point, the question of rates, you have told us that your assessment had been reduced from time to time in proportion to the reduction of rent?—Yes.

56,114. What has been the general course of rates in your union?—Our rates, generally speaking, are rather low; I do not think they have risen at all.

56,115. That is to say, they have not risen in the £?—I think not—very little.

56,116. If the rent has been reduced in the proportion from 36*s.* per acre to 16*s.* per acre, that is to say, by something more than 50 per cent., your actual rates are reduced in the same proportion?—Yes, I believe at first when I took that farm I paid 75*l.* a year. I now pay about 30*l.* a year.

56,117. So that the rates have been reduced in a yet larger proportion than your rent?—About the same you will find.

56,118. I thought it was rather more—36*s.* to 16*s.* is rather less in proportion than 75 to 30?—It is 70 to 30.

56,119. It is about the same?—There is not much difference—there may be a trifle. My rates are, perhaps, exceptionally low; we have no school board and no sanitary rate.

56,120. It is purely a rural union?—My parish is purely rural; we have no extra rates at all of any sort.

56,121. What is the rate in the £?—About 2*s.* in the £.

56,122. Have you any recommendation to make on the subject of rates?—It always seems to me that agricultural land ought not to be rated as it is, and that according to the income derived from it land pays a far larger share of rates than it should, and larger than other property pays.

56,123. I suppose you would admit that the rates are taken into account when the tenant makes the agreement?—I should say it is more a landlord's than a tenant's question, excepting with regard to new rates. New rates are frequently put on. When we have parish councils and school boards they all increase the rates.

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56,124. And it takes time for the adjustment to be made?—Yes, the sitting tenant has to pay them.

56,125. But if the adjustment is made it falls upon the landlord, and not upon the tenant?—Yes, but I would like to put it in this light. My father was a tradesman, and occupied his own house and warehouse and stables, and so on. I know from these he derived an income of from 1,000*l.* to 1,500*l.* a year.

56,126. Is your own parish a purely rural one?—My parish, where I live, but I am speaking now of where my father lived.

56,127. You have nothing but land?—Nothing else. I know my father would not be rated at more than 150*l.* or 200*l.*, although he derived an income of from 1,000*l.* to 1,500*l.* a year. A farmer farming his own land with such an income would be rated on a thousand or more. I have never been able to see why that should be the case. However, that is more a landlord's question than a tenant's question, and I have not troubled about it.

56,128. Your own rates are little more than 2*s.* an acre?—A trifle less than 2*s.* an acre.

56,129. Therefore, a rise in the price of wheat of 6*d.* in the quarter would be better than the relief of the rates?—I have always said that the relief of rates would affect me very little indeed.

56,130. Any small alteration of prices would much more than meet the total burden of the rates?—Yes.

Railway rates.

56,131. Have you anything to say of a general character upon railway rates?—I may say that I have always thought that the foreign produce is favoured very much. Taking my own case, nearly all our corn or wheat goes to Birmingham or the Black Country. Now the rates for the foreign corn from Cardiff to Birmingham, I believe, are exactly the same as from Isham, although the distance from Cardiff to Birmingham is very nearly double.

56,132. (*Mr. Giffen.*) What is the rate?—I believe it is 8*s* 4*d.* a ton for corn, and I always think that the rates ought to be the same according to distance. If my rates were made the same in proportion as the rates from the foreign ports to Birmingham I believe it would make a difference of 3*s.* a ton—that is 9*d.* a quarter — to my corn. I know there must be a difference with regard to larger or smaller loads.

Price of wheat.

56,133. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Did I understand you to say at the beginning of your examination if you could have got 30*s.* per quarter you would have gone on growing wheat?—Yes.

56,134. Would that maintain you?—I think that wheat could be grown on land suitable for it at 30*s.* per quarter.

56,135. Your land is perhaps very suitable?—More suitable for corn than anything else.

Wheat production.

56,136. How many quarters per acre do you get?—A good four quarters; rather more than that, four to five quarters. I have had six and seven, but I have been down as low as two and a half.

56,137. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have grown as much as six and seven quarters per acre?—In exceptional fields.

56,138. But what is it on the average?—I do not think I have averaged quite six in any one year.

56,139. You have averaged nearly six?—I have averaged over five in exceptional years.

56,140. If everybody averaged six, and got 30*s.* per quarter, that would be a very good price?—Yes.

56,141. (*Chairman.*) You put it at about four quarters?—Yes. I have said, and I maintain still, that to grow wheat on such land as mine does not cost more than 5*l.*, a trifle less than 5*l.* per acre, plus rent, whatever that may be. Rent is a variable quantity, so that if you grow four quarters to the acre, and your rent is 1*l.* an acre, your wheat would repay expenses, and you would have the straw for the profit.

System of cultivation.

56,142. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What is the nature of your land?—Heavy clay land.

56,143. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it three-horse land?—Yes, except where it is four.

56,144. Can you feed off roots on it?—Not much of it.

56,145. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What do you use after?—Seeds and beans.

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56,146. Is it good bean land?—Fairly good bean land.

56,147. Now under the new system of keeping the seeds down four years, of course, you plant very much less wheat, and also beans?—Less beans as well. I should probably have in future not more than one-fourth wheat. I have seeds and keep more sheep.

56,148. And fat them off on the land?—As much as I can, I have always fed off.

Compensation to sitting tenant.

56,149. (*Mr. Little.*) You propose to give the sitting tenant compensation for all improvements?—Yes.

56,150. By the payment to him of a capital sum, leaving the landlord to recoup himself by an increased rent?—Yes.

56,151. Would you include in those improvements, manures?—I should, where they had increased the value of the land.

56,152. "Manures" under the Agricultural Holdings Act include feeding stuffs?—Yes.

56,153. And you would pay the sitting tenant for the manures that he had used?—If he had increased the value of the land, but not otherwise.

56,154. Supposing a sitting tenant got on a farm such as yours 150*l.* or 200*l.* compensation for the consumption of cake and the use of artificial manures; would the landlord get that again?—If that had increased the value of the land, I suppose he would get it from the increased rent; if it had not, the outgoing tenant would not get it at all.

56,155. Supposing the sitting tenant is paid, and in a couple of years exhausts that manure, how would the landlord's increased rent repay him?—I do not quite catch your question.

56,156. It is quite possible that this 150*l.* in the shape of manures might be taken out of the land, say, in a couple of years?—In two or three years it might.

56,157. And the landlord would get an increased rent for two or three years and then the thing would be gone. Is not that so?—Yes, but the change I propose would not affect that change at all. I do not agree with the present system. I find fault with it as being unjust to the landlord, but the change that I propose would not affect that.

56,158. Would you do away with those agreements where the tenant has to be compensated for the use of artificial food and manures?—Yes, I should do away with all fixed specified sums.

56,159. You would not permit an agreement of the kind?—I should do away with them as regards the law. I would do away with all those fixed payments. I am certain that a man may spend large sums in the purchase of cake and manures and may yet run his land down and leave it practically worse than another man who spends nothing on those things.

56,160. That is possible. But if a sitting tenant is to be compensated for that which he can use and carry away, how is the landlord to be secured?—I do not say that he is to be compensated if the tenant has not added to the value of the land.

56,161. He may have added to the temporary value of the land, but only for a short period?—I suppose valuers would know that it was only temporary, and would compensate him accordingly. They would not give so much for the two years as for a permanent improvement.

56,162. That is a lower compensation than tenants are entitled to?—I think that tenants sometimes get very much more than they are entitled to.

56,163. But would not they be entitled to much less under your proposal?—Good farmers would get more. My contention is that the present law favours bad tenants who may happen to be under good landlords, and it gives no protection to a good tenant who is under a bad landlord.

56,164. But the principle of the Act is the principle that you propose to adopt as to the value to the incoming tenant?—Yes, and that is not properly carried out, I consider.

56,165. But it is the principle of the Act?—Yes, it is, so far as the Act goes.

56,166. It is expressly declared that for such improvement as the tenant is entitled to compensation, the compensation shall be based upon the value to an incoming tenant?—That is not, I say, properly carried out. That is not the fault of the law but the fault of the valuers.

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Price of wheat.

56,167. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand in spite of the exceptionally favourable character of your land for growing wheat, you have still reduced your production of wheat very considerably at the present prices?—Yes.

56,168. And although it might pay at 30*s.*, it would not pay at present prices?—Certainly not at 1*l.* or 25*s.*

Wheat production.

56,169. But in your district I apprehend that there are not many who grow their wheat as successfully as you do?—I do not know—you will have another witness who grows as much.

56,170. You are certainly fortunate, are you not?—I do not think that four quarters an acre is a high average.

56,171. I thought you said six quarters was the average nearly?—Nearly six in some years.

56,172. Still, when I hear that a farmer is so favourably circumstanced that he is getting six quarters of wheat per acre, it rather makes my mouth water?—I think it is exceptional when I have 5½.

56,173. And not very often six or seven I suppose?—It is 26 or 27 years since I began farming, and I have only done it once.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

56,174. There are three points on which I want to ask you one or two questions, and the first is with regard to the subject which Mr. Little has been examining you upon, because I feel a difficulty and always have felt a difficulty which you may be able to set at rest, and that is the question of giving compensation to the sitting tenant. Now I understand you to say that whenever a tenant gives notice to quit for any purpose he may be entitled to be paid for all his improvements. That is so, is it not?—That is, if the tenancy is determined—is finished; and a fresh tenancy is created.

56,175. If the tenancy is determined, and it is determined by a notice to quit, that is so, is it not?—Yes.

56,176. Then under these circumstances, any tenant who chooses to give a notice to quit is to be entitled, if he calls in a valuer, to have whatever compensation the valuer awards him for all the improvements he has made?—Yes.

56,177. In those improvements I understand you include everything that is now given under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

56,178. I want to take the case of a Lady Day entry. I do not know when they enter in your part of the world; but you know farms where they enter in at Lady Day and May Day, this is the difficulty, and this is the position I want to bring under your notice. A man has spent a considerable sum of money on cakes and in manures, which is all part of the annual work in cultivating his farm; he has laid it out; he has planted his wheat, and sown his barley; and for all this you say upon his receiving a notice to quit he has to be paid?—That is hardly the same as compensation for improvements. You are now speaking of agricultural work?

56,179. Work, and the use and employment of these manures and these cakes which are all included in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—But, of course, if the farm was relet to a new tenant, the new tenant would have to pay for sowing the barley and the hire.

56,180. The tillages?—Yes.

56,181. You admit that?—Of course the new tenant must pay.

56,182. But supposing there is not a new tenant. I am taking the case of the sitting tenant?—Of course he would be in the place of a new tenant then.

56,183. Taking it upon that ground, then he is always to be paid, at all events for his cakes and manures?—If there is a readjustment of the rent.

56,184. There is no question of the readjustment of the rent?—If the landlord pays his value, the landlord would be entitled to treat it as a new tenancy, and then there would be a readjustment of the rent.

56,185. The landlord would be entitled to a new tenancy the moment the notice to quit was given. But what you are supposing is, that the tenant, although staying on the farm, should receive all the compensation for cake and manure that he has used in the production of

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those crops?—I will answer that in a minute. Of course I mean if it is a new tenancy; if it is a new tenancy the landlord will naturally say, "We will have "a readjustment."

56,186. But it seems to be a new tenancy, after a notice to quit—there is no difference of opinion upon that point. Your case is perfectly clear that after a notice to quit has been given by one side or the other, then the tenant is to be entitled to be paid for all the cakes and manures used in the production of his crops?—I say, treating him on the same footing as a new tenant.

56,187. Quite so, you agree?—If the rent was adjusted merely.

56,188. He would be paid under any circumstances, whether readjusted or not?—But the moment you insist upon a readjustment of the rent ——

56,189. I will come to that afterwards. Answer the questions that I put to you. He has to be paid for all the cakes and manures he has used in the production of those crops?—If the landlord pays for them that becomes his property.

56,190. What?—Any improvement that has been made by the tenant, if the landlord has paid for it, the moment the landlord has paid for it it becomes the property of the landlord.

56,191. The moment the notice to quit is given you say they become the property of the landlord, subject to the existing law or custom, which has the force of law upon the subject. I arrive at this; it is quite clear that this is what you meant, when a notice to quit has been given if the tenant chooses to call in a valuer, then he is to be entitled to compensation for all the cake and the manures that he has used upon the production of the crops?—Yes. You rather go beyond me. I only say that he is to be paid for improvements which add to the letting value of the farm. Now I should go so far as to say that if the cakes and manures that he has used have only kept the farm up to the state in which it was when he took it, he ought not to be paid; but the fault of the present system is that he gets his payment. You ought to be paid for improvements which add to the value of the land.

56,192. (*Mr. Channing.*) Or prevent its being reduced in value?—Or prevent the natural fall in value of the land.

56,193. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I was coming to that question afterwards; but for the present the tenant is to be entitled to call in a valuer, and, if the valuer so awards, he is to receive compensation for all the manures and takes used; that is so, is it not?—Yes, if they add to the letting value of the farm.

56,194. If the valuer awards it?—If they add to the letting value of the farm.

56,195. Then the next step is this: an arrangement is made between the landlord and tenant, and the same tenant goes on. Then he has to leave the crops which have been produced by the cake and manures?—But, of course, he would then have to pay the valuation if he goes on. As a matter of custom, the incoming tenant pays the valuation.

56,196. Then he would have to repay the landlord the sum he has been paid for compensation?—As now. In law the landlord is now responsible to the outgoing tenant.

56,197. Certainly?—But, as a matter of custom, the incoming tenant pays for the tillages, and that sort of thing. I do not propose to interfere with the payment for tillages.

56,198. I am not speaking of tillages; I am speaking of cakes and manures, not of tillages. Has the new tenant, under those circumstances, to pay for the cakes and manures?—I have always said that all those things ought to be paid for by the landlord and not by the incoming tenant at all; and that the incoming tenant should take the farm at what it is worth at the time he goes in, and that then he should be bound to maintain it in as high a state of fertility, and should not claim anything for cakes and manures, which are necessary to maintain it in that state.

56,199. I understand quite clearly, from what you have told us, that the tenant, after he gives a notice to quit, is to call in a valuer, and, if the valuer so awards, the landlord is to give compensation for cakes and manures; and then I put to you the case where the tenant still remains on the farm, and is going to reap these crops himself. Has he to pay anything for manures and cakes when he becomes the tenant or not? I want an answer, yes or no?—I am endeavouring to answer, but I cannot answer, yes or no.

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56,200. Why?—Because it would not convey my meaning.

56,201. It is a matter of fact?—If you will allow me to answer without confining me to yes or no, I will do so.

56,202. Please to answer as clearly and straightly as you can?—The sitting tenant would be exactly in the same position as a new tenant if it were the custom of the estate and country generally, that if the new tenant should pay for those things the sitting tenant would have to pay for them.

56,203. If it was the custom of the country, or in the agreement?—Yes. And then the sitting tenant would have to pay for them practically. They would not be valued if they were going on; if they were valued it would be that, as outgoing tenant, he would receive payment for them from the landlord; but as incoming tenant he would have to pay the landlord for them.

56,204. That is exactly what I wanted to arrive at. I am much obliged to you for your answer. But then it comes to this, as a matter of fact, that in all cases where customs or agreements to that effect are in existence, or where the thing is held under the existing law, your proposal would result in this: that the tenant would call in a valuer who would award him so much payment, which the landlord would have to make if he were entitled to it, for cakes and manures; and thereupon the landlord would call in a valuer, and the existing tenant, being a new tenant, would have to pay it back to him?—But cakes and manures are not the only improvements.

56,205. But I am limiting it to cakes and manures. I am much obliged to you, because I have arrived at what you mean; and I should like to ask you upon that: Do you think it really desirable to alter by law all existing practices and customs which have been found by experience to work admirably well, and give great satisfaction, for a change which, after all, would make very little change, and that would result in exactly the same thing as happens now?—I cannot think that the present customs have acted admirably.

56,206. I would quote the case of the custom of Lincolnshire. Have you read the evidence of the Sub-Commissioner, Mr. Wilson Fox, in his report upon Lincolnshire?—No, I have not seen it.

56,207. I am sure, if you were to read it, you would be very much interested in it. You are not aware then that in that report he points to the custom of Lincolnshire. Would it modify your view if a high authority like this says that there is a custom in existence which is admitted to have given universal satisfaction, and that there would be the strongest possible feeling on the part of a great body of farmers in a large district like that, against any change in the law—would it not tend, perhaps, if you were well acquainted with it, to modify your views with reference to this change in the law?—I cannot say what it might do. All that I can say is this—that where the law or custom works in my own district I can point to farm after farm which has been run down and practically ruined by the outgoing tenants, who have yet been enabled to claim compensation in considerable sums for improvements. On the other hand, I can point to many a good farmer who has farmed well, and has lost a considerable sum of money, who has left a very large amount for his successor and his landlord.

56,208. I quite understand your views?—I have always held that those improvements ought to be paid for by the landlord, not by the incoming tenant. It makes too large an inroad upon the incoming tenant's capital, besides which he does pay twice over. We all know that a farmer takes a farm at a high rent because of the good condition that it is in, and he has to pay a sum to the outgoing tenant for the manures and cakes that have brought it into that condition. I have always contended that the landlord ought to pay for the manures and cakes which have brought the land into that condition.

56,209. You would do away with all customs and all laws which are at present based upon any fixed payments, or upon the outlay made by the tenant?—Yes.

56,210. And you still recommend that, although you are unable to say from your experience, that in very

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wide districts of the country this proposal would give the greatest possible dissatisfaction to a very large body of farmers. You would still advocate this, although you are unable to say, from your own knowledge, that your proposal would give very great dissatisfaction in many parts of the country, to a large body of farmers?—I do not think that it would give dissatisfaction at all.

56,211. (*Chairman.*) That is rather an assumption on the part of Mr. Chaplin?—I do not think I have said anything to lead to that.

56,212. You are not aware of Mr. Wilson Fox's report, nor of the condition of things in Lincolnshire?—No. With regard to my own district, we have had this matter of the Agricultural Holdings Act time after time before us; I have generally taken a rather prominent part, and I have proposed resolutions upon it repeatedly, and I have generally managed to carry those resolutions by a very small majority. Those resolutions, and my views, have been supported by the large majority of the tenant farmers, and have been opposed by the landlords and the land agents, and I believe that the views that I express are the views of the majority of the tenant farmers.

56,213. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Throughout England?—In our district.

56,214. That I quite agree with?—I do not profess to speak for districts that I have never been in.

56,215. I quite understand that, but you are advocating a change in the law which is to be universal?—Yes, I would make the law what I believe to be just to everyone.

56,216. And your proposals are to apply to all parts of England?—I see nothing to prevent them.

56,217. Even although they are to override customs and practices which in other counties, as far as you are aware, may give perfect satisfaction?—I would make the law what I consider to be just, no matter what customs there are.

56,218. That is all that I want to arrive at. Your proposal, so far as it conflicts with them, would override and repeal all existing customs that are contrary to your views?—I would not allow any customs to override the law.

56,219. Quite so, the law as exemplified in your proposals?—They do not override the law as at present.

Valuation of improvements.

56,220. Now, upon another point in connexion with this; your view I understand quite clearly to be this; that the compensation is not to be based upon the outlay, but upon the whole value of the improvement to the incoming tenant at the time that the outgoing tenant leaves?—Yes.

56,221. How is that value to be estimated?—By the valuers.

56,222. By the arbitrator?—By the arbitrator.

56,223. Take the case where there may have been, although I am afraid that it is not likely to happen, a very great rise of prices—that would enormously add to the value of the improvements. Is the tenant to have the whole of that added value which comes from the rise in prices?—I should hardly say that it would add very considerably, but it would add somewhat, and I should say he would. If, on the other hand, he executed those improvements and prices fell he would lose in proportion, and I should say that he should also stand to win if the prices rose.

56,224. I admit that there is something to be said on both sides?—The man must take his chance in the rise and fall; I think that it is only fair to make him pay for what is used during the past few years.

56,225. Are you acquainted with, or have you had experience of, cases where the compensation to the tenant is based, not upon the value, but upon the outlay, or a fixed proportion of it?—I think it is always done so.

56,226. Oh, no; the value under the Act is to the incoming tenant, the value of the improvement?—Oh, no, certainly not; the valuers have a schedule that they go by, and they give a certain proportion for the cost of the cake for the year and before.

56,227. I am aware that that is the usual practice of the valuers, but it is not the spirit or the letter of the law?—I prefer the law to the practice.

56,228. But that practice still continues to prevail, that they give the compensation on the proportion of the outlay?—Yes.

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56,229. With regard to the second question. All restrictions, you say, are to be swept away, and you would allow a tenant to have compensation for all outlay?—No, I never said that—all improvements he has made—not outlay.

56,230. But all outlay that he has made, so far as it has added to the value?—I do not like the word "outlay." I object to the outlay being taken into consideration at all. I go simply upon the value of the improvement.

56,231. That is the base upon which you give compensation?—Yes.

Permanent improvements by tenants.

56,232. Do I understand you to say that you could sweep away all restrictions, and among those there was to be no limit to be made on the outlay of the tenant?—Yes.

56,233. No limit on any kind of improvement whatever?—Yes.

56,234. The point I want to bring under your notice is this: if that became the law it would leave an enormous outlay of capital by the tenants on the estate—you can follow that?—Yes.

56,235. I want you to take the case of a landlord who is not in a position to make any large payments whatever; have you considered what is to be his position, supposing this large outlay to be made; the tenants may choose to give up the business, and he is made responsible, upon the authority of the valuer, for a very large payment indeed. Have you considered that possibility?—Yes.

56,236. Do you think it would be fair to put a landlord in that position where he would have to pay for outlays against his will?—I do; I think that it is so important for the country at large that the land of the country should be as well cultivated as possible, that, although I should be very sorry for a landlord who could not afford to pay for improvements—only for improvements, not for outlay—still, I consider the good of the country must override the good of the individual landlords; and that if a man is not in a position to pay for the value of improvements, the sooner the land belongs to someone who can do so, be he landlord or tenant, the better for the landlord, the tenant, and the whole country.

56,237. Have you any proposals to make by which the land could be transferred to someone else without injustice and with fair treatment of the landlord; how do you provide for that?—I do not think it is necessary to provide for that. If a man cannot meet the bare charges of his estate then it is time for him to dispose of it to someone who can.

56,238. What you are proposing to do now might under certain circumstances render a landlord liable for large sums of money which have been expended without his consent, and against his will, and you are quite prepared to say that the landlord must take the consequences of that?—You keep harping upon the sums of money that he has expended; I say he is only responsible for the improvements—for the added value of his property.

56,239. You have already explained to us that there may be added value without any increase of rent?—No. I do not think I have said that.

56,240. Certainly that was your answer to the questions of the Chairman?—I think you have misunderstood me.

56,241. Is added value to depend entirely upon increase of rent? Is there to be no added value for which a tenant is to be compensated if there is no increase of rent?—I say only that value which is added to which would increase the rent.

56,242. (*Chairman.*) I think you went a little further. I put the case where rents were reduced owing to lower prices and although an improvement had been effected it could not be shown to have added to the actual rent because that was reduced owing to other causes. In that case the arbitrator would be entitled to award on the ground that but for that the rent would be still more reduced?—I call it increased rent if a man prevents rent falling. Say a farm is let at 1*l.* an acre for instance which otherwise would come down to 10*s.*, but for the tenant's improvements, that is what I call increasing the rent. If the tenant's improvement

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prevents the rent from falling he is entitled to something for that improvement.

56,243. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Or prevents it falling without the improvement?—Yes.

56,244. But then the position I want to put to you is this: the case of a landlord who is already impoverished, which is the case of a great many, and who has no further means at his disposal; your improvement, even if it has value, in no way betters his position—it does not place him in any further funds or enable him to obtain them, but then I understand you that you are quite willing that these improvements should be made entailing responsibility upon him which it may be impossible for him to meet and to entail all these expenses?—I do not think that fairly puts my view.

56,245. I have tried to put it fairly?—If the improvements have added to the value of the estate, either the landlord could sell it for more money than he otherwise would, or he could borrow the money.

56,246. Certainly, but if it does not increase the letting value?—But I say that it has.

56,247. I put to you the position of a landlord who is already at the end of his tether. You are making proposals which are not to add to his rent?—I do not say to the rent, but to the value.

56,248. Which are not necessarily to add to the value. The value, of course, can only be measured by what it will fetch in the market?—I beg your pardon.

56,249. There is a great distinction in the case I am putting between an actual increase in the value of his property and a fall to less than it otherwise would have been?—It comes to this. You are thinking of a case where there would have been a large fall, but, by the tenant's improvements, that fall is prevented; I say that adds to the value.

56,250. I am not thinking of that case, but of the case of a landlord who is called upon to make improvements; he knows that he has not the means of doing it, and would not be justified in the outlay. Then you propose that a tenant should be permitted to make the outlay for him, and that the tenant should have the right, when he leaves that farm, if the valuer says that the outlay has increased the value of his holding, to come upon the landlord and claim a sum of money, and he would not be in a position to meet that claim?—I cannot help that; if that sum of money belongs in justice to the tenant, in spite of the landlord's position, the tenant is entitled to receive it.

56,251. You advocate those proposals no matter what the consequences might be to the landlord, even supposing he were made bankrupt?—Even supposing they forced him to sell.

56,252. They might go further?—I advocate justice, no matter what happens to the landlord.

56,253. It would be perfectly just to impose by law a responsibility upon a landlord he might not be able to meet, and make him a bankrupt, would it?—In my view it would be quite right for the tenant to make necessary improvements.

Notice to landlord of improvements.

56,254. *Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you propose that the tenant should give any notice to the landlord of the improvements?—It would be better that he should; all tenants would prefer that their landlords should do them.

56,255. According to your proposal, would you give the landlord notice or not?—Yes, as a matter of detail it would be better to give the landlord notice.

56,256. What length of time?—I have not gone into that. But practically I think all tenants would give them notice, because they would ask the landlord to do it as a matter of course.

56,257. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say that a considerable number of farms have been run down by bad farming in your district?—Yes.

Compensation for deterioration.

56,258. Has the landlord been able to obtain compensation from the men who have run them down?—Not in some cases that I am thinking of, certainly not.

56,259. You propose in every case whatever improvements are made which add to the letting value that the landlord shall have to pay for them?—Yes.

56,260. Do you supplement that by any proposals to protect the landlord in cases where he has suffered by bad farming?—Of course.

56,261. How do you think the law can be amended in that respect?—By giving the landlord and the tenant equal claims, the landlord to claim for deterioration, and the tenant to claim for improvements.

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56,262. Have the men been able to pay for the damage?—In some cases they have, but in others not. The law can only give a man a claim; the law does not expect a man to get money from a man who has no money.

56,263. Still the landlord suffers; his property has been depreciated, and practically he has no efficient remedy?—He has not now. I should make the landlord's position better than it is.

56,264. How?—Because he has no claim whatever.

56,265. He makes claims, but cannot enforce them?—But supposing the tenant does not make a claim?

56,266. (*Mr. Little.*) The landlord has no claim?—Not if the tenant makes no claim.

56,267. Not under the Act; but has not he under custom?—No; if the man is under the Act that is over the custom.

56,268. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you say the landlord should have the right exactly as the tenant has in the suggestion of the Central Chamber of Agriculture that the notices are to be given the same day?—Yes; personally I would do away with all notices.

56,269. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you think there are any means by which the landlord could be efficiently protected?—I cannot see how you can make a bankrupt pay his debts.

56,270. In your district are there more farms injured in that way than improved by good farming?—Of late years, I am afraid there have been.

56,271. The man who would suffer most in the existing state of things is the landlord?—No, the good tenant.

56,272. But taking the tenants on one side and the landlords on the other, the landlords have received more injury by bad farming than they have obtained benefit by the tenants' improvements?—I would not say that—I would not go so far as that—the good tenants have received most injury.

Permanent improvements by tenants.

56,273. Then you say you would allow any improvement to be carried out which adds to the letting value of the farm. Would you allow that, although it altered the nature of the farm?—I think I should.

56,274. Any alteration, for example, in the shape of making a large dwelling-house instead of a small one?—Yes, though, mind you, if it was out of character with the farm, it would not add to the value of the farm. I can tell you where the large dwelling-house diminishes the value.

56,275. But you might have cases of turning a farm into practically a residential property?—Yes.

56,276. Would you allow compensation in that case?—Yes.

56,277. But you do not think it is desirable in the interests of the country, and of agriculture generally, that expensive residences of this sort should be provided?—I do not think that they ever would be.

56,278. But a man might very readily, if he had a farm on a short tenancy, enlarge the house considerably?—And what valuer would give him anything?

56,279. A good house would add to the letting value?—It does not always.

56,280. Taking the corresponding case in a town, or anywhere else. Supposing a tenant has a small house, and during the tenancy he pulls it down and builds a bigger one, is he to be paid for that?—I am not talking of town houses, I am talking of a farm.

56,281. Does not the same principle apply to residential improvements on farms? Would you allow a farmhouse to be altered to any extent? You would not consider that that is desirable?—I should say a man is a fool who did it, and I do not think there are a sufficient number of fools in the world, and I would not alter it by the law.

56,282. But you would give a claim in that case to the tenant to be repaid?—If it added to the value of the farm.

56,283. However short a term of tenancy there was?—But these things in practice would never come in.

56,284. Would you think that a man who has a short tenancy in a farm is entitled to expend very large sums

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either in that way or in any other way, and practically altogether alter the property?—He is not entitled to any more under my proposal than if he chooses to do it now.

56,285. But there are certain improvements that he must not do, and for which he has no compensation?—If it added to the value of the landlord's property I would give him compensation.

56,286. Although it altogether altered the nature of the property?—If it added to the letting value of the property, I would give him compensation.

56,287. (*Mr. Channing.*) Now do not you think that the valuer in such a case would have to take into consideration the purposes for which the farm was let, for instance, whether it was let for arable or dairy purposes, or market-gardening in the first instance?—Decidedly, every valuer would naturally do so.

56,288. So that the prudent tenant would not without consent divert the whole purposes or character of the holding?—No tenant would, not one tenant in England in 20 years would do so; they would not be such fools.

56,289. Would it not be on the whole a more prudent step to give notice to the landlord of the improvements, and to arrange the matter by agreement?—Every tenant would naturally do so, no tenant would go and lay out a lot of his money on another man's property if he could induce the other man to do it.

Scheduling improvements.

56,290. Would it not be on the whole more workable to schedule certain improvements, and then a tenant would have to give the landlord notice of the character and scope of the improvements beforehand?—I think not, I should do away with all schedules.

56,291. You do not think that the introducing of that into the law would prevent complications and disputes afterwards?—I think it would lead to complications and disputes as it does at present.

56,292. That is your opinion, quite distinctly?—Yes.

56,293. I think you and I differ on that?—Quite so.

56,294. Now as to the position of the landlords, are you in favour of having State loans at more moderate terms for the carrying out of improvements?—I have not gone into that, I would rather not. I have no objection to State loans. That is more a landlord's question, and I do not speak for them.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

56,295. But as to the point upon which Mr. Chaplin pressed you so much, the question as to the sitting tenant, now, if the sitting tenant has by custom or agreement to pay, in his position as incoming tenant, for the valuation, the question I should like to put to you is this: would it not be the proper, and just, and workable way for him to pay that valuation in his rent. He would pay it either by increase of rent would he not, or by receiving a less reduction of rent than other farmers were receiving on the same estate?—Yes, probably it would be, as a matter of arrangement, carried out in that way.

56,296. That is a supposition of repayment on a valuation by the incoming tenant, is that a practical one really, would not the matter be adjusted in the rent?—No doubt it would, always.

56,297. You would have a rent fixed on the remaining value, would you not, and give the landlord the right to charge for whatever he could get improved to the extent, and for the period he had left it improved?—Yes.

56,298. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You fix the rent for the remaining value—how many years?—We were not fixing the rent. I do not know what you mean by fixing the rent, that is a matter of negotiation.

56,299. (*Mr. Channing.*) I am not suggesting the fixing of rent, my question was whether the rent, as agreed on between the landlord and tenant, would not either be an increase of rent, or by withholding the proportionate reduction of the rent which might be given to another tenant, cover the amount which the sitting tenant in that case would have to pay as a valuation?—That would be a matter of arrangement between the landlord and tenant as to whether he received the payment in a lump sum or as consideration in the rent.

56,300. As a matter of fact, this payment would be settled in consideration of the rent between the two parties?—Probably.

56,301. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you apply that to purely transitory improvements such as the use of cakes and manures?—I apply it to anything the landlord included in the bargain. It would be a matter of agreement.

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56,302. (*Mr. Channing.*) But in the case of a transitory improvement it would be in favour of the landlord rather than the tenant, would it not, because if the landlord were to fix the rent at the current value——?—But I should leave your tenant exactly the same as the incoming tenant, and if the landlord demanded more rent in addition to this payment for improvement, the tenant would simply say, I shall not give it, and you must give me the payment for improvements.

56,303. As a matter of fact, your case for the sitting tenant is this: that unless he has the right to have the valuation before the terms of the tenancy are readjusted at any time, by notice on either side, he is placed in a position in which he would be forced to pay an unfair rent?—Yes.

56,304. Whereas if you give him the right to this valuation, and the remaining value of his improvements, he would be in a position of a fair bargainer?—Yes.

56,305. Have you contemplated this case of a landlord wishing to charge more for his land than the current market value of it, in order to anticipate what the valuation of a tenant might be for his improvements?—I do not quite understand that.

56,306. Supposing the landlord were to say, "I anticipate what the valuation might be, and add that to the current value of the land." In that case would he not be in a position to abstract from the tenant the amount which the tenant under the new law, would be able to receive?—But the tenant would not be obliged to pay, there are two parties to the bargain.

56,307. He would have to fall back again upon his notice to quit?—Yes.

Fixity of tenure.

56,308. I put that question because I wanted to know whether you were at all in favour of fixity of tenure in any form?—I cannot say that; I am not in favour of fixity of tenure.

56,309. You are in favour of strengthening the good tenant to obtain the full value of what he has got, and to give him that advantage in bargaining, and not to fixity of tenure?—With regard to the sitting tenant you remember that I advocate the landlord, not the incoming tenant, paying for the improvements, whether made by cakes or artificial manures or any other means. I do not consider that any of those ought to fall upon the incoming tenant. The incoming tenant takes the land in the condition in which it is, at the rent it is worth at the time, and, in my opinion, it should be the landlord that pays for all improvements.

Valuation of improvements.

56,310. As to the system of valuation, how do you wish it carried out; are you satisfied with the present system of valuation?—Not with regard to the valuation of artificial manures, and cakes, and so on; I do not like the present system.

56,311. Nor the valuation of any other improvements supposing they were made?—No, my contention is that valuers as a rule take the outlay—the cost—as the basis, instead of which they ought to take the added value.

Official valuers.

56,312. Does that point to an official valuer who would treat the matter from a different point of view?—I think we would get official valuers ourselves who would.

56,313. What is your idea of an official valuer and his duties?—In what way?

56,314. What would you propose—would you have an official valuer appointed by a district council or by a list for the county, or what?—I think it would be best to have a list for the county.

56,315. What duties would you give them?—All the duties at present performed by the valuers and the umpires.

56,316. Place them in the position of umpires, and restrict umpires to be selected from them?—Yes.

56,317. But you would not give them any power of fixing rent?—I think not. I may say that that is a question upon which I am, in my own mind, rather doubtful, but my tendency is not to give them any power of fixing rent, but I am not very strong upon it.

Produce rents.

56,318. Have you any opinion upon the fixing of produce rents in any way?—I have thought of it a good deal, and I have not seen how it could be worked. Do you mean that the rent should rise or fall according to the value of the produce?

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56,319. Or be determined by a certain proportion of the produce?—You know produce varies very much on different farms.

Position of farmers.

56,320. What is the actual position of the tenant farmers in your district; there have been a great many changes of tenancy, I believe?—A great many during the last 15 years.

56,321. The last years, 1892 and 1893, were very disastrous, were they not?—Well, personally, 1893 was not so bad as several others, certainly not for me; a wet season is far worse than a dry one.

56,322. (*Chairman.*) Your district did not suffer so much from drought as many others?—It did suffer, but my farm is one that can stand a good deal of dry weather, and 1879, the wet season, was the worst for me.

Produce rents.

56,323. (*Mr. Channing.*) We were going into the question of advocating produce rents. What do you think of the relation of rents now in Northamptonshire as regards cost of production; what is the economical value of a farm, and what does it take to keep it going; are they fair rents or not?—I think, on the whole, the rents have not been reduced so much as they should have been in proportion to the fall in the value of the produce.

56,324. What ought to be the proportion of rent to the gross produce of a farm; it used to be one-third, what is it now?—I could hardly say, but it would not be so high because other expenses have not come down in proportion.

Scheduling condition of farms.

56,325. Have you any opinion as to the practicability of having a record of the condition of the farm on the entrance of a tenant?—I do not think there would be any great difficulty in it.

56,326. Could it be done?—Yes.

56,327. It would be sufficient evidence at the close of a tenancy, you think?—I think so; there would not be any great difficulty in it.

Freedom of cultivation.

56,328. What opinion have you about freedom of cultivation—freedom of cropping and sale?—I should give every freedom to the tenant, but I should also give an injunction to the landlord to prevent any undue waste.

56,329. (*Mr. Little.*) To whom?—To the court, the county court, or any other court.

56,330. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you any proposals to make?—No, not as to what court.

Land court.

56,331. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is there any strong opinion in Northamptonshire in favour of having official arbitrators to whom you would refer all these questions, including the claim of a landlord for an injunction—a sort of land court?—I do not think there is any strong feeling in favour of it. I think among tenant farmers there would be rather a preponderance in favour of it, but there is not a strong feeling in the matter.

56,332. Is there a larger number of farmers who would like a land court by whom questions of compensation to the landlord for deterioration, and the question of compensation for the tenant's improvements, could be decided, than those who keep to the present system?—I can hardly say. I do not think there would be a strong feeling either way.

56,333. But still there are a large number of people who take that view?—I think so.

56,334. (*Mr. Everett.*) As I understand it, your desire is to have such a system as will promote good farming?—Decidedly.

56,335. And you wish to accomplish that by making good farming as safe as law can make it?—Yes.

Scheduling condition of farms.

56,336. You have been asked whether it would commend itself to your judgment that farms should be entered with a written statement of the condition in which they are to be kept for comparison when the end of the tenure comes, and the landlord is to be compensated if the farm has been deteriorated, and the tenant if the tenant has improved its value. Would that strike you as a practical way of meeting the object you have in view?—I think it would. I think it would be carried out fairly. I do not see any insuperable difficulties in it.

Valuation of improvements.

56,337. And would you desire to see the amount of compensation to the tenant or forfeiture to the landlord arranged by some system of valuation which would be elastic and not tied by hard and arbitrary rules?—Yes.

56,338. Would you leave it to a system of independent valuation, a law confirming that principle which you would think better than a law full of cumbrous details such as we have now?—Yes.

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56,339. When a tenant came to the end of his tenure in such a case as that, you do not see that the landlord would suffer any harm if the tenant had considerably increased the value of the landlord's property by what he had done to it?—I do not think so at all.

56,340. If the tenant were to go on with the higher improvement of that farm, do you think that the landlord and tenant would be able to adjust the term of the new hire without any actual money passing from the landlord to the tenant?—I think probably they would.

56,341. It would be adjusted in the rent?—Probably.

56,342. And the landlord would be benefitted by having a farm to let in first-rate condition?—Yes.

56,343. (*Lord Rendel.*) You have made some very radical propositions, not in the political sense?—Some of them would be considered so.

56,344. I was not perfectly certain whether I fully understood you. You appear to recognise three parties as interested in the land, not only the owner and the occupier, but the State, the country?—Yes.

Permanent improvements by tenants.

56,345. In answer to a very difficult question put to you by Mr. Chaplin, you fell back upon apparently some principle that there was a duty of cultivation lying in an owner of cultivable land?—I do not think I quite understand that I said anything about the duty of an owner. I said that it was very much to the interest of the public at large that the land should be well cultivated, and that everything should be done to encourage good cultivation.

56,346. But where a case was put to you that an owner might suffer under the working of one of your main proposals, did I gather you to fall back upon the proposition that the owner must suffer in the interests of the State?—I do not admit that the owner would ever suffer injustice, he might suffer inconvenience, and I say he must put up with the inconvenience if it is for the good of the State.

56,347. Do I understand you to base that upon any principle such as the one I have heard suggested, namely, that an owner of cultivable land owes it to the State that it should be cultivated?—I should go so far as to say that.

56,348. In that case if the owner of land delegates it to the farmer, you think that responsibility rests with the farmer?—It should not be with the best agriculture.

56,349. On the principle that where he delegates it you should give the fullest possible liberty to the farmer?—Yes.

56,350. Your experience of the farmer has led you to the conclusion that the only workable course will be to give in respect of improvements an absolutely free hand to the farmer?—That would be the best course.

56,351. And to preserve that, you propose that in the interest of the better cultivation of the land generally?—Yes.

56,352. On the ground that that is the primary interest of the State?—Yes.

56,353. Am I right in inferring that the only protection you give to the owner, for the obvious inconvenience of his losing his discretion as regards improvements in his own land, would be that there should be, whenever a transfer or renewal of tenancy takes place, an opportunity on both sides for ascertaining what has been the result of such improvements in reference to the letting value of the land?—I do not look upon it as a protection of the landlord; that lies in the common sense of the tenant, and the fact that no tenant wants to lay out his money unnecessarily. I do not know that I should say that the landlord needs any protection.

56,354. Surely if he loses his discretion as to the manner in which his land shall be cultivated; if he loses his discretion as to the condition in which the land shall be put in many respects besides mere cultivation, he deserves in your opinion, I gather, some protection beyond the mere judgment of the farmer which may or may not be a sound one?—He does not lose much protection beyond what he has at present.

56,355. At present he has the protection that no such expenditure could take place, I gather properly it could take place, without his assent?—If the tenant chooses to do it. But the difference would be that under the

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present system, whether that is an improvement or not the tenant would lose it. Under the scheme that I advocate, if it was an improvement the tenant would not lose it.

56,356. On the other hand you would propose to give the tenant a legal power of recovering any value that he might have added?—Yes, a power of recovering the value.

56,357. And you still leave the landlord in the position of resting upon the good sense of the tenant for the security against what he might regard as a very undesirable expenditure on the property?—He has not only that, but the opinion of the valuer, who, if it were undesirable, and if it did not add to the letting value, would not give him anything, and the landlord would not have to pay anything.

56,358. I want to know whether you rest that proposition upon justice as between the landlord and the tenant; or, whether you fall back upon the principle that the State is concerned, and that the interest of the State in adding the highest letting value to the land must prevail over the interest of the landlord so far as it is affected?—Rather on both. I say it is only just to the tenant that he should be repaid if he has added value to the land. The interest of the State overrides the inconvenience of what he ought to pay. It may be inconvenient to pay his just debt, but that added value is a just debt, and he ought to pay it.

56,359. You are prepared to face the situation, not only that it may be inconvenient to the landlord, but almost impossible for him to pay it?—Yes.

56,360. On the ground that the interest of the State is concerned. I merely wish to know if it is simply on the ground of justice to the tenant, or on the ground that the interest of the State here intervenes, and that it is the interest of the State and of the tenant, two of the three parties who are concerned, that you support the view that you have submitted, namely, that the tenant should have an absolutely free hand, and that he should be able to charge the land with a very considerable increase in value without the consent of the owner of the land himself; is that what you mean?—Yes, I say it is to the interest of both the tenant and the public that the land should be cultivated as well as possible, and that the utmost should be got out of it.

Cost of valuation.

56,361. (*Chairman.*) I presume you agree with the witnesses who have told this Commission that the process of determining the amount of compensation to be paid an outgoing tenant is, as a rule, expensive?—I think it is.

56,362. Do you think that it can be very much reduced, or will it always be an expensive process?—I am afraid it will be rather expensive; I think the charges are more than they need be at present.

56,363. Arising from the fact that both parties select an arbitrator, and the two select an umpire, so that three parties are engaged in the arbitration?—Yes.

56,364. And you think that that may be reduced?—Yes.

56,365. But you will admit that it will be more or less an expensive process?—It is rather an expensive process.

56,366. Especially with the somewhat wide character of things that you propose should be dealt with?—I do not think it need be any more expensive than now.

Compensation to sitting tenants.

56,367. Let us consider what will be the actual practical effect of your recommendation with reference to the sitting tenant. My own difficulty is, to see how it will really benefit a tenant who desires to have his rent reduced. Let us suppose that a tenant desires to have his rent reduced, and he has a difference with his landlord as to what the amount should be. According to you the tenant would give notice to quit, and, upon getting the notice to quit, those proceedings for the determination of the amount of compensation to be paid to the tenant would at once take place?—If they could not agree.

56,368. If no agreement has been come to?—Yes, if they do not come to any agreement.

56,369. If they do not come to any agreement, then those proceedings take place?—Yes.

56,370. That is what takes place now?—Now those proceedings do not come on till the man leaves his farm.

56,371. They take place when the tenant gives notice?—Hardly; unless he is leaving the farm they never take place till he has left.

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56,372. Now, those proceedings would take place immediately after giving notice to quit as a preliminary to further negotiations between the landlord and the tenant as to rent; is that not so?—I do not know that; it all depends. It would place the tenant in this position, that he would say to his landlord, "I want this reduction of rent;" if the landlord would not give it, the tenant would say, "I know that the farm may "be worth what I am paying, but it is my outlay that "makes it so; repay me my outlay, and then I will pay "the rent."

56,373. And then negotiate again?—Yes.

56,374. And in the meantime the tenant has given notice to quit?—Yes.

56,375. He can do that now?—But he cannot.

56,376. In what respect does it alter the law? The tenant now, if he is dissatisfied with his rent, has to give notice to quit, and upon giving notice to quit, just about the time of quitting his farm those proceedings for arbitration take place?—He has no right to have a valuation, or to receive compensation, unless he actually leaves.

56,377. Those proceedings generally take place before leaving, do they not?—But they do not take place unless he does actually leave.

56,378. Or a notice that he intends to leave?—I have never known a case except on leaving; generally it is a week after he leaves, rather than before.

56,379. At all events those proceedings have to take place, this expensive process for the determination of what is to be paid, the money has to be paid by the landlord, and the parties are in a position to negotiate again?—Yes.

56,380. And then when the negotiation has taken place and the agreement arrived at, the landlord has to receive back again from the tenant all that is due?—No.

56,381. He receives back again that portion of the compensation which is due to growing crops, and to the manure and cake?—Yes; tillages.

56,382. Tillages, and manures, and cake?—Yes under the present custom it would be so.

56,383. That would be at least four-fifths of the whole compensation?—Not always so much as that.

56,384. What will there remain?—Supposing the tenant had carried out that drainage clause——

56,385. Any permanent improvement like drainage he would be paid, but the ordinary improvements, such as the expenditure on cake or manures, all expenses relating to growing crops and fertilisers, and so forth, that would have to be repaid to the landlord by the tenant?—But you remember that I object to that incoming tenant paying——

56,386. That does not affect the question. The question is what is to be paid in the first instance by the landlord to the tenant, and what is to be repaid to the landlord by the tenant when they have come to some final arrangement as to the rent ——?—I beg your pardon. I hardly caught the question.

56,387. Well, this process is to be this: the tenant has to give notice to quit; upon that, if an agreement is not arrived at, there will be an arbitration as to what is to be paid between the landlord and the tenant; upon the completion of the arbitration, which will probably result in a considerable sum of money being awarded to the landlord, the two are then in a position to negotiate again?—Yes.

56,388. On the assumption that they agree as to what the rent will be, then the tenant will have to repay to the landlord a large portion, if not the whole—a considerable portion of that sum which has already, under your process, been paid by the landlord to the tenant?—I do not think he would. The landlord must bear the loss of that; he has given a higher rent.

56,389. I thought you admitted to the extent of tillage, and growing crops, and manures, and the cake, in respect of all which the incoming tenant, the old tenant, who is in the position of the incoming tenant, would get the benefit of, he would have to repay to the landlord?—He would the tillages; I do not know about the other things.

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56,390. But the question of the addition which has been given by putting in manures, feeding with cake, which is of a fugitive character, I assume, inasmuch as the incoming tenant would benefit and have an advantage from it, he would have to pay the value of that to the landlord?—I have been saying all through that I object to the tenant paying for it.

Payments by incoming tenants.

56,391. What, in your opinion, should the incoming tenant pay?—Pay—in what way?

56,392. When he comes into the farm?—Just for the ploughing that has been done, and the seed sown, and hay and straw and turnips left on the place.

56,393. And nothing for cake and manures?—No.

56,394. Although he may derive the whole benefit, and although the benefit may be of a fugitive character?—But he gets increased rent; everybody knows that a farm in high cultivation lets for more than a farm in a low condition.

56,395. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding the outgoing tenant and the landlord, are not they the two contracting parties only in respect to compensation?—The outgoing tenant and the landlord?

56,396. Yes; the incoming tenant has nothing to do with it?—No.

56,397. The incoming tenant pays rent upon the improved condition of the farm?—Yes.

56,398. And if he was asked by the landlord to pay again his share of it, the landlord is receiving rent for the improvement, and he will be paid twice over?—And he does in practice, and the incoming tenants do in practice pay twice over.

56,399. And all these improvements from cakes and manures are quite different from tillages?—Yes.

56,400. They stand in a very different class?—Yes.

56,401. So that an incoming tenant both pays a high rent, and is called upon by the landlord to pay him what he has received through the increased rent?—He ought not, because he pays for the manures.

56,402. That is the practical outcome of it; it is an undue burden put upon the incoming tenant, and very often cripples him in carrying on the farm?—Mind, the difficulty is that all tenants paid it when they went in, and therefore they ought to receive it when they come out, or else I say that no payment should be made; that you should keep the farm up to its value.

56,403. There have been several questions put to you by Mr. Chaplin regarding the farm falling in rent, the whole value; but would it not be that the increased value to the holding is given by the improvements of the tenant. If the improvements had not been made even with the falling rent, the farm would naturally have fallen more if it had been left in a state of poverty?—I think I have always used the words "the increased value."

56,404. Not the letting value?—I have used the words "the increased value."

56,405. Several witnesses have used the words "the letting value"?—But the increased value should mean the same whether it raises it to what it was before or keeps it from falling below.

56,406. If a farm does fall through even with good improvements, it would fall further from a meagre hand not using improvements?—Yes.

56,407. (*Mr. Little.*) You said in answer to Mr. Chaplin that if a man takes a farm in a high condition, he pays a higher rent?—Yes.

56,408. It follows from that, that if he takes it in poor condition, he takes it at a lower rent?—Yes; than in a high condition.

56,409. He takes it at a lower rent in consequence of its being in a bad condition?—Yes.

56,410. Is he not compensated in the lower rent for that bad condition?—No, he takes it on the rent that it is worth at the time.

56,411. In its then condition?—Yes.

56,412. I suppose he gets allowed a sum for putting it into condition, does he not, in taking it at a lower rent—he is allowed a sum which is required to put it into good condition?—I do not know that he does. As a rule, the man takes the farm for what it is worth at the time in the condition in which it is; if he brings it into better condition, he does it by the expenditure of his own money or his own outlay in some way or other.

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Permanent improvements by tenants.

56,413. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you say what are the particular improvements that you think farmers ought to be allowed in your district now to carry out and get compensation, for which they do not get compensation at present?—I should allow them to carry out any improvements.

56,414. Can you state the particular improvements, in respect of which they suffer from a grievance, that are not carried out? Are there any improvements that they would carry out with compensation?—I do not know that I should like to lay down any particular grounds. As a rule, they get their landlord's consent, but if they do not, they do not make the improvements.

56,415. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is not laying down permanent pasture an improvement?—That is one improvement; that is sometimes done, and would be done more. I know many cases where it has been laid down to grass, and on another man entering, it has been ploughed up.

56,416. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Cannot you specify the particular improvements?—No.

56,417. Could you say that there is anything besides permanent pasture?—Simply continuous good farming, which is never compensated for.

Compensation to outgoing tenants.

56,418. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I should like to ask one or two questions arising out of an answer to Mr. Channing. I understand you to say that the landlord is to pay that part of the tenant right which consists of cake and manures?—I should say that the landlord must pay for what adds to the letting value of the farm.

56,419. Is he to pay for the cake and manure if it adds to the letting value of the farm?—Yes, to the letting value of the farm.

56,420. Then you contend that having done that, he is to make a bargain to recoup himself by the rent?—To make a bargain to let the land for what it is worth.

56,421. And in that respect he will recoup himself for the compensation that he has paid?—Yes.

56,422. What is the rent of your farm now?—It is now 16*s.* per acre.

56,423. What does your cake and manure bill come to in the course of a year in round numbers. You spend a great deal, or you would not grow such good crops?—No, I do not; I am rather moderate in that way. My cake bill would be perhaps 200*l.* a year, and my manure I do not think would come to 30*l.* a year. I use hardly any artificial manures. Mine is one of those cases in which, by fairly good farming, I am keeping my land in fairly good condition, without much outlay for which I could claim compensation.

56,424. Take the case of a big sheep farmer on very heavy land, which runs, in these days, to 5*s.* or 10*s.* an acre; under those circumstances, the outlay upon cake and manures would be very much greater than on the land where the farming is well done?—Possibly.

56,425. That we quite admit. Under those circumstances, if a landlord has had to pay all this as compensation to the tenant, and it is to be paid by him, what on earth is the inducement to let the farm at all? Is not he almost compelled, under those circumstances, having made all this outlay, having spent the money by which the crops have been produced and paid for it himself, would it not appear more to his interest to farm it himself, rather than to let it to anybody else?—I do not see that.

56,426. Why?—Naturally an incoming tenant would pay more rent where the land is in good condition.

56,427. Would he pay a sufficiently increased rent to recoup the landlord for that heavy compensation, when the compensation is more than three or four times the rent?—It would be only once; the outgoing tenant not having paid on coming would not get paid before going out.

56,428. You have not told us that before?—That is quite so.

56,429. Do you think that the tenant who went out on this proposal, afterwards having spent a great deal on cake and manures, which would add to the value, would be satisfied without getting anything?—If it added to the value, that is another thing.

56,430. But you said without any reserve, that if the tenant had not paid for those when he came in, he would not get anything when he went out?—He has to be paid for anything that adds to the value, but if

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he only keeps it up to the condition in which he took it, he would not be entitled to claim anything.

56,431. It comes to this, that in a vast number of cases the existing tenant farmers would not be entitled to get the compensation which they now receive, and of which they are absolutely assured, for cake and manure; but it would depend entirely upon the new arrangements, by which a great many of them would be deprived of it altogether?—A great many of our tenant farmers do get a great deal more than they are entitled to.

56,432. You advocate that, not so much in the interest of the farmers, as in the interest of the general public?—Advocate what?

56,433. Your proposals?—I advocate it in the case of justice to all.

56,434. You told me that you think, under your proposals, it is more than probable that a great many tenant farmers would not get compensation either for cake or manures?—The bad farmers would leave their farms, and they would not get compensation, and they ought not to get it.

56,435. That you advocate then in the general interests of the public?—I advocate that as justice even justice as between man and man.

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56,436. I thought you told Lord Rendel that you advocate it in the interests of the State?—Not quite.

56,437. You advocate them solely and simply in the interests of justice. Is not the tenant, in regard to the consumption of cake, very greatly compensated before he leaves his farm by the increased value which it has given to the stock?—I do not know about that. Of course, he is compensated as he goes on; he gets it returned.

56,438. When he has fed his stock in that way, he gets a better price for them, and he is partially repaid, is he not?—Unless he has added to the increased value of the farm, I say he is not entitled to anything for manures.

56,439. I understand your views, but I think that they would be very unsatisfactory to a very great many farmers of my acquaintance?—That may be.

56,440. (*Chairman.*) What is the name of your union?—Wellingborough.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. Britten.

Mr. Richard Britten called and examined.

Mr. R. Britten.

56,441. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer in Northamptonshire?—Yes.

56,442. You farm on a large scale?—I have 1,000 acres. I commenced to farm in March 1857, not the whole of it, part of it.

56,443. As a tenant?—As a tenant.

Reduction of rents.

56,444. Has the rent been considerably reduced in consequence of the depression?—It has.

56,445. What has the reduction been?—Previous to 1880, I will not call it the exact year, but about that time, for part of my holding I was paying 56*s.* an acre. That was the part that I entered upon in 1857; for another part I was paying 50*s.* per acre.

56,446. And what has been the reduction?—About 1880 I had a reduction of 15 per cent., a few years after that I had a reduction of another 15 per cent.; and those two per-centages have become permanent.

56,447. (*Mr. Channing.*) Since when?—Since 1880.

56,448. When were they made permanent I mean?—Seven years ago. I think it would be. Since then the tenants on Lord and Lady Wantage's estate for some half years have had a return of 15 per cent., and for some other half years 20 per cent.

56,449. (*Mr. Little.*) On the reduced rent?—On the reduced rent.

56,450. (*Chairman.*) The permanent reductions were 30 per cent?—Approaching that.

56,451. And beyond that there have been temporary reductions of from 15 to 20 per cent.?—Some half years 15 per cent., others 20 per cent.

56,452. But those have not been converted into permanent reductions?—No, but they are reductions.

Nature of farms.

56,453. What is the nature of your farms, arable or grazing farms?—About half and half.

56,454. Is it good grazing land?—Yes, fairly good grazing land.

56,455. For the feeding of cattle?—It is all applied for that purpose, the feeding of cattle.

56,456. I suppose, but for a large part of it being grazing land the reduction would have been still greater?—All the tenants have been treated pretty much alike on those large estates.

56,457. Have you heard the evidence given by the last witness from Northamptonshire?—I have.

56,458. Do you generally agree, or are there points on which you agree?—I do not altogether agree with him.

56,459. Perhaps you will state the points on which you do not altogether agree?—If you would excuse me I would rather be examined separately on my own proof.

Judicial rents.

56,460. Is there any feeling in your district in favour of the arbitration on rents?—No, not very much so.

56,461. Are you in favour yourself of the judicial determination of rents?—No, I am not.

56,462. You consider, on the whole, it is better to leave it to negotiation between landlord and tenant?—I think the landlord and tenant should make a bargain for themselves.

56,463. Do you think that is the general view of the farmers in your district?—I should say so.

56,464. Are you a member of the County Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes, I am.

56,465–6. Has there been a discussion there on the subject of judicial rents?—Well, I am afraid I have not been a very good attendant, I am afraid not.

56,467. It has been represented by Mr. Hunter Pringle, who has reported on the district that although the tenant farmers generally are not in favour of judicial rents in the strict sense of the term, yet that they are in favour of some process of arbitration as between landlord and tenant of a compulsory character, including the subject of rent. The difference, I understand, is that he considers that judicial rents would involve an open and public inquiry, whereas the arbitration in rents, in his sense, would be merely a private inquiry as between landlord and tenant, but not open to the public. Now, do you think that there is any feeling, so far as you are aware, in favour of that second process?—No, from friends whom I have talked to on the subject I think they are satisfied with the landlord and tenant making a bargain for themselves without any interference.

Reduction of rents.

56,468. You think, on the whole, the reductions of rent in your district have been adequate and reasonable?—Well, they have varied very much. I know instances where landlords have not remitted any of the rent.

56,469. Not any?—I know of instances.

56,470. But taking the average of cases?—Taking the average of cases there have been reductions.

56,471. (*Mr. Clay.*) Are there landlords who have not given reductions?—I know of landlords who have not given any reductions whatever.

56,472. And kept their tenants starving?—Well——

56,473. (*Chairman.*) They have kept their tenants in such cases?—Well, the instance I am speaking of is rather exceptional.

(*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think the witness said first of all that there was one instance he knew of, and then he was asked the question, and he said instances, perhaps he had better correct that.

(*Witness.*) I know of instances where there have been no reductions, or very trifling reductions. I know of 10 per cent., as little as 10 per cent., and I know of one instance where there has been no reduction whatever;

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it is rather an exceptional case, although it is rather a large tract of land.

56,474. (*Chairman.*) In that case has the landlord kept his tenants?—Well, no, I should say not.

56,475. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has the new tenant given the old rent for the farm?—Yes.

56,476. (*Chairman.*) Do you say that the new tenants have given the old rent?—They have.

Demand for farms.

56,477. Is there a demand for farms in your district?—It is not great.

56,478. Where the farm is vacant is it possible to find a tenant?—I do not know of any land unlet at the present time; I might say there is very little on the landlords' hands at present.

56,479. Very little?—Very little.

56,480. And generally the land is occupied?—The bulk of it. I do not know of a farm that is actually lying waste.

56,481. (*Mr. Channing.*) On whose estate are you?—Lord and Lady Wantage's.

56,482. (*Chairman.*) Have you any recommendations to make yourself?—No, I do not know that I have any particular recommendations to make.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

56,483. On the subject of the Agricultural Holdings Act are there any amendments that you would suggest?—No, the Agricultural Holdings Act has had very little effect as far as I know.

56,484. By having very little effect, I presume you mean that there have been very few cases between the landlord and tenant arising from it?—I think not.

56,485. I suppose as a general rule the question of compensation as between the outgoing and the incoming tenant is settled between themselves?—Yes.

56,486. And they do not resort to the Act except in cases of severe dispute?—Extreme cases.

56,487. It does not follow from that that the Act may not to some extent guide the position of arbitrators as between the incoming tenant and the outgoing tenant?—As far as I can speak I do not think much of it.

56,488. Can you suggest any alterations or amendments in it?—No, I do not know that I can.

Assessment to rates.

56,489. On the question of rates, has the assessment of your land been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent?—It has.

56,490. Is that generally the case?—Yes, rent is taken as a basis of the rating.

56,491. But the rates are not reduced when temporary abatements are made?—No, they are not. The permanent reductions are allowed for, but not the temporary abatements.

Rates.

56,492. What is the general course of the rates in your district?—My rates are something like 3*s.* in the pound.

56,493. Have they risen or been about the same?—They have not varied very much.

56,494. Then the actual burden is somewhat less than it was because your assessment is reduced?—Yes, rather so. Of course the assessment is reduced.

56,495. Are there any other matters that you would desire to speak about?—Living, as I do, near my land, and being near the town, our labour bill is very heavy.

Wages.

56,496. Have the wages of labour increased or diminished?—They have increased very much; they have increased to the employer very considerably.

56,497. What has the increase been?—I will put it in this way; previous to 1871 we were paying our labourers 2*s.* a day; that means 4*s.* a day for two men. Now we pay half-a-crown a day, and that will be 7*s.* 6*d.* a day for three men, and I do not think we get so much work done for the 7*s.* 6*d.* as for the 4*s.*

56,498. When did the rise take place?—In 1871.

56,499. And there has been no decrease again since then?—There has been a slight decrease, but the general wage round my neighbourhood is half-a-crown a day.

56,500. What is the town you are near?—Northampton.

56,501. How far from that?—It joins Northampton.

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56,502. On that account the rent of your land is kept up, and the reductions are not so heavy as compared with other districts?—The reductions have been pretty general—pretty much the same on the whole of the estate to which I belong: in some cases it is more.

56,503 (*Mr. Channing.*) You are on the Overstone portion of it?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farm.

56,504. (*Mr. Little.*) You have a farm which is very different in character to that which Mr. Nunneley has?—My part is the plough portion of Overstone; it is turnip and barley land.

56,505. Very good red land, not only turnip and barley land, but I believe it grows good wheat as well?—That is so.

56,506. And you have a lot of good grass land, and you have a great number of bullocks?—I have.

56,507. And it is commonly known that you are an excellent chooser of cattle, and you buy them in for grazing?—Yes, and then they are sold out.

56,508. You have been in this occupation for a very long time. Have you of late years found it a profitable business?—Certainly not, very unprofitable.

56,509. I do not want to ask any close questions, but, generally, you have not found it a profitable business?—I have not.

56,510. Employing ample capital, having an exceptionally good farm, in a very good position, and paying the closest attention to business, you have not found it a successful and remunerative business?—I have worked as hard as any man, and I flatter myself that I know my business as well as any other man. In the ordinary course of business I ought to take something handsome from my business every year, and in fact it only keeps a man of inexpensive habits like myself.

56,511. Your living does not cost you a large percentage on the capital you employ?—Very little indeed.

56,512. If you put your money into the funds you would be just as well off?—I should be better off.

56,513. You have an excellent landlord?—I have.

56,514. And a well equipped farm, and every advantage that a man could have?—I entered under exceptional circumstances; on one farm I succeeded my uncle. From the time of my entering they were in an excellent state of cultivation, and I have endeavoured ever since I held them to keep them so.

Agreements.

56,515. You have a printed agreement, which is in force, on the Overstone estate?—I have.

56,516. And does that agreement specify the compensation which will be given to you at quitting, or does it leave it to the custom of the country?—It does not specify.

56,517. It leaves it to the custom of the country?—It does.

56,518. What is the time of entry in your district; is it April?—Michaelmas.

56,519. At quitting what would custom give you?—I have never quitted land that I once took.

56,520. You know what the tenants get by custom?—They get compensation for cake.

56,521. Under the custom?—Yes, under the custom.

56,522. And they do now, notwithstanding the Agricultural Holdings Act?—They do now. I beg your pardon, I said I never quit land; I recently gave up 50 acres of land to the Borough of Northampton; it is all grass land. On quitting I received compensation for anything that I used the previous two years.

56,523. Did you make a claim under the Act?—I did not. It was done between the landlord and myself, it was a mutual arrangement.

56,524. You are probably aware that you had no legal claim?—I was aware of it.

Payments by incoming tenants.

56,525. You have heard the evidence of Mr. Nunneley on this point, and I think you said that you do not altogether agree with his views. Do you see anything unfair in an incoming tenant paying for that which he has the immediate use and disposal of. When a tenant quits a farm and he has a claim for compensation for cake and manures, the incomer enters at once upon the enjoyment of that, does he not?—I think a tenant should be compensated for cake.

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56,526. Oh yes?—And manures that he has used.

56,527. Who is to pay for it?—The incoming tenant.

56,528. You think there is nothing unfair in the incoming tenant paying for the manure which he has to use and dispose of?—I think that he should do so.

56,529. Would not he be able to exhaust it if he chooses to?—Yes.

56,530. Supposing the landlord pays for manures, could he get a rent which would compensate him for what was paid to the outgoing tenant?—When an incoming tenant takes a farm he is guided very much as to the condition in which it is in.

56,531. No doubt; but what I wish you to consider is this: you say it is perfectly fair for an incoming tenant to pay for the cake and manure?—Yes.

56,532. Supposing it were made the law, that the incoming tenant should not pay, and that the landlord should pay, could the landlord secure the manure remaining in the land—could not the tenant exhaust it?—Certainly, he could exhaust it.

56,533. Would not the landlord have rather a risky position if he had to pay for it, and the tenant had not?—He would, certainly.

56,534. Would the tenant give a sufficiently increased rent under those circumstances to make the landlord secure. Do you mind telling us what you got for your 47 acres?—I believe I had 84*l.*

56,535. That being grass land it would not be so easy to exhaust; but if it had been plough land, it might be exhausted in two or three years?—It might.

56,536. And that 84*l.* would, if exhausted in three years, make a very considerable addition to the rent, would not it?—Certainly.

56,537. The landlord ought to get a very great increase of rent?—Yes.

56,538. Would he practically be secured if compelled to pay to the outgoing tenant?—I do not see how he could.

56,539. You do not see anything unfair in a tenant paying for what he has the use of?—No.

Reductions of rent.

56,540. (*Mr. Channing.*) I think you said you had 30 per cent. in the way of permanent reductions, besides 15 per cent., or thereabouts, of abatements from time to time?—First, 15 per cent., and then 15 per cent. on the reduction—it would not mean quite 30 per cent. Since that time, the last few years, we have had a reduction, some half-years 15 per cent., and sometimes 20 per cent.

56,541. Does it mean that you have been paying rather more than half the rent you began with?—Yes, that is it.

56,542. Is your land very near Northampton?—Yes, part of my land joins and runs up to the town, and part of it is three miles away.

56,543. Do you do any dairy work?—I do not dairy, except for my own private use.

56,544. You say the reductions are uniform on that estate?—Yes, some are more than others.

56,545. Subject to conditions, what should you say were the reductions on other estates in that neighbourhood?—I do not think any of them give greater reductions: there are solitary cases, but I do not think that any landlords have given greater reductions than Lord Wantage.

56,546. What do you put the average reduction in the county at? Would it be over 40 per cent.?—No, I should not think so.

56,547. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you think there has been as big a reduction as 40 per cent. in the county?—Yes, and greater in some cases.

56,548. (*Mr. Channing.*) In some cases there was no reduction at all?—I know of cases, and I know of others where there has been only 10 per cent. in my own immediate neighbourhood.

56,549. Do you find a difference in the reduction to a new tenant and to an old tenant if he applies for a reduction; I do not ask you about Lord Wantage's estate?—There are cases where new tenants have had greater reduction than the old ones have been offered.

56,550. Do you think that these cases constitute a hardship to the old tenant?—I think myself that the old tenants should have as fair a chance as the new ones.

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56,551. The rents ought to be in some reasonable proportion to the cost of the operation and the price of the produce?—Certainly.

Payments by incoming tenants.

56,552. (*Mr. Dalton.*) We were told just now that when the incoming tenant paid compensation for cake and manure he paid twice over, because he also paid an increased rent. Do you agree with that statement?—I do not see how he can be paying twice over.

56,553. Does not he take into account, when he pays the rent, the fact that he will have to pay compensation for cakes and manure?—Of course he does.

56,554. And you do not agree with the statement that he pays twice over?—I do not see how he can pay twice over.

56,555. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) As this matter of compensation for the sitting tenant was part of what was proposed by the previous witness, I would ask you, would not that entail these valuations being made at a very early date, in fact, a good time before the termination of the tenancy?—It would.

56,556. So as to allow the landlord an opportunity of re-letting the farm if they failed to agree?—Quite so.

56,557. That would be a great practical difficulty in carrying out such an arrangement?—I should say it would be difficult.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

56,558. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you say you would suggest any alterations in the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No, I would not wish to say anything about that.

56,559. Have you had any experience of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Very little. I have not studied it very much.

56,560. So that you are not qualified to speak about it?—I would rather not say anything on that subject.

56,561. You give that opinion simply because you do not know the Act?—I would rather not go into the question.

56,562. (*Mr. Channing.*) You have been in the fortunate position of being nearly 40 years on the same farm and under the same landlord?—I have.

56,563. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have not studied the Act in any way to give an opinion?—I would rather not answer that question.

Reduction of rent.

56,564. You say that some of your farmers have not got reductions from some proprietors?—I know of a case where there has been no reduction, and I know of others where there has been only 10 per cent.

56,565. And still you say that these farmers are going on and being succeeded by farmers that are paying the same rent?—The landlord I speak of who has made no reduction I might have said it was land lying very near the town, and a great deal of it is let as accommodation land.

56,566. And at the same time you told us that your trade in farming has been not at all profitable?—It has not. It has paid very poor interest on the capital I employ.

56,567. If you had not got the 30 per cent. reduction where would you have been?—I would have been in the workhouse.

56,568. What has become of those farmers that have got no reduction?—They fare very badly—many men fare very badly.

56,569. I suppose those in the workhouse fare very badly, and this farming business is bringing men very near to starvation point?—Many men are in a desperate state as regards their circumstances.

56,570. So that when I put it as near starvation point that was not an exaggeration?—Not at all. Many men are.

Compensation for improvements.

56,571. When you say that you got compensation for leaving some grass land you got 84*l.*, I think?—I did. That was an arrangement between myself and the landlord.

56,572. How much do you think you increased the value of that land by your labour and cakes and manuring that entitled you to 84*l.*?—There is no doubt that the using of cake upon grass land makes it capable of carrying more stock all the time that it is capable of carrying any stock.

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56,573. And then the landlord would get an increased rent when he came to let that grass land, would not he?—I do not know about that.

56,574. Would not you give more for a grass field that would carry more stock than a field that would carry fewer?—Certainly.

56,575. Would not you pay more rent for that?—Certainly, in the case of a fresh entry it would command a higher rent if the land was in fine condition rather than in poor condition.

56,576. Your cakes have made it all the more valuable?—Certainly.

56,577. Where would that go to? Would it be the landlord's profit?—It would be worth more to a new tenant.

56,578. I am not talking about the tenants, I am talking about the landlord. Would not that go into the landlord's pocket—into the rent-roll?—It would be a benefit to the landlord.

56,579. Would not the rent go into the landlord's pocket if he got more for that field? That is a simple question?—It is a simple question.

56,580. Where would it go to?—As far as I know on the estate where I am, the advantage has not been taken on that footing.

56,581. We are talking about that grass field; the increased value of that field, with the good caking and good management, would not that go into the landlord's pocket?—As far as that field is concerned, I am still a tenant, and I pay a less rent than before.

56,582. They took this field from you?—I am still tenant.

56,583. What did you get that 84*l.* for?—I got 84*l.* from my late landlord as regards that concern. The land I speak of now belongs to the Corporation of Northampton. It was taken from my farm for a public park.

56,584. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) And you have hired it from them?—Yes, and I pay less rent than before.

56,585. (*Mr. Little.*) You are subject to the disadvantage that they have made it into a park?—Yes; they have the right of entry.

56,586. (*Mr. Clay.*) The land was increased in value by your cake, or you would not have got the 84*l.*, and it has gone into your hands with some disadvantages, but you got the money for the increased value?—I got the compensation.

56,587. (*Mr. Little.*) Suppose this land would make an increased rent at the moment when it was turned over, would it continue to command that rent if you ceased to put on cake?—I should say not.

56,588. That increased fertility would soon disappear?—It would soon go back.

56,589. (*Mr. Clay.*) How long would it be before it disappeared?—It would show that it was differently treated in the course of three or four years.

56,590. Still you got 84*l.* for the four years, so you are well off?—I got my money.

56,591. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What you have got as compensation is this 84*l.* for the grass land, which would be the usual practice under similar circumstances in your part of the country?—This was a severance. This land was taken from my farm, and because it injured the rest of the farm I was given this compensation as a sort of leaving the land—compensation for the severance.

56,592. But if the severance had been taken from anyone else, would he not have been entitled, and probably have got somewhat similar compensation?—I should say so.

Tenure.

56,593. What do you hold under, a written agreement?—I do, a yearly tenancy.

56,594. Are written agreements common in Northamptonshire?—Yes.

56,595. And they are made voluntary between the landlord and the tenant themselves?—Between the landlord and tenant themselves.

56,596. As a matter of fact, in these days, when in many parts of the country landlords find very great difficulty in getting suitable tenants, or desirable tenants, for their farms, is not it the fact, as far as you know, that tenants are in a position to make very favourable agreements themselves?—Certainly, they are at the present time.

56,597. They are rather masters of the situation than otherwise?—I should say so.

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56,598. Has there been any great difficulty, in your recollection, of making fair terms in taking a farm?—I think not.

56,599. Tenants, as a rule, have been enabled to take care of themselves?—I think so. I am strongly of opinion that the landlord and tenant should make agreements themselves without outside interference.

56,600. You think, as a rule, when agreements are made on these terms between themselves they turn out more satisfactorily than if the law were always interfering on hard and fast lines with them?—It makes the parties more agreeable with each other.

56,601. As far as you know, is there any substantial grievance among farmers in Northamptonshire upon the ground that they cannot make fair agreements?—I think not.

56,602. That is your experience?—That is my experience.

56,603. And I understand you have been in Northampton for 40 years?—Close upon it; I was born there, but I have been farming on my own account since 1857.

56,604. You have a very wide experience of the farmers in Northamptonshire?—Yes, I know a great many.

56,605. And you know the circumstances of agriculture in that county?—I have a pretty good knowledge of the state of things in that county.

Low prices.

56,606. According to the answers to questions which have been put to you, you do not find any substantial grievance upon the grounds which we have been discussing this afternoon?—Not as regards those grievances, the great grievance is the lowness of prices.

56,607. Is that the real cause of agricultural depression, in your opinion?—Certainly.

56,608. Do you see any prospect of substantial improvement in agriculture by any changes that could be made in the law unless there is some change in prices at the same time?—I do not see in these days how legislation could artificially advance prices.

56,609. But do you see how legislation could artificially improve the present position of agriculture; make a real improvement in the present depression of agriculture, unless there is some rise of prices?—I do not see that we can be benefited substantially without an advance of prices.

56,610. You see great difficulty in bringing about a rise of prices?—I do.

56,611. But your view is that unless there is such a rise we have no reason to look forward, with any certainty at all, to any improvement in the agricultural situation?—I think the whole question hinges upon better prices.

56,612. Quite irrespective of anything that might be done by the Agricultural Holdings Act, or tenure, or anything else?—All that I can see in the way of legislation would be some relief in rates and taxes. I do not see what other sources we can get relief from or look to.

56,613. In many parts of the country it has got altogether beyond the question of rent, has it not?—It has.

56,614. Further reductions of rent by itself, as far as I understand you, would not be sufficient to remove depression?—No, it would not.

56,615. It might help in individual cases where the land is good, and will bear a further reduction?—Where the land is good; but there is some land which could not be cultivated at present prices, even without rent.

56,616. It cannot be cultivated except at a loss even without rent at present prices?—That would be so.

Price of wheat.

56,617. We were told by the last witness that he thought even paying the rent on his farm—I understood him to say where he grew wheat, it could be made to pay at 30*s.* per quarter, do you agree with that?—I certainly could not do it, and I grow wheat and barley, and if my corn does not average 2*l.* per quarter, it is no use to me.

56,618. Are you acquainted with his farm?—I know the locality quite well.

56,619. Are we to suppose then that your farm is not so good as his?—I should say mine is the best of the two, I should say so.

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56,620. What rent do you pay?—At one time I paid for one farm 50*s*. per acre, and for another 50*s*. per acre. Since, I have had a 15 per cent., and then another 15 per cent. abatement which has become permanent, and the last few years we have had a further reduction, some half years of 20 and others 15 per cent.

56,621. Could you grow wheat at 30*s*. per quarter with any reasonable reduction of rent that could be made?—I do not think and I do not believe that anyone with that alone could.

Reduction of rent.

56,622. You pointed out the case of some men in Northamptonshire, who have got no reduction of rent, and you said their case was very hard indeed, and they were in great straits and great difficulty at the present time, is that so?—It is so.

56,623. Have they asked for reductions and been refused?—They have.

56,624. And why have they consented to remain at a rent that they cannot pay, what has there been in their cases to prevent their giving up their farm?—It is difficult to say why; they cling to them, and hold to them having belonged to them so long.

56,625. That is a point which I want to have even more information upon if we can get it, because clearly a man who is occupying a farm at a rent at which he cannot make his holding pay, is in a very unfortunate and very disadvantageous position. Unless there was some very strong inducement to the contrary you would think that under those circumstances a man would give up the farm?—Yes, and go somewhere else.

56,626. Yes, what is to prevent their taking that course?—It is a very difficult question to answer; you know the nature of farmers, they cling to their old places.

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56,627. Is it because they have invested capital in the farm which they think they will lose to a great extent and for which they think they would not get compensation if they do go?—I am afraid that where the men have got poor the land has got exceedingly poor too.

56,628. So that they would not be entitled to compensation?—Not much.

56,629. If they had had something to claim then perhaps they might go?—Perhaps they might.

56,630. (*Mr. Little.*) They would tumble to pieces if they moved?—Yes.

56,631. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is, say, they have got no capital left, and if they went to another place they would not have the money for another farm?—That is so.

56,632. They do not pay the rent and get very much into arrears?—I am afraid a great many manage to get into arrears.

56,633. (*Mr. Clay.*) You say that farmers are the masters of the situation?—I say that the farmers are in a better position to make an agreement with the landlord now than they were.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. G. W. Finn.

Mr. George W. Finn called and examined.

Mr. G. W. Finn.

56,634. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You are an auctioneer and valuer at Faversham?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farms.

56,635. And you also farm a large number of acres?—Fairly large.

56,636. What number?—Over 2,000 acres.

56,637. You have got 2,500 acres down in your proof?—It is about that, I do not know to a hundred or two.

56,638. Have you had it for long?—Yes, 20 years.

56,639. Does any portion of that belong to yourself?—Yes, about 200 acres.

56,640. Two hundred acres of your own, and how much of pasture and the rest?—Out of the lot there are 1,500 acres in pasture.

56,641. And how many in hops?—Something under 200 acres.

56,642. (*Mr. Little.*) Is it in the marsh?—I have some in the Romney Marsh, but the bulk of it is close to Faversham.

56,643. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is it scattered?—Yes, and the marsh to which you allude is 30 miles.

56,644. Is that your own?—No, that is not mine.

Existence of depression.

56,645. Have you felt yourself and have your fellow tenant farmers in the neighbourhood felt the effects of the depression?—Yes, very much.

56,646. What do you attribute it to?—You sell everything you grow at less than it costs you to produce.

56,647. And therefore much capital must go from the tenants?—Nearly all of it.

Uncultivated land.

56,648. Is there much land out of cultivation?—Considerable.

56,649. On which there are no tenants?—No tenants at all.

56,650. That is, landlords cannot find tenants, I suppose?—There is a good deal besides which the landlords have on their own hands—it has not gone out of cultivation.

Land in hand.

56,651. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you say a good deal has gone out of cultivation?—There are some farms out of cultivation, and a good deal that the landlords are cultivating in the best way they can.

56,652. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And for those farms they would gladly find tenants?—Yes.

56,653. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) At any rent?—No rent at all.

56,654. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What do you attribute the want of tenants to; is there no capital going into farming?—The capital is all gone.

56,655. And are there no fresh tenants who have money?—Well, they fight rather shy of investing in farming.

56,656. Has the land on the landlord's hands increased in extent during the last two or three years?—It increases every year.

56,657. You do not see any stoppage to that at present?—I should think there will be more than ever this year.

56,658. (*Mr. Little.*) On those high-lying inland in the chalk?—No, all kinds of land. I think the heavy corn-growing land is as bad as any.

Land laid down to grass.

56,659. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Has much land been laid down to grass?—Yes; what the landlords have on their own hand they put most of down to grass.

56,660. Laying it down after cultivation, and putting in the seeds, or letting it tumble down?—They put it down as well as they can when they have capital to do it with.

Rural depopulation.

56,661. And what has been the consequence of that as regards the labour?—The labourers have to leave the villages; I went through a village the other day where I had a farm myself—one of the Commissioners knows it—and I saw lots of empty cottages. I farmed there 30 years ago, and I could not get cottages at any price for half a dozen men for my own farm.

56,662. Have those labourers who have left received less wages?—The old men go into the workhouses and the young ones into the towns.

56,663. There is some labour?—Yes.

56,664. Have you more to pay for that?—No, about the same.

56,665. Although the labourers themselves have decreased very much in number you have to pay equal wages to what you did some time ago?—About the same.

56,666. In this state of things have the tradesmen in the villages suffered at all?—Oh yes, the millers have gone all to smash, and the mills are closed, and other people struggle on the best way they can, but they all suffer.

Position of landlords.

56,667. As regards the landlords, have they been obliged to leave their mansions and go elsewhere?—There is scarcely any resident landlord in Kent now; the mansions are standing empty or let to others.

56,668. I suppose, being near London, a good many of them are let?—A good many are let. They do let, and most of them get something for them.

Hop-growing.

56,669. As regards your experience with the 200 acres of hops, have you grown them for long?—Yes, I have grown 200 acres of hops for 30 years.

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56,670. What are the effects of foreign competition now?—Well, it looks like ruining the industry altogether now.

56,671. Have you many hop gardens dug up or done away with in your neighbourhood?—I think something like 20,000 acres less than there were, according to the official figures.

56,672. Do you mean in the district?—No, the whole kingdom.

56,673. But in your immediate district do you know of land that was hop grounds now put to some other cultivation?—I should say in my immediate neighbourhood that it has not decreased; certainly, it has been rather more favoured for hop growing than some other places, and the worst must go first.

56,674. Perhaps you grow a very good quality of hops?—Yes, a very good quality.

56,675. And therefore you do not feel the depression so much as in other places?—We felt it about three or four years ago, and we had a little revival, but last year was frightfully bad, and this looks like being worse.

Employment of labour.

56,676. As the hop-grounds go out of cultivation so much less labour is used?—That is the serious part of it. I took the trouble to look up my wages bill on my grazing business, and I found that I paid, in 1894, in wages 78*l*., and the same year, on arable land with hops, the wages came to over 3,000*l*.

56,677. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the acreage of that last farm?—240 acres, and the wages were just over 3,000*l*.

56,678. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) And that with pasture came to 78*l*.?—Yes; on that one farm of 240 acres the labour came to 3,010*l*. for the year, and the grazing farm of 250 acres 78*l*. 13*s*.

56,679. But of those 240 acres, how much were hops?—About 90 acres.

56,680. That is a very heavy amount for labour, is it not?—I thought so.

56,681. On the arable land is there any spade cultivation?—No.

56,682. And no market-gardening?—No.

56,683. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The labour on hops is very heavy?—Yes, and upon another farm of 140 acres I paid 1,898*l*.; and I could give you other instances of a similar kind.

56,684. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is it mainly the hops?—Yes.

56,685. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think it is the case that the cultivation of hops employs more labour, does it not, than almost any other growing product, taking the whole year through?—Any that I know of; there may be some kinds of fruit plantations that may be more, but I do not know of any.

56,686. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is reckoned to be about the cost of the cultivation of hops per acre?—About 50*l*.

56,687. That is including the picking and packing of the crop?—Yes, if you get a fair crop it costs 50*l*.; that is so. I think that it is a serious matter if the hop industry fails, it is worse than anything. There are three farms that join this one that I mention, and there are two others near mine, and mine is not the only case. There are others, I think there are three of us altogether, who pay 9,000*l*. in wages every year that we grow hops. Then, I might say, in my case I do not grow much fruit, but the fruit that I do grow I sell it on the trees, so that I do not pay the labour on that, and I grow early peas for the markets.

56,688. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) The actual labour all comes from the neighbourhood, does it not?—Everything comes from there.

56,689. Although you sell the fruit on the trees the labour comes from the neighbourhood?—But it is not included in this 3,000*l*.; I grow early peas, and a couple of hundred people are engaged, and I do not pay them; I sell that at so much per acre, and that would be added to the 3,000*l*., and I have cabbages and other things; I do not market any of them.

Cause of depression.

56,690. Have you suffered much from bad seasons?—Yes, we suffered a good deal last year from the wet, and almost as much the year before from the drought.

56,691. But the chief cause of losing the money, or the little money you make, is that the prices are so low?—That is just it; you cannot produce it at the price; that is the secret of it.

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Rates.

56,692. As regards rates and taxes, and tithes, have you anything to say about that? Are they higher than they were, or very much the same?—As the rents come down, of course, the assessments are altered, and your rateable value is lowered, but they have to raise quite as much or rather more every year, so that it has to be kept up some way. Those people who do not get their rating down pay more—I do not think there is much difference.

56,693. But you have not gone into the rating question?—No, I have not much time for it.

Railway rates.

56,694. Have you anything to say as regards railway rates?—Yes, I think that they ought to be lower. Since this last stir that was made amongst them they have raised the rates higher for live stock instead of their being lowered.

56,695. They have raised the rates on live stock?—Yes, a good deal of our stock that we fatten—and I fatten about 3,000 sheep a year—go to London.

56,696. Alive or dead?—Alive, and the men who buy them pay 20 or 30 per cent. more for the carriage. They all complain that they cost more than they did.

56,697. You feel that?—We do, of course; we have to pay it.

56,698. And as regards dead stock, do you have to pay higher rates for that than you used to?—No. I think on the hops we have got a considerable reduction, but I am not sure about corn—I feed my own corn.

Reduction of rents.

56,699. As regards rents, have they been reduced much in your neighbourhood?—Where I farm myself they have not been reduced very much. Of course, in the poorer districts they have been reduced to nothing.

Tenure.

56,700. Do you farm upon yearly tenancies or upon leases?—Yearly tenancies.

56,701. And as regards the tenure of land there altogether, is there any feeling that there should be a fair arbitration between the landlord and tenant as to rents in any land court, or anything of that sort?—There appears to be a very strong feeling among farmers generally that there should be more security for unexhausted improvements.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

56,702. Is the Agricultural Holdings Act put into force in your neighbourhood?—Not at all.

56,703. Why is that?—Well, no one considers it—neither landlords nor tenants—to be any good.

56,704. They go upon their own agreements?—I think that under most of our agreements the tenants would get as much under the agreement without taking the Act at all.

56,705. Would that apply to hop gardens and fruit culture?—You do not get much for your hop gardens.

Compensation for hop-gardens.

56,706. Supposing you left your tenancy, is the compensation for the hop gardens fully insured?—No, the hop gardens question is rather a peculiar one.

56,707. That is why we should like to hear it?—The usual custom is for a landlord to put in his agreements a certain acreage of hops to each kiln that he has upon the farm. Now on this farm where I have 90 acres of hops there are two kilns, and the landlord would bind himself to take hops which the two kilns would serve, and there would be from 8 to 10 acres for each kiln. In that case he would be only bound to take 20 acres out of the 90 acres.

56,708. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When he takes the 20 acres, what do you mean by the taking of them; does the landlord pay for the cost of them?—He pays for the hop poles.

56,709. What does that come to per acre?—In my own case I have almost left off using poles; I have put them up on permanent wire, which costs about 30*l*. an acre.

56,710. You do that subject to an agreement, I suppose?—Most of the agreements have a clause that the wire work would be taken ——

56,711. By the landlord?—Not an increased acreage—it would be taken in lieu of poles. The agreement says either hop poles or wire-work.

56,712. The landlord would be bound to pay you for either 20 acres of hop-poles or wirework?—Yes, according to the number of kilns. The landlord does not bind himself beyond the accommodation for drying upon the farm, and the tenant takes the risk of the rest.

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56,713. Surely in your risk you have taken the risk of 70 acres?—Yes.

56,714. That is a heavy risk?—Yes.

56,715. With your eyes open?—Yes.

56,716. And you would not consider it a cause of complaint that the landlord did not take it off?—No, because I would not plant it if I did not think it was a farm suitable for hops, and that a tenant would be willing to take it over. It is a hop farm, and there is no hardship in taking over an extra quantity.

56,717. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is this all on yearly tenancy?—Yes.

56,718. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is exactly your legal position in the event of your having to give up 70 acres. Your landlord, I understand, is bound to take 20 acres and to pay for them?—Yes.

56,719. Supposing you had to leave the farm for any reason and had this 70 acres to dispose of, do I understand that you would have the right to find another tenant, who would pay you for this 70 acres?—No, I have no right to find a tenant.

56,720. Then it might come about that you might have to leave and get nothing for those 70 acres?—Yes, very little.

56,721. But that is an enormous risk?—Well, it is, but I think I can make you clearly understand it by what took place last year. One of my neighbours who had 70 acres of hops died 12 months since, and his widow left the farm last Michaelmas; he had 70 acres of hops with three kilns attached to the farm, and he had built five kilns to get the extra accommodation. When they left the farm another tenant was found, and this tenant could not make the terms that he wished to make for the other five kilns. They said you could have those five kilns if you pay a certain rent, and he thought the rent was too high and he declined, and they let them to somebody else. When the time came for him to have this place made over, he said, "No, I do "not take all your wirework. I am not bound by your "agreement to take more than three kilns represent, "and I decline to take a certain quantity." I do not think that he declined to take all the difference, which would be 40 acres. This was the tenant who declined, and it ended in this wirework, which probably cost 35*l.* an acre, which had been standing for some years—the outgoing tenants of course did not know what to do with this wire—being sold to him for a nominal sum of 50*s.* an acre.

56,722. To the incoming tenant?—Yes.

56,723. Would they have had the right to remove it?—Yes.

56,724. They have that hold?—Yes, I could remove mine.

56,725. And that gives you a handle which enables you to get a certain amount?—Yes.

56,726. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) But it is worth very little if it is removed?—Yes.

56,727. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But it is worth a good deal to the man standing up?—Yes. But if he is going to grub the hops he would not take it.

56,728. You have to run that risk if he would not take this plant?—If that land of mine were taken for another purpose not to grow hops the incoming tenant need only pay for 16 acres.

56,729. You made this great outlay and took this risk on the faith of your judgment, on the probability of hops continuing to be grown on that particular farm?—Yes.

56,730. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is not that done very generally throughout the hop-growing districts?—Yes. I have known cases where the landlords have refused to take anything pertaining to the hops, which I think is very hard lines.

56,731. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I suppose in a good year when you get a good harvest you get a great part of your capital back?—Sometimes.

Low prices of hops.

56,732. When I say good prices, I mean good prices with a favourable season; you make a great haul?—That is what we hope, but that is what we do not get. Twenty-five years ago if we had a small crop we invariably had a high price, but it is not so now; we may have a small crop and the foreigner a large one, and thus we only get a small price.

56,733. What you have to contemplate is a short crop and a short price too?—That is it, but then what else can you do, you cannot grow corn. I cannot grow wheat at 28*s.* a quarter.

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Cheap loans.

56,734. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you any opinion as to whether the landlord should have capital found at an easy rate of interest?—I think it would be a very good thing indeed, because I believe there are a great many landlords who would farm their land better with capital.

56,735. You would sooner see the landlords borrow that money than for the tenant to do it?—I would like to see them both. But could the tenant give security?

Co-operative farming.

56,736. Do you see any way of the tenant being able to get security?—I should like to say that even in that case it would be rather difficult, because I happen to know of an estate where the landlord has met his tenants in this way when a tenant has gone to him and said that he had not sufficient capital to carry on his farm he has said, "Well, I will do this, I will find "three-fourths of the capital. If your farm wants "4,000*l.*, and you have only 1,000*l.* I will put the "other 3,000*l.* into the concern, as a partner," and he does it, I think, in a very liberal way. Well, the landlord says the first charge on the farm shall be the management which you shall do: you shall have 100*l.* or 150*l.* a year, according to the size of the farm; that is the first charge, and the late tenant who was then manager takes it. Then the next charge is 5 per cent. on the tenant's fourth part of the capital, that is the second charge. The third charge is the interest on the landlord's three-fourths; and the fourth is the rent; and that he has been attempting to carry out for some two or three years. I know four farms carrying on in that way.

56,737. Do you know the result?—I do not think he has had any rent at all. The tenant has had the interest in some instances on his capital, and he has also had his pay.

56,738. And he has lived?—Yes; and the farms have been fairly well cultivated, which is a great advantage.

56,739. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The first charge for management has been paid; the second charge for the interest on the tenant's fourth has been paid?—Only sometimes—not always.

56,740. And the tenant has always got his living?—Always, he has lived in the house rent free.

56,741. And so far as you know the landlord has got no interest?—I will not say none, I say in some cases he has.

56,742. He has been paid his interest, and in no case any rent?—I am quite positive about that. I have been all through the figures myself, but I am positive that there has been no rent.

56,743. And the chief gain is that the land is under cultivation?—Yes, and the tenant lives.

56,744. Is it likely to continue?—Well I do not know whether the landlord can do it. Can he go on year after year without having rent and getting no interest for the three-fourths of the capital?

56,745. If he found that he could not go on any longer, he could not get back his capital?—No.

56,746. In the case you tell us of, is part of the landlord's capital gone?—I should say yes. There has been little rent paid.

56,747. As long as the capital remains available for working the farm the thing might continue?—I would not like to answer that positively either way.

56,748. But if the capital was, by any misfortune, say, to disappear, or any considerable portion, the experiment would break down and the landlord would not be disposed to go on?—I know that in some of the cases there has been further capital put into it.

56,749. In spite of the experiment having so far failed?—Not in spite of it.

56,750. Surely if he has lost part of his capital and got no rent I am entitled to consider that as practically a failure?—I say that it is practically a failure—you said in spite of it.

56,751. In spite of the thing having been a failure so far you know instances where the landlord has put still more capital into it?—Yes, that is so. I am only speaking of one landlord.

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56,752. He has given a further trial to the experiment?—Yes.

56,753. Knowing all that you do about it, what is your general view as to the prospects of this experiment. Is it going to be a success and worth trying on the part of other landlords or not?—I think it is a very good example to other landlords.

56,754. As an example, no doubt it is admirable, but as an experiment will it pay? Will it encourage others to do the same do you think?—Well, if they like to follow a good example it might.

56,755. But only for the sake of a good example, not as a matter of business?—Agriculturists have for a good many years lived on hope, and the landlords have done the same, and I suppose landlords still hope for a better time.

56,756. And that possibly may induce them to continue the experiment by which at all events the land is kept in cultivation?—Just for the same reason that I continue to occupy 2,000 acres of land,—because I cannot think but there are better times to come.

56,757. But there is no other practical reason except the hope that springs eternal in the human breast to induce them to go on?—If you ask me whether the landlord can see any immediate future that he will come right I should say no.

56,758. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the condition of the other estates near to this? Are they in as good cultivation, and are the tenants as well off?—There are some estates where there is not a single farm let, not one; they are all in hand.

56,759. And this estate is in a better condition?—I consider that it is in a better position as it is than the man who has land on his hand, because he not only does not get his rent, but he loses money.

Restrictions in agreements.

56,760. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is there much restriction in the agreements in your district?—The agreements continue very much the same with all the restrictions, but they are not very much acted upon.

56,761. Or in the selling of produce, I suppose?—I think that the agreement is rather a grievance with a good many, because of this question of tenure. At nearly all our meetings in the county they all support this alteration of the land tenure.

Security for tenants' outlay.

56,762. In what way?—They would like to see increased security given to the tenant for his outlay.

56,763. How would they wish to have it carried out; by arbitration, or land court, or what?—I think they would be quite satisfied that it should be left to the valuers who act for them now. But supposing a man at the present time leaves a farm where he has laid down 50 acres of pasture, he does not get anything for that.

56,764. He might get it?—If the landlord chose to give it him, not otherwise.

56,765. Is the general feeling in your district that the tenant should make their own improvements with or without the consent of the landlord?—I do not think you would find many men who would go the whole length of being allowed to put up anything or do anything they liked. I think our people are all reasonable people. I think that all men expect in Kent that they should be paid for any improvements that they have made, exactly what they are worth, not any more. If they take a farm in a bad state and leave it good, they think that the valuation should come to more.

56,766. Probably they would enter a farm in a lower condition, because it is at a lower rent?—Yes; why should not it be so.

56,767. I mean it would be, would it not?—When I entered this farm, where I pay 3,000*l.* wages, that I had it two years without paying any rent at all, because it was in such a deplorable condition. Was it a bad thing for the landlord for the tenant to leave it in that way?

56,768. Supposing the farm has run out, you would have the landlord compensated, and the tenant compensated if it was the other way?—Yes; I would make the land produce all that it possibly can. Even in these bad times.

56,769. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would you have this wire-work and wood-work paid for by the landlord?—I should prefer that it should be left to the incoming tenant.

56,770. You think it would be too large a question for the landlord?—Yes. I would not bind a tenant or landlord to the full quantity, not to any quantity that a man chose to go to, because there are men who are unreasonable enough. I should consider that on my own farm, 90 acres was an undue quantity.

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Landlord's improvements.

56,771. Do you think that the landlords have provided sufficient kilns and other accommodation for their own lands?—Not where they charge a hop rent.

56,772. But hop rent is charged?—I do not consider mine a hop rent.

56,773. What would your rent be for the whole of your land?—About 40*s.* for this one.

Rent and tithe.

56,774. For the whole 240 acres?—Yes, and I pay the tithe, which is 10*s.*

56,775. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it extraordinary tithe?—Not much; the other is 12*s.*; the rent is 54*s.*, and the tithe about 12*s.*

56,776. That is the commutation value, not its present value or the par value?—I am not sure that I do not pay 12*s.*

56,777. You are 25 per cent. below par?—Yes, I know this about the tithe; I have given notice to leave. I shall settle my tithe myself. My rent, tithe, and the rates on that farm is just about 80*s.*

56,778. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) On the whole, 200 acres?—Not the 240 acres.

56,779. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the land tax, is it very high?—I do not remember any land tax, but speaking of three or four years ago, our land tax is higher than it was. They have raised it a little.

56,780. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the rental of your hop land by itself, independently of the corn land—what is your hop land worth an acre—40*s.*, I think, you put the whole of it?—Well, the corn land is not worth anything. You have to go into this speculation. If the hops pay, it pays, but nothing else pays.

Prices of hops.

56,781. Have not hops paid lately?—They did not pay the last year.

56,782. Why?—Because the price was so low.

56,783. There was a very large crop?—I grow a very large crop and lost money. We only got 70*s.* or 75*s.*

56,784. Was the importation of hops unusually large?—I would not answer that off-hand. I think that they are selling the best Californians at 40*s.* per cwt. If they can do that, there is an end of the business for this country.

56,785. What is the price of the choicest East Kent hops?—I sold mine up to 4*l.* 5*s.* last year, but that means the choicest, that would not be an average.

Cost of hop-growing.

56,786. What is the cost of cultivating an acre of hop land in Kent, the whole cultivation and production?—If you grow 12 hundredweight to the acre it will cost 50*l.* an acre.

56,787. Including everything?—Yes.

56,788. What would be an average crop?—If you grew 12 hundredweight, and sold at 4*l.*, you would lose 2*l.* an acre; if you sold at 3*l.*, you would lose 14*l.* an acre.

56,789. Could you give an average idea of the price of the East Kent hops, taking seven years?—No, I could not.

56,790. Would it not be beyond 5*l.*?—The last seven years?

56,791. Yes?—I have not given that any consideration. You see, there is a great deal of difference in East Kent hops; last year some were sold at 40*s.*

56,792. I am speaking of your district, which is the best part—East Kent?—I should have said for the last seven years that they would have averaged 5*l.*

56,793. And the average production is what?—I do not know, I grow as many as I can.

Results of hop-growing.

56,794. Taking the average of the last seven years, would there be a profit or loss?—Seven years ago we had two or three very bad years. I should say that during the last seven years we farmers in our neighbourhood have just held our own; it has been the hops that have paid sufficient to make up for the loss in the other branches; and where we have lost it is because the hops have not been able to do it.

56,795. In your district, in the best hop-growing, they have just held their own?—Just sufficient to cover the loss on the other things.

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56,796. And in other districts, where they are not so favoured, tenants have lost?—They have not held their own in my own immediate district, all of them. On the adjoining farm to mine the man has gone bankrupt this year, he has been a large hop-grower, and he brought out the Butcher Wire Work.

Decreased hop production.

56,797. Is it likely that the hop acreage will be decreased?—If these prices continue there is not a question about it, it must be decreased, and the hop-growers will decrease too. The hop growing is such a big thing—there is such an enormous amount of capital involved. In corn growing a man may dwindle away his capital and be a little worse off, but with the hops it is so different. If my hops lose me 7,000*l.*, well, I should very soon get sick of it. One of my neighbours last year lost 10,000*l.* with his hops, that will not go on very long, because you could not.

56,798. Has the cost of cultivation and production been decreased?—Then you would decrease the crop, which is no use.

56,799. What is the chief item of expense in hop production, labour and manure?—Picking costs about 10*l.* to 15*l.* an acre, and then the drying and packing.

56,800. And those expenses cannot be reduced?—I do not see how, you could not reduce those at all.

56,801. You can get no relief in that way?—I cannot see how.

56,802. Decreased production would cause a greater loss?—I do not think we are likely to get any cheaper labour.

56,803. I think independently of the depression in the hop industry in Kent, the farmers who farm land pure and simple are very much depressed?—They are nearly all finished off.

Depression in the Isle of Sheppey.

56,804. Could you give us any account of the state of the Isle of Sheppey which used once to be highly cultivated?—Yes, to-day I have in my hands 2,000 acres that we are only asking 10*s.* an acre rent for. It is nearly all pasture. If I could get tenants at 7*s.* 6*d.* I should think it would be accepted, and I have known it all let at 35*s.*, at any rate, I am certain I could get half-a-dozen years ago 10*s.*, and I have known it at 2*l.*, and all grazing land, too.

56,805. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is that permanent pasture?—Marsh land; that is the most extraordinary thing that I know.

56,806. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you know anything of arable land in the Isle of Sheppey?—It is every bit as bad.

56,807. Is it not a fact that a large estate which used to bring in about 5,000*l.* a year has cost the owner something within the last two years?—Yes, I would not be surprised if that was the case. The gentleman to whom you refer, two years ago I valued one of his farms for a client, who farmed in East Kent, and he thought that this Sheppey land was so tempting that he took the farm, and had it two years and lost 500*l.*, and came out last year.

56,808. And yet not only that estate, but other land between that and nearer the railway station, and consequently nearer the markets, has been very well cultivated, and it has fallen off to a great degree?—Yes, except those close to the town.

56,809. But the whole island has fallen off?—Yes.

56,810. And in your knowledge of other districts, is it not a very peculiar case, that that land which was considered very fine land should have fallen so greatly in value?—It is peculiar, but it is not an isolated case, because I could take you to a district outside of the island where the land is similar corn-growing land, and I think I could take you over four miles and never go off a bit of land that is not going barren, all this land was thoroughly good wheat-growing land, six or seven quarters to the acre, and 10 or 12 quarters of barley, and to-day it is lying to waste.

Nature of land in the Isle of Sheppey.

56,811. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it heavy land to cultivate?—Yes.

56,812. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) This is very expensive land to cultivate, is it not?—Yes.

56,813. And you can only get at it at certain times?—Yes.

56,814. And when there were good productive seasons there was not more productive land?—Quite so; I have known it with 10 quarters of barley, and it is now lying barren.

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56,815. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) How about the pasture land in the Isle of Sheppey?—As I occupy 1,500 acres of pasture myself, I think I am enabled to give an opinion upon that, and I would say this, that my people have been graziers for generations, and my grandfather, when I began, said, "It is always right to hold your "wool if it gets below 18 pence; whenever it gets "below 18 pence, it is safe to hold it." I shear 6,000 sheep, and that means 160 bags of wool, and I sell it at 9*d.*; that makes 1,400*l.* a year difference to my grazing, and that has been going on for the last 12 or 14 years. My wool comes to 1,200*l.* or 1,600*l.* less than what was considered the lowest price it should be sold at.

Railway rates.

56,816. With regard to railway rates, you complain of them, are they specially unfair with regard to hops?—No, I do not think we have considerable cause to complain; they have been considerably reduced.

56,817. As compared with foreign rates?—Yes, we have got used to the foreigner and the preference.

56,818. Do you know the charge for a pound of hops from New York to Liverpool?—No, I could not tell that. I believe that it costs as much to send hops to London from our place as from Flushing to London.

56,819. Well, it is seven-sixteenths of a halfpenny for a pound from New York to Liverpool, and it is rather less than one farthing a pound from Faversham to London?—I could not say I know, very much to my disgust, that the rates have been raised to stock, and it affects our market.

56,820. You do not complain of the carriage of hops as compared with other produce?—I do not say that. I complain of the rates as compared with the foreign hops, but I say they have lessened the rates at home. I fancy we used to pay 3*s.*, and we are now paying 2*s.* 1*d.*, which is a considerable reduction. But we are still at a disadvantage with the foreigner; but that I cannot be quite certain about.

Marketing of hops.

56,821. Have you any suggestion to make to improve the state of the hop industry as regards the methods of sale which are unsatisfactory, I think?—No, I cannot complain of that because I sell my own.

56,822. Generally the methods of sale are unsatisfactory. The general custom that holds is that of consigning to factors who sell to breweries?—I do not think there is anything wrong about it.

56,823. That is not too roundabout a process?—I do not think so. If the growers could sell direct to brewers it might be as well, but I think it is done very fairly.

56,824. You know that is a supposed cause of grievance?—I have heard people complain, but I have not known of any cause. I daresay there are some factors who are not very particular, but as a rule they are quite as conscientious and straight as other men, and I have not had cause to complain. Perhaps I should not give an opinion. I sell nearly all mine direct to brewers.

56,825. That presupposes that this is a better way than selling through the factor?—If you can save the intermediate commission it must be better.

Decreased hop-production and employment of labour.

56,826. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you said the labour bill per acre for hops is 50*l.*?—No, I said the total cost per acre.

56,827. Is not that the labour bill mainly?—Yes, mainly.

56,828. How much of that is the labour bill, the greater part of it?—Yes, certainly, because out of that the picking alone would come to at least 15*l.* an acre.

56,829. Should you say 40*l.* of it was labour bill? I want to see what is the amount that the labouring classes would lose from those 20,000 acres of hops having gone out of cultivation. If it were 50*l.* an acre there would be a million sterling gone at once?—The wages per acre upon those farms, I mean, would be on the first one 12*l.* 10*s.* 10*d.* per acre, and in the next one 14*l.*, and that, you must remember, would mean that 90 acres out of 240 is hops, so that it would be more than double if it were all hops. You might safely put it at 30*l.* or 40*l.* an acre.

56,830. What is the acreage now under cultivation of hops in England?—I have not the figures handy, but I am told it is 59,000 acres.

56,831. At any rate, if they were to go out of cultivation it would mean an enormous decrease in the money

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spent on wages?—It would mean simply ruin. The town of Faversham has about 12,000 inhabitants, and every 1*s.* of this of mine comes into Faversham because I do not employ anyone else.

56,832. The amount spent in wages must be enormously diminished in the case of all this corn land that has gone out of cultivation?—Wonderfully. Look at the pasture land with 150 acres costing about 80*l.* a year.

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56,833. You had your own farm free of rent for the first two years in consequence of its bad condition?—Yes.

56,834. Then, practically, you got off your rent for two years in order to improve it?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned.

One Hundred and Sixth Day.

Thursday, 8th August 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACY EVERETT, Esq.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

Mr. BLANDY JENKINS called and examined.

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56,835. (*Chairman.*) You are a landowner residing in Glamorganshire?—Yes.

56,836. What extent of property have you there?—About 7,000 acres.

56,837. What kind of land is it; is it mostly hilly land?—It is chiefly pasture.

Depression in Glamorganshire.

56,838. The depression in agriculture has not been as severe in your county as in other districts?—It is not so severe, because they have very good markets, and deal directly with the collieries in the district. They are nearly all small farmers, and able to sell milk, and fowls, and bacon, and cheese direct to the consumer.

Size of farms.

56,839. What would be the size of their farms?—They vary very much. The land you might call farming land would not be more than 40 to 50 acres; but they might have a large sheep run in addition.

56,840. But the actual cultivated land is not more than 40 to 50 acres, is it?—Certainly not.

56,841. Is that the general average?—All through the hilly part, the Vale of Glamorgan is purely agricultural.

56,842. Some large farms?—Yes.

56,843. Are you speaking now mainly of the hill farms?—I am speaking now mainly of the hill farms.

56,844. The small hill farms?—Yes; I know the county very well otherwise.

56,845. Do you know the county generally?—Yes.

Low prices.

56,846. You say that the small hill farms have not suffered from the depression?—What they have suffered from is the low price of wool; that hit them very hard; and in 1893 they suffered more from cattle trail, which was very bad then owing to the drought.

56,847. That is in the year 1893, when the prices fell very much?—Yes.

56,848. Since that they have recovered, have they?—Last year the cattle went up and this year they went back slightly; but I think that the cattle trade is reviving again now.

56,849. I suppose the long drought of the spring affected prices?—Yes.

56,850. Now, in consequence of the rain and the better prospects of food, prices have gone up again?—It is not so good as it was.

56,851. How much has it risen last year as compared with the previous year?—I should think you could buy cows in 1893 for four guineas or 5*l.* a beast—very useful cows, and now the same animal would fetch 12*l.* to 14*l.*

56,852. And what do you say as to lean stock?—About the same proportion—in fact they were not saleable.

56,853. The fall in 1893 was very serious indeed, was it not?—It was very serious indeed.

56,854. In consequence of the great drought, and the fact that there was no demand for store cattle?—So far as Glamorganshire is concerned, with reference to the drought, we were better off than almost any county. It was noticeable when you went down to Cardiff and Carmarthen, the country looked green after the middle of July, and when you got to Pembroke and Cardigan it was completely burnt up, and of course that affected the prices of stock with us.

56,855. Last year the prices came back to their normal condition?—Yes.

Position of small farmers.

56,856. You say one reason why small farmers have not suffered is that the small farmers supply the resident population?—They supply the resident population, they get a very good price for cheese and butter.

56,857. And butter too?—And butter too, and bacon, a very fair price.

56,858. Selling it direct to the consumer?—Yes, direct to the consumer. There are large collieries all through the district; and they take it themselves and sell it mostly direct to the colliers.

56,859. There is not much wheat grown?—Practically none. They might grow a couple of acres on the farm.

56,860. Any barley or oats?—A few oats. Most of those hill farms grow about sufficient oats and they may sell a little, but it is chiefly for their own use.

56,861. The fall in prices does not affect them?—Not so much. Where they suffer mostly is from the price of wool.

56,862. Has not that gone up a little?—No, not to any large extent.

Prices of butter.

56,863. In the case of butter, you said that the butter has fallen?—The butter is not so good in price as it has been. I understood it was a large quantity of New Zealand butter which came in this winter, and the

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butter which used to sell at 1*s.* 3*d.* you could have bought last year at 1*s.*, that is the winter butter.

56,864. During the winter?—Yes.

56,865. What is it now?—I do not exactly know; about 1*s.* for fresh butter.

56,866. Is that the wholesale price or is it mostly sold to the consumer?—It is mostly retail.

56,867. They mostly sell in retail and they get a better price?—Yes.

56,868. Then they have been very much affected by that?—Not so very much, but still they are affected by it. It is not worth their while to keep the winter dairy and sell butter and the price has not varied much from the summer to the winter.

56,869. Have you got the prices over a range of years?—No, I have not, it would average about 1*s.* in the summer for the last ten years and 15*d.* or 16*d.* in the winter.

56,870. What happened last year was that the winter prices fell and the summer price has not been maintained?—I do not think that the summer price has been affected.

Wages.

56,871. What is the case with wages in your district?—The wages are high.

56,872. Have they been maintained during the last 15 years?—Yes, they have increased.

56,873. How much have they increased?—We used to get men in my part, that is, on the edge of the collieries, for about 16*s.* or 18*s.* per week and now they are 18*s.* and 1*l.*; they have increased 2*s.* or 3*s.* a week. It is difficult to get men to farm; that is men who understand farm work.

56,874. Is the quality of labour as good as it was?—No.

Employment of labourers.

56,875. The small farmers do not employ much labour, do they?—They generally keep what they call a boy in the house—a young fellow to look after cows and that, and to plough; they occasionally employ men for edging and fencing, but not regularly as a rule.

56,876. Is it the large farmers in the Vale who employ labour?—Yes. Their wages would be formerly 12*s.* to 14*s.* per week, and now they would be 14*s.* to 16*s.* But they are short of men; the men go away to the collieries.

56,877. Is there a full demand for colliers and in the other works?—Not now, there is great depression.

56,878. But there has been a great demand till lately?—Yes, till lately; during about the last 15 months they have been rather slack.

56,879. Since then has there been a tendency for wages to change or not?—I do not think so—not amongst the agricultural men.

Rates.

56,880. Then with regard to rates, what do you say?—Rates are high; school rates are very high.

56,881. What are the normal rates?—Well, they vary very much—the school rates vary from 4*d.* to 16*d.* in the different parishes, and even more in one or two cases.

56,882. But the other rates, what do you say about them?—As to the other rates, the poor rate is moderate. I do not think that is above 1*s.*

56,883. Have they been maintained about the same rate, or have they increased?—I think they were quite as low as formerly, but that is owing to the rateable value having increased so very much in many of the parishes owing to the collieries being opened, and now the railways have come.

56,884. They gain in that respect, although their expenditure has increased?—But the rateable value has increased.

56,885. (*Mr. Channing.*) Not the agricultural land?—No, it has rather decreased. In the vale of Glamorgan the rentals have gone down.

Reduction of rent.

56,886. (*Chairman.*) What has been the general effect on rents—from what you said, rents have fallen?—Yes, they have fallen in the agricultural part.

56,887. How much?—Well, that varies very much, it is, I should think, 25 or 26 per cent.

56,888. As much as that—not averaging through the county—is it so much as that?—Not through the county, but through the agricultural part of the county.

56,889. You are sure that it is so much as that? Because the returns we have had of the value of assessments does not show anything like that for Glamorgan in the value of land?—Well, I am speaking now of large parishes like Llantwit Major in the Vale of Glamorganshire, the largest parish, where they have gone down 5 per cent.

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56,890. You say in your proof that the depreciation in value of purely agricultural land has been from 10 to 15 per cent.?—I say in value, but the rateable value has gone down. If it was to be put up for auction to-morrow it would probably fetch within 10 per cent. what it did; but the rents are down 25 per cent. Now they are making a new railway there in that part, and that probably will help them.

56,891. Take your own rents; have they allen?—My own rents are just the same as they have been for 40 years; they have never been altered.

56,892. They have not fallen?—No, I have made reductions.

Abatement of rent.

56,893. Temporary abatements?—Yes.

56,894. In bad years like 1893; not in good years, I suppose?—In 1892 and 1893, and this year I have made a slight abatement.

56,895. What did you do last year?—Last year I only abated the tithes.

56,896. You paid the tithes?—I was charged for the tithes.

56,897. Do you think that it is generally the case with your neighbours that actual rents were not reduced, but that they have made abatements from time to time?—Yes; and on Lord Wimborne's estate the actual rents have been reduced.

56,898. Do you know how much?—I should say nearly 25 per cent. from 10 years ago. They may have been higher than others formerly, and they were high probably at the time. Lord Dunraven's estate, one of the largest in the county, has not been reduced much, I think, but then they were lower before.

56,899. I suppose there is no land unoccupied?—No.

Demand for farms.

56,900. When farms are vacant, are they let readily?—Oh dear, yes.

56,901. At the old rents?—They would in the hills, but I do not know that they would in the vale; in fact, they have not, because the land has been reduced certainly from about 30*s.* to 18*s.*, and very good land too.

56,902. At that reduction, does it let easily?—Yes, it is easily let, and it will be more easily, because this railway I mentioned is coming through, and that will enable it to be let very much better.

56,903. And in the hills will the land let without reduction?—Yes, it will let without reduction.

56,904. Is there plenty of demand for farms?—Yes, plenty; particularly the hill farms.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

56,905. Is the Agricultural Holdings Act used in your district?—No, very little, they have very strong tenant right there.

56,906. It is more favourable on the whole, to the outgoing tenant, I believe?—It is more favourable to the outgoing tenant.

Rateable value of land.

56,907. Referring to this return of the rateable value of land, I find that the rateable value of land in Glamorganshire has rather increased in 1894, as compared with 1870?—That would be so, because there has been such an immense quantity of land built on, and the increase has come in that way.

56,908. I am now speaking of agricultural land only? Can you take a parish. If you take probably the largest agricultural parish in the county, Lantwit Major in the Bridgend and Cowbridge Union.

56,909. Taking the whole union, the rateable value in 1871, for purely agricultural land, was 77,000*l.*, and in 1894, it was 82,000—an increase of 5,000*l.*?—Yes, but I should think that had to do with houses.

56,910. No, the buildings are assessed separately. I am speaking now only of agricultural land?—The rateable value of Llantwit Major Union has increased enormously; there is no doubt about that.

56,911. The buildings have increased enormously, and so also the railways. The rateable value of buildings in Bridgend Union has increased from 29,000*l.*, to

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76,000*l.*, and the rateable value of railways has increased from nothing to 52,000*l.*, so that the total on all property has enormously increased; but the agricultural land alone has increased from 77,000*l.* to 82,000*l.*?—But last year the agricultural land was all put down 15 per cent. *The witness subsequently wrote:* "I find this "is an error, the resolution of the assessment com- "mittee was not carried out."

56,912. This return is given in 1894?—There must be a mistake in that, because I am quite sure that the rateable value of the purely agricultural land has gone down.

56,913. It would be well to have that looked into, and perhaps you will look into that carefully when you correct your evidence, because this is a return supplied to the Local Government Board by the various unions, and it gives the assessments for 1894?—It does not give you the parishes, does it?

56,914. No, it gives the return for the whole union?—Quite so.

56,915. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is the principle of valuation, or the practice of valuation altered at all in that union?—In what way?

56,916. In that union has there been any alteration in the principle or practice?—Well, what I very much objected to was that the agricultural land should be reduced to 15 per cent. on the whole last year.

56,917. (*Mr. Channing.*) Irrespective of the reductions of rent?—Irrespective of anything; rent is such a bad criterion, really. The farms of the large landowners are probably let reasonably enough; then there are an immense quantity of small farms, which are let high, and also land to butchers, and those sort of people; there is more of that about there than in most of the agricultural counties.

56,918. (*Chairman.*) One does not see why on that account the assessment should be reduced 15 per cent., unless the rents were actually reduced?—It was so reduced 15 per cent.; they reduced the whole of the agricultural part of the union. (*See Ques.* 56,911.)

56,919. Of course this is a comparison with 1871, but it is not the highest point of rents in Wales, because between 1871 and 1879 they rose considerably?—Yes, they began to rise in 1870.

56,920. They rose 15 per cent. between 1870 and 1879. Then the income tax returns show that they fell again 5 per cent., which would still leave an increase of 10 per cent., as compared with 1871?—From 1870 it went up very much—everything went up.

56,921. There was a rise of 15 per cent. between 1870 and 1879, and then, according to the income tax returns, on land alone there was a reduction of 5 per cent., which would still show an increase in the value of land as compared with 1870 of 10 per cent., and that tallies with the assessment?—This is the parish I was speaking of, this land of Llantwit Major. Their rental value was 4,720*l.*; the rateable value of that parish was nearly 10,000*l.*; that is a purely agricultural parish.

56,922. How does that compare with the previous years?—It is reduced.

56,923. How much?—I have not got last year—it was nearly 10,000*l.*

56,924. Could you compare it with 15 years ago?—Well, I am comparing it now with two years ago; it was reduced from 1,500*l.* to 2,000*l.*

56,925. I think it would be as well to look into the matter, and perhaps you would write to us again?—How long would you like me to go back?

56,926. One would like to go back 15 years, and to say whether there has been an increase or decrease in the rateable value of land only as compared with 15 years ago?—You must understand this—I am speaking now of those agricultural parishes, and not of the farms on the hills; they have not decreased—if anything they have increased, because their markets are better; but we in the Vale of Glamorgan, which is purely agricultural, have decreased in the last few years.

56,927. The increase of one may have balanced the decrease in the others?—Yes, it may have counterbalanced it. Would you like me to send this?

56,928. An increase in the hill country may more than account for the decrease in the vale country. May that not be so?—Yes.

56,929. Because it is certainly a most remarkable fact that both the income tax on land alone, and the assessments for the poor law, show a considerable increase—a small decrease as compared with 1879, but a considerable increase as compared with 1870?—Yes.

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56,930. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I suppose there has been a great deal of extension of town in the district?—Yes.

56,931. That would send up the value of land in the immediate neighbourhood of the town?—It does, but that is mostly in the hill districts, where the coal measures are. A town will rise up in a couple of years where there is a colliery, and immediately the land would go up, probably.

System of rating.

56,932. (*Chairman.*) What suggestions have you to make?—I am afraid I cannot suggest anything beyond what I said before. There is one thing that I think bears hardly upon agriculture, and that is, farm-houses ought to be only rated on the fourth, I think, the same as the land because they are not benefitted by any drainage or sewerage works.

56,933. They are included in the sanitary district?—Yes, the sanitary rates are increasing very much. There will have to be large sums spent.

56,934. Where that is the case do you think that the farm-houses ought to be exempted?—I think they ought to be treated the same as the land, because they reap no benefit from a sewer or anything that way.

56,935. But then I suppose there might be other houses in the purely rural part, which would gain equally with the farm-houses?—If they were in a village, they ought to be rated in the same way, but it is rather hard that a house that stands out in the country has to pay when you do not get any benefit.

56,936. There might be houses, not farm-houses, equally isolated which do not gain from the sanitary expenditure?—Very few.

56,937. But still they may exist?—Yes.

56,938. There might be a public-house or a small house in the country. Would it be possible to distinguish between one class of houses and another?—That is the difficulty, except that till late years the farm was always rated as a farm-house, land, and buildings. Now we have to rate the house separately.

56,939. You think there might be a difficulty in distinguishing between one class of house and another?—You could not distinguish the farms in any way.

Tithe.

56,940. What other suggestions have you?—I think that the Tithe Act of last year is rather unjust so far—that is, the person occupying his own land is bound to pay tithe, whether the land is worth it or not, and therefore it rather militates against small men becoming owners of land.

56,941. I do not know what you mean by "whether "the land is worth it or not"?—I can give you an instance. In Berkshire——

56,942. You are not speaking of Wales now?—But it applies there too. If you occupy your own land you are obliged to pay the full tithe. Supposing the tithe is 6*s.* per acre, you would have to pay the 6*s.* per acre, though the land would not be worth 5*s.* per acre.

56,943. That is not the case in Wales. There is no land in Wales which is at all comparable to the case you mention in Berkshire, namely, where the value has gone down so that it is not equal to the value of the tithe?—It does not apply so much. It is not so strong in Wales.

56,944. Is there any case in Wales?—I think there must be in the agricultural parts of Wales.

56,945. Do you know any yourself?—I cannot say that I do.

56,946. You are speaking of a case in Berkshire where, if the land was let, the landowner might get some relief under the Tithe Act of two years ago, but where he is occupying his own land he gets no relief?—He gets no relief.

Rates.

56,947. Have you any other remedies to suggest?—I think the rates in some way ought to be relieved. The education rate and the building rate is very heavy here. Either the building should be paid for, I think, by the Government, or paid for by the ground landowners; I think that is rather hard upon the tenants that they should have to pay for the permanent improvements of the district.

56,948. What in?—We are bound to build those schools, and we are bound to make new roads occasionally, and things of that sort; all that is rated upon the parish, and on the ratepayers, I do not think that is fair. I think it ought to come out of the Imperial Exchequer, or from the landowner.

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State loans.

Forestry.

Cheap loans for public works.

Railway rates.

56,949. Then you think it is desirable that there should be loans made for agricultural improvements?—I hardly think that would do—I do not think that would do.

56,950. You do not think so?—No.

56,951. Do you think anything is to be done in the way of encouraging the growth of timber?—I do not know how you can encourage it.

56,952. I ask you that because in your proof there is something to that effect?—No doubt it would be a good thing to grow more timber.

56,953. You do not attach much importance to it?—No; what falls very hardly I think, is, that the districts are obliged to borrow the money now to carry out the sewerage works, and for schools, and other public works; the Government now get money at less than 2½ per cent., and we have to borrow it at 3½ per cent. I call that very unreasonable; that might be re-adjusted.

56,954. In consequence of the fall in the value of money there might be a greater lowering in the way of loans to the current rate at which the Government can borrow the money?—Yes.

56,955. (*Lord Rendel.*) I see you refer in your proof to railway rates. What is your opinion as to the operation of the railway rates on farming in Glamorganshire?—Well, they are very high; I cannot see why if it pays the railway company to take their goods for 50 miles—in this case the great Western Railway Company will take their goods from Bristol to Swansea at half the price they take them from Bristol and Bridgend, although it is nearly double the distance. Now, if it pays them to take those goods from Bristol to Swansea, surely it must pay them to take them the less distance at the same price, and, therefore, they ought not to be allowed to do it. It is the short rate that tells very much; and that is principally what affects agricultural produce.

56,956. Do you think the case is one which legislation might be reasonably called for?—I think so—I never could understand why, if a railway company could make a profit upon a long rate at the less rate, why they should not be made to carry at the same rate in proportion, perhaps not quite the same proportion, for the short distances.

56,957. Are you influenced in your own view by the consideration of the country or district from which the produce comes, that it is carried at the lower rate for the longer distance?—Yes. Now they carry the foreign through rate at very much less than they do country through rate.

56,958. Then do you adopt or approve of a principle that the railway companies are primarily made for the purpose of carrying the produce of the district?—Certainly. I consider that the railway company comes to Parliament and asks to take up this ground, and they object to anybody else taking it up when they have got their Bill, and, therefore, they ought to carry the produce of the country, and passenger of the country, at a fair price.

56,959. Then you consider that there is an implied condition on which they maintain their monopoly of their powers, on this principle, namely, that they should consider the produce of the actual country through which they go?—I do think so.

56,960. Do you consider that in carrying foreign produce at preferential rates, they are breaking that implied condition?—Yes, to a certain extent they are. I would not say they carry at preferential rates; I believe their nominal rates—what they are allowed to charge—are even higher than they actually do charge; but what I think is this: that their maximum rates ought to be all reduced. They show that they can carry at so much less, by being able to carry these other goods at so much less and at a profit; and I do not see why they should not have their maximum rates reduced in consequence.

56,961. Do you consider that the question is one considerable enough in its operation and economical effect, to deserve the very serious consideration of Parliament?—I think it should. I think the last committee of Parliament were completely humbugged by the railway companies.

Ground game.

56,962. You have not, I think, referred to a note in your proof as to the operation of the Ground Game Act?—Well, I think the Ground Game Act worked badly in this way; they ought to belong to the tenant altogether. It might be of some use to him; he might make a profit out of his rabbits; but now he can do nothing, neither he nor the landlord—they are no good to anybody, and they are worse than that—there are always poachers all over the place after these things.

56,693. (*Chairman.*) You mean the ground game ought to belong to the tenant?—Yes.

56,964. And there ought not to be a concurrent right on the part of the landlord?—I think they ought to belong to the tenant.

56,965. Do you apply that principle to all game?—I think it would be better if it applied to all game.

56,966. You admit that there would be a difficulty in applying a different rule to ground game and winged game?—Yes, there would be that. You could deal with winged game better than ground game.

56,967. You are in favour of the same principle being applied to all game, and you think the difficulty would not then arise?—It might be applied to ground game without the other.

56,968. If the landlord had not a concurrent right in the ground game, he might reserve the right to shoot the winged game, and have no right to shoot hares and rabbits — that would be a rather difficult position would it not?—I do not know about that; probably there would not be any hares and rabbits to shoot.

56,969. Some people say that if the tenants had the sole right of game, there would be more rabbits than now?—I think there would, because I believe you might rabbit a farm more profitably than probably with other matters in some cases.

56,970. (*Lord Rendel.*) But your general objection to the working of the Act is, that it establishes a division in the property of ground game?—Yes. It does not work very well.

56,971. Your view is, I understand, that in the interest of the maintenance of ground game and the useful cultivation of ground game, that has an unfortunate effect?—It has, no doubt. I think in that case—supposing it was all the property of the tenant—the man would cultivate it or have none at all; that would be the effect of it.

Law of distress.

56,972. You have also, I think, referred to the law of distraint; may I ask in what direction you desire amendment of the law?—I do not know that there is much in that. I think I will withdraw that.

Ground game.

56,973. (*Mr. Elton.*) I do not quite understand how your views came in on the Ground Game Act. You say it works badly, but your proposals have nothing to do with the Ground Game Act at all, they are in a totally different sphere altogether. The proposal that the tenant should be the owner of all the winged or ground game in the district has nothing to do with the principle of the Ground Game Act, has it?—I do not know what you mean by the principle of the Ground Game Act.

56,974. The principle is not to give the property to the farmer?—The object of it was to reduce ground game.

56,975. Certainly; not to give the property in a particular class of game to the farmer, but to reserve another part to the landlord?—I suppose the object of the Ground Game Act was to enable the farmer to prevent his being eaten up with ground game.

56,976. I quite agree with you. Do you think that the Ground Game Act gives the property of the ground game to the tenants at present?—No, it does not.

56,977. Then my question was, how do you connect with the Ground Game Act your proposal that all the property in the game should belong to the tenant; it is a different matter, is it not, altogether?—Hardly. I think the Ground Game Act might be of some use if it belonged to the tenant, because where hares and rabbits might be cultivated usefully and profitably they would be so cultivated.

56,978. I think you suggest that they might be cultivated in warrens?—Yes.

56,979. What has that got to do with the Ground Game Act?—I should call a warren a place where there is a good deal of rough ground which is not profitably cultivated at present, as there are many places in England.

56,980. What has that got to do with the Ground Game Act?—Everything.

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56,981. Of course it has to do with this, that it is concerned with a man and a rabbit, but only that much. You said that the farmers in your district made a good deal of cheese; what sort of cheese do they make, is it skimmed milk?—It is one milk cheese.

Cheese-making.

56,982. Not for selling out of the district?—No, it is thin cheese; it is sold quite fresh.

56,983. And used by the miners and labourers?—Yes, they buy that in preference to anything else.

Milk-selling.

56,984. Do they sell the milk in the winter?—Yes, where the farms are close enough to the collieries.

56,985. Do you find that those railway rates act in a prohibitive way on the selling of milk?—Well, I do not know.

56,986. Do they send milk to Bristol?—Do we send milk to Bristol?

56,987. Yes; from your district is not it sent to Bristol?—They send milk to us from Bristol, or rather from Somersetshire.

56,988. Then it is not a very important question of railway rates in the carriage of milk?—Not to milk—not to our farmers, because we import milk.

New Zealand butter.

56,989. Now about this New Zealand butter that you mentioned; it did not seem to me that you were quite sure about that. Do you think that the importation of New Zealand butter was the cause of the butter going down?—That is what I was told.

56,990. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Was it not Australian butter?—I was told it was chiefly from New Zealand; but you could have bought very excellent butter in Cardiff last winter for 1*s.*; of course they have knocked us out of the market there.

56,991. (*Mr. Elton.*) What you said was that it came from New Zealand, and I know that it had failed in several other places?—They said it was from New Zealand; it may have come from Australia.

Depression in Glamorganshire.

56,992. (*Mr. Everett.*) In your county the depression is not very severe, as you have no difficulty in letting the land?—We have no difficulty at all in letting the land.

56,993. And you can let it still at three-quarters of its old rent?—Yes; I think any land in the county could be let at that, particularly if it was cut up more.

56,994. (*Chairman.*) The hill farms are at the old rents?—If anything they have increased.

56,995. (*Mr. Everett.*) And such depression as there is in the Vale is in the price of things that they have to sell?—Yes.

Tithe.

56,996. In reference to the tithe, I understand you to say that what you have done for your tenants is to pay the tithe for them. Is it customary still for the tenant to pay the tithe?—Hardly that. I pay the tithes always now, but that has been reckoned, of course, as their rent. My tenants' rents have never been altered, the tithe was added to it, but now we do not charge for the tithe.

56,997. They have gained the benefit of the reduction of the amount of the tithe?—Yes, but in 1893 they were reduced 15 per cent.

56,998. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Is the land as well cultivated as it used to be in Glamorganshire?—Yes, quite.

56,999. Have the tenants as much capital as they used to have?—Oh, yes, I think so. I should think there is very little difference.

57,000. Do you let your farms on lease or yearly tenancy?—On yearly tenancy—I do not think we have ever changed.

57,001. Would the tenants take a lease do you think?—I do not think they would.

Low prices.

57,002. What do the farmers complain of mostly in your district; have not they some special grievance?—Well, the hill farmers chiefly complain of the price of wool, that affects them more than anything else; but the vale farmers complain of the price of corn. This parish of Llantwit Major, the average growth of wheat there was quite 1,000 acres; now they do not grow 200 owing to the depression in agriculture.

57,003. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) How much do you say?—This parish I am speaking of is probably the largest parish in the Vale of Glamorganshire, and they used to grow there always in the wheat quarter about 1,000 to 1,100 acres—now they do not grow 200.

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57,004. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) I think the small farmer's rent is very much higher than the large farmer's?—Yes.

Rent of small farms.

57,005. Is there a better demand for them?—There is any quantity of demand for small farms.

57,006. At how much an acre?—Well, these hill farms are about 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre, the farms in the Vale, and the large farms used to let at 30*s.*; but now the large farms have gone down probably to 18*s.* or 1*l.* per acre.

57,007. (*Chairman.*) When you speak of 7*s.* an acre, do you include the run on the mountain, or is that what they pay on the 40 acres that you say they have?—The mountain land would probably be from 1*s.* 6*d.* to half-a-crown, according to the value.

57,008. What is the cultivated part of the land per acre?—The enclosed part is about 7*s.* 6*d.*; it varies from 7*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* 6*d.*

57,009. Not more than that?—Some might be; with a shelter some small pieces would be worth more. Where you are near a colliery, as much as 5*l.* an acre is given; it has increased very much there.

57,010. Do they pay anything for the common right, or is that included in the rent of the farm?—It would not be common right. These mountains are private property mostly; but where they are commons you pay nothing.

57,011. When you are speaking of rent do you include commons in the rent?—They are principally mountain pastures.

57,012. They are allotted out to particular farms?—Yes.

57,013. Now, take a farm of 40 acres with a run on the mountain; would that average include the run on the mountain for 7*s.* an acre?—Yes; probably 7*s.* 6*d.*; the mountain would not average that.

57,014. Not the mountain itself?—I think the farm would average 7*s.* 6*d.* to 10*s.* 6*d.*, the enclosed land as a rule. There are some that would be higher, that would go up to 15*s.* or 1*l.*; but then the mountain land, the sheep walk, would probably be 1*s.* 6*d.* to half-a-crown. If a very good sheep walk it might be rather more.

Occupying owners.

57,015. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are there many occupying owners in your district?—No, I do not think there are as many as there used to be.

57,016. Are they selling to large landowners?—They did sell some 25 to 30 years ago.

57,017. Of course, farmers generally prefer to take from large landowners rather than the small ones?—Oh, yes, they get it cheaper probably.

Compensation for improvements.

57,018. What is the custom—how do you compensate the out-going tenant for improvements made during his tenancy?—Well, practically they pay full prices for everything. If the farmer grows roots and puts in manure he would get two years' compensation—it may be reckoned on two or three crops; lime would be reckoned longer still.

57,019. And what about the unexhausted improvements made during the tenancy?—I do not think they make any improvements themselves.

57,020. Not many of the farmers in Glamorganshire?—No, I hardly know of any.

57,021. Everything is done by the landlords?—Yes.

57,022. (*Mr. Channing.*) You refer to permanent improvements, not to manures?—Not to manures; and they get fully compensated for the manures; I meant in the shape of building or draining.

57,023. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) All that is done by the landlord?—Yes.

Dairy factories.

57,024. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you any suggestions to make as to agricultural co-operation; I see it is on your notes?—Well, I think there might be something done with the dairy farming—the co-operative factories.

57,025. The creameries?—Yes, butter and cheese.

57,026. Has any experiment been tried in Glamorganshire?—I do not think there has.

Average rents.

57,027. The rents in the Vale of Glamorgan were formerly very high; it was very valuable land?—Yes, they were very fairly high, but it was very good land.

57,028. What would be the average rent 20 years ago?—About the land it would average 30*s.* 30 years ago.

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57,029. I am speaking of 20 years ago?—It would average a good deal of it 30*s.* per acre and now it is about 1*l.* per acre.

57,030. Have you been on the Assessment Committee yourself?—Yes.

Rateable value of land.

57,031. Could you explain to the Commission on what principle this 15 per cent. on agricultural land was agreed to?—I think I explained that I objected to it.

57,032. On what principle was it justified?—I cannot tell you because there was a sort of depression in agriculture. But I was very much against it. They were mostly farmers on the Assessment Committee and they carried it.

57,033. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was this reduction to allow for the remission of rents at all?—They took an arbitrary line and they told the overseers that they could reduce all the agricultural land by 15 per cent.

57,034. But do they take rent as the basis of valuation of your Union?—They always did till then.

57,035. They took the actual rent?—Yes.

57,036. Have there been any remissions of rent there?—Yes, on Lord Wimborne's estate very large remissions.

57,037. Would not those who argue in favour of this reduction of 15 per cent. support it on the ground that it was not fair to take the actual rent paid as the value of the land when there was always a considerable remission?—But then they did so. On those estates of Lord Wimborne's property those tenants had the benefit both ways because their rents have been reduced and they get the 15 per cent. reduction too, therefore it was quite unfair.

57,038. I am not justifying it. I am only asking whether that was the ground on which they supported it?—No.

57,039. Then on what ground was it supported?—That the farmers were having bad times as far as I could make out.

Improvements by landlords.

57,040. You say no improvements have been made by the tenants—have there not been very large improvements made by the landlords?—I think the buildings are better than they were.

57,041. The landlords have incurred considerable expenditure in the erection of buildings?—Yes.

Rents.

57,042. And notwithstanding that the rents have fallen?—They have in the Vale of Glamorgan; not in the hills.

57,043. But the rents are not high in the hills now, I think you said?—I should say, if anything, they are higher than they were in the hills.

57,044. But still they are not high rents?—But they are high enough because it is poor land.

Cheap loans for public works.

57,045. You recommend, I think, that the Public Works Loan Commissioners should reduce their rate of interest?—Yes.

57,046. They charge now much the same as they did a good many years ago?—They charge the same as they did when money was 3½ per cent.; they charge 3½ per cent. now as they did 15 years ago.

57,047. And your county council can borrow I think at 3 per cent.?—Yes, I think our county council can borrow at 2¾.

57,048. Do you think it is desirable that the county councils should be allowed to borrow money to lend to the other authorities in the county?—I think it would be better done to borrow straight from the Imperial Government the same as they do now. It is giving an immense deal of work to county councils which I think they are hardly fit to perform; they would be practically bankers.

57,049. But you know in county boroughs the Corporations very frequently borrow to lend to the other authorities in the town, the school board and the guardians for instance; and in many cases when they have done that they have paid off the Public Works Loan Commissioners because they find they can borrow at a lower rate of interest. Are you against county councils having a similar power?—I am not exactly against it, but it would create less confusion. There is the machinery now in existence if the rate of interest was reduced. Why that should not be extended I do not know. It would be quite as simple as the county council carrying it out.

57,050. And what rate of interest do you think should be charged?—I should have said one-eighth or one-fourth to pay the expenses above the amount you have to pay, probably one-eighth would pay it if the Government did it, and it was a large amount. If the county had to do it they would have to charge one-fourth. We have very large sums in the county of Glamorgan to borrow. Probably we could do it in that county much better than in some others. I happen to be chairman of the county council.

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57,051. And you do not want the business?—We do not want the business.

57,052. But I suppose insurance companies will lend it at very much the same amount of interest now as the Public Works Loan Commissioners?—Yes.

57,053. There is no particular advantage at the present time in borrowing from the Public Works Loan Commissioners except in the case of a very small authority?—No, there is not.

57,054. And to a great extent it has been discontinued by the large authorities. In former years large corporations like Birmingham used to borrow from the Government and now they have most of them repaid their money and have borrowed at cheaper rates?—There are now financial agencies offering to lend you money, I am in correspondence with one for an urban district, of which I am chairman, and we probably should pay off the Government and get the money at 2¾ per cent. *The witness subsequently wrote:*—"I have "since ascertained that the agency I speak of will lend "at 3¼ on 5,000*l.*"

57,055. The practice of the Public Works Loan Commissioners at the present time to lend at a low rate of interest—what they call a low rate of interest—is of advantage to very small local authorities?—I think their rate of interest is excessively high.

57,056. That is what I am saying, that by reason of their charging their present rate it is only worth the while of a very small authority to borrow from them—the bigger authorities get no advantage from it?—Not where there are large sums wanted.

Government provision of school buildings.

57,057. You think that school buildings should be provided for by the Government?—I think so. I think that ought to come out of Imperial taxation; the building fund, not the maintenance.

57,058. I suppose that is the great source of expenditure of your school boards?—Yes, it is pretty heavy; the demands now of the Education Department are very strong; they want everything perfectly done.

57,059. Would you suggest that voluntary school buildings also, should be provided by the Government, or merely the school board buildings?—I think we may have to pay the rates.

57,060. Only in the case of the school boards?—I do not think I should give it to voluntary schools; certainly not.

57,061. Can you say over how many years the repayment of those school loans now extend?—I think the utmost is 50 years, but I should think they average between 30 and 40.

57,062. Is not the higher school board rate partly owing, in some districts, to the fact that the period allowed for the repayment of these loans is a great deal too short, and it becomes a very heavy burden upon the present generation?—I think they are mostly 35 years.

57,063. Would the buildings last for longer than that?—I think they would probably last 50 years at least.

Rates.

57,064. You say that the average poor rate in Glamorganshire was about 1*s.*?—Yes, about 1*s.* This is poor rate and county rate alone, not highway, sanitary, or school rates.

57,065. From Mr. Fowler's return it seems to be very high in some of the unions. Take Bridgend and Cowbridge, that you mentioned. Do you know whether it has fallen there since 1891?—It is less, I think, because the rateable value of the union has gone up so much; the rateable value of the railway itself in that union has gone up nearly 25,000*l.*

57,066. Since when?—It was put up last year.

57,067. You think the rate has fallen since the date of Mr. Fowler's return in 1890 and 1891?—I have said it has, for the reason that the rateable value has gone up very much.

57,068. According to the return, Bridgend and Cowbridge is only one in 1890 and 1891 out of the eight unions in which the rate levied for the expenditure of the poor law authorities was over 2*s.* in the pound?—I think I may be wrong. I think the rate in my own

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parish is 2*s.* in the pound, which has practically covered the poor rate, and the highway rate, and the sanitary rate.

57,069. And the school board rate?—Well, it did not cover it last year; our school board rate would be 3*d.*

57,070. But taking the average rates in Glamorganshire in 1890 and 1891, taking the whole county, the rural rates were very exceptionally high; according to this return the average rate for the county was 2*s.* 7*d.* in 1890 and 1891?—I should not have thought so. That probably includes more than the actual poor rate, it includes the highway rate, and the sanitary rate.

57,071. Clearly, but it includes the poor law relief, the county rate, the rural sanitary, and the rural school board rates?—The 2*s.* 7*d.*

57,072. Yes. But that is the average of the whole county?—I should not call that excessive.

57,073. Not for Wales, but it is considerably higher than the average for England and Wales?—I hardly think so.

57,074. Well, in 1890-91 the average was 2*s.* 2*d.* for the whole of England and Wales, and for Glamorganshire it was 2*s.* 7*d.*?—It is the school board rate that fills up so.

57,075. What is the poor law rate?—The poor rate is not excessive; not the actual poor rate.

57,076. What union are you speaking of?—Cowbridge.

57,077. It is 2*s.* 1*d.* there in 1890 and 1891?—But that is the highway rate, sanitary and school board rates.

57,078. The rate I am speaking of was simply the rate levied by the poor law authority. You will find it on page 43 of Mr. Fowler's report?—I should have thought not.

57,079. I am not saying that that is so at the present minute, for you told us that since then there has been an alteration?—At the present time, in the last three years, the rate in the parish has been 1*s.* in the half year; that is 2*s.* in the year has paid everything with the exception of the school board rate. The parish of Llantaran, where a large quantity of value has arisen on account of railways, we have more than half the value in railways.

57,080. That is an exceptional parish?—But the rate per pound would be the same all over the union.

57,081. How do you pay for your highways?—We pay, since the Act of 1888, the same as under the English Act.

57,082. It goes over the whole county?—Over the whole district.

57,083. But the school board rate, how is that?—That would be a special rate.

57,084. And the railway property, coming in your parish, has considerably reduced it?—It helps us considerably.

57,085. You say in your district the farm house is always rated separately for the purposes of those sanitary rates?—They are rated for sanitary purposes separately.

57,086. You know that is not the universal practice. But you feel sure that it is pretty universal in your district?—It is.

57,087. But it is, I believe, frequently not done, from the trouble that it causes in many parts of the country—I am not saying that it ought not to be done?—In all urban districts it is done; and in the rural parishes, which are essentially rural, probably the sanitary rate up till now has not come up to the 1*d.*, and therefore it is not worth while to alter it in these particular parishes.

57,088. I only want to know the practice in your district—it is universal in your part of the country?—I can hardly say that. It is not done in every parish, where it does not exceed a 1*d.* rate for instance.

57,089. It is not ordered to be done?—There is no occasion to do it.

57,090. You say a considerable quantity of land has gone back to grass. Is that mainly the wheat-growing land?—There was a great deal more corn than there is now. There is a great deal of ground laid down to grass, which comes up very quickly there.

57,091. Has that led to any depopulation of the rural parishes?—No.

57,092. Do you give as much employment in the district where it comes back to grass as when you cultivate corn?—Well, perhaps hardly that. We are generally short of labour. The labour nearly all goes to the works; really it has a tendency to go away.

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57,093. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) It goes where?—To the collieries.

Forestry.

57,094. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You think foresting should be encouraged?—I think it is desirable.

57,095. How would you encourage it?—That is another matter.

57,096. Have there been any experiments made in your part of the country?—Larch and timber grows very well in some parts of the hills, and probably it would pay better than others.

57,097. You think it is a favourable district to try it in?—I think it is. You have to pay the rates now, and you would have to pay the tithe and everything on the land whether you planted it or not. That could be relieved and a charge made when it was cut and it would probably be better then.

57,098. You say in your proof that the land has deteriorated by the sale of hay and straw, but I do not think you have given any evidence about it?—That is so.

Free sale.

57,099. Is freedom of sale allowed in your part of the country?—Pretty well.

57,100. A man is allowed to sell whatever he likes?—Yes.

57,101. And the result has been deleterious to the land?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,102. You say the Agricultural Holdings Act is is hardly ever used in your county?—I hardly know a case. Wherever it has been tried it has been always unsatisfactory.

57,103. Has it been tried?—It has been tried in one or two cases. There has generally been litigation over it. The landowners endeavoured to enforce the Agricultural Holdings Act, and they have generally got the worst of it.

Depression in Glamorganshire.

57,104. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You say that the depression in Glamorganshire is not so severe as it is in other counties. Are you speaking of other counties in Wales, or in England or both?—It was so in other counties in South Wales. Glamorgan had an exceptional quantity of rain as compared with the other counties. It was very noticeable if you went from Cardiff to Carmarthen, the country was green, and when you got to Pembrokeshire it was dried up and brown, and beyond Cardiganshire.

57,105. And owing to that, since 1893 it has been less distressed than other counties?—What our people lost was on the price of cattle, though probably we did not lose as much as the west country people those of Pembrokeshire and Cardigan.

57,106. Previous to the time when you had rain, while other counties were suffering from drought, was there more or less depression than in other counties?—Much less.

57,107. Was it very much the same?—Well, we had this advantage. Our cows produced more milk, and we could make more cheese.

57,108. And you had plenty for them to eat?—We had plenty for them to eat.

57,109. And you say there was a considerable depreciation in the value of purely agricultural land, from 10 to 15 per cent. Is that in selling or letting value?—I meant that was in selling, but I fancy it will come back now. The railway called the Vale of Glamorgan Railway, which will open up that district, will probably bring the land up to be worth as much as it was 10 years ago.

Laying land down to grass.

57,110. With regard to this land which has gone back to grass. You say that in your district the grass there comes very quickly, does it become good grass?—It is very fair pasture in seven years.

57,111. For permanent pasture?—Yes, if it is properly laid down.

57,112. If it is properly laid down?—Yes, but it would come almost itself, if you manured it.

57,113. Has it been laid down or gone back itself?—Some has been properly laid down, but some has gone back naturally.

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57,114. But still, if you have to change your system of cultivation, it presents natural facilities to go back to grass?—Yes.

57,115. And those facilities have been to a considerable extent availed of?—Yes, I think they have.

Wages.

57,116. The wages have been very high, but that is in consequence of the competition of the collieries?—Yes.

Low prices.

57,117. You say that the prices have fallen, chiefly of corn and of wool, owing to foreign competition. But is it not the fact that wool has risen of late a good deal in price?—No, I do not think so.

57,118. Not in Wales?—Our wool has not risen very much.

57,119. The rise is limited entirely to long wool—the Lincolnshire wool, or wherever they have got that class of sheep which produces that long wool?—I do not think our short Welsh wool has risen.

Prices of butter.

57,120. Then again, you have suffered very much from the fall of butter?—We suffered last winter. The price was not nearly so good as it used to be. I was informed that it was owing to the New Zealand butter that came in.

57,121. That is a matter in Glamorganshire of great importance?—Yes, our butter and cheese are our chief products.

57,122. Will that effect the question of rents?—Well, this summer I do not think the butter has fallen.

57,123. (*Chairman.*) I understood you to say that last winter, it fell?—Last winter it did fall.

57,124. For the price of winter butter, but the price of summer butter seems to have been the same as in the past year, and it was only last year that the fall was observed. Is that so?—It was only last year that I observed it.

57,125. Up to last year the price was about the same in the winter as about the average?—Yes, the butter did not go up in the winter as it has before.

57,126. In other winters it had gone up?—Yes.

57,127. What you complain of in the case of butter you observed for the first time last winter?—I think so.

The law of distress.

57,128. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are of opinion, I see in your proof, that the law of distraint should be amended. Did you state in what respect it ought to be amended?—I think I am wrong in saying that. I am not quite sure that I am sufficiently clear, but where the distraint seems to me to be unjust is this: I had one instance—it was my own sister—where the landowner is able to distrain upon an under-tenants' property, without his giving notice that the tenant owed money, when the under-tenant goes in.

57,129. The under-tenant where land has been sublet, you mean?—Yes.

57,130. And the landlord is able to distrain on the stock upon the land of the sub-tenant?—Yes, I had a case with which I had to do—it was a sister of my own, who took a farm attached to a house which belonged to Lord Dunraven. The man she took it of had not paid Lord Dunraven, but she had no means of knowing that, and Lord Dunraven ought to have given her notice that the rent was not paid before he was able to distrain. I think that should be remedied in some way. If the owner can distrain he should be bound to give the person going in with his consent as a sub-tenant, a notice that the rent is unpaid, and that any rents due must be paid to him by the sub-tenant.

57,131. If that were done, that would meet your views?—Yes.

57,132. In this case no notice was given?—In this case the notice was not given. They did not give notice. They paid the rent.

57,133. What rent? Was it paid by the sub-tenant to the tenant?—As a matter of fact I arranged the matter. It might have been done, I say the person is open to that.

Tenure.

57,134. The depression is not owing to anything unsatisfactory in the nature of land tenure, is it?—I do not think so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act and Glamorganshire custom.

57,135. The Agricultural Holdings Act is very seldom used, but you have a system of tenant right. Is that analogous to the tenant right customs in England?—Practically the tenant right there gives the full price for everything.

57,136. (*Chairman.*) It is very much like the Lincolnshire custom, is it not?—It is better than the Lincolnshire custom.

57,137. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you stated what the terms of the tenant right are. It would be interesting to know if it is better than the Lincolnshire custom?—I am hardly capable of that.

57,138. Is it a custom applying to the county of Glamorganshire alone that you are speaking of?—I think it does. I do not think it is the same custom in Monmouthshire or the west—I do not know their custom.

57,139. But you could put it in?—Yes.

57,140. (*Chairman.*) If you will add to your evidence when you get it to correct what the actual facts of this custom are, it will be interesting?—Yes, I will.

57,141. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I suppose there are tenant-rights valuers in Glamorganshire?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A.)

57,142. Are there any of them from whom we could get the details and particulars of this custom?—Yes. There is a very good man, a man named Mr. John Lewis, near Cowbridge; he is a tenant, I should call him principally a farmer's valuer. If you want his address I can give it to you.

57,143. Would he be thoroughly conversant with the custom, and able to put it before the Commission?—Yes.

57,144. Would he be willing to come as a witness?—Yes.

Ground game.

57,145. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In reference to these proposals for dealing with ground game, would you give the tenant the right to enter the plantations on the farm, or bounding his farm, to kill ground game?—No, I do not think I should.

57,146. Then I understand you to say that the landlord was not to have a concurrent right to kill—the landlord was to have no right to destroy ground game?—No, I think not. I think the game on the land, certainly the ground game, should be entirely the property of the tenant. If he likes to let it to the landlord he can.

57,147. Then there is property of the landlord's that might suffer, is there not—young trees, hedges and so forth—who is to be responsible for damage done to them?—I take it that the tenant would be.

57,148. The tenant would be liable in damages?—He is liable now in damages if he suffers his hedges to be spoiled.

57,149. And if he allowed rabbits near a young plantation made by the proprietor, would he be liable?—I do not know that he would be liable off his own holding; but a tenant would be liable for not keeping his fences in order.

57,150. But the landlord may reserve a piece of ground for a young plantation. Is it a practical proposal that a landlord should have no right to kill ground game?—But then that would be in the landlord's occupation.

57,151. But the tenant might allow the game to increase so much on his part that it would destroy the young trees?—Just so; but then I take it that you would have to do exactly the same as the tenant now. Where he has a neighbour, he would have to wire them out, or keep them out.

Technical education.

57,152. Has your county been doing anything in the way of technical education in regard to this dairying work?—Yes, we have schools.

57,153. Has that been going on for some time?—It has been going on now for some two or three years—two years.

57,154. Has the effect of it been noticeable in the improvement of butter?—No, I do not think it has. I do not think the dairy school has taken so well in Glamorganshire as it has in Monmouthshire.

57,155. Have you tried the system of sending instructors to the different farms, not in those large classes, to point out the methods that might be adopted for improving the making of butter by simple means?—No, we have not.

State loans.

57,156. You say while you approve of State loans for schools, and the making of new roads, et cetera, you do not approve of landlords getting State loans for permanent improvements, such as buildings, at a cheap rate?—I did not understand that; I did not think it meant landlord's loans: I thought it meant tenants.

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57,157. You say in your brief, "I do not think State loans would be advisable"?—I thought that applied to the tenants.

57,158. Then you would approve of landlords getting the advantage of State loans at a low rate of interest for all permanent improvements?—Oh, yes, certainly.

57,159. Then do you think that in your part of the country it would be taken advantage of?—No, I do not think it would very much.

Tenure.

57,160. (*Mr. Clay.*) You say that the present system of tenure is satisfactory. Are you speaking from a landlord's point of view or a tenant's?—Well, I am speaking from my own point of view. I have not had a change of tenants for years—for generations; they always seem to go on.

57,161. Is your tenure on the lease system, or year to year?—Year to year.

57,162. And you find that works satisfactorily to the tenants?—They do not go, and I suppose it is satisfactory to them.

Position of tenants.

57,163. With the reduction you have given of 30 per cent., have they been able to keep their land in good condition and make a little money?—Yes, I think that my tenants, the hill farmers, have improved their condition if anything, because it is owing to the collieries springing up and their being able to sell everything easily, and their market is on the spot almost; they have only to ride or drive a couple of miles, and they can send their produce straight away to the consumer at the colliery, or the people around the collieries at the very best prices possible.

57,164. Does that apply largely to your county? Everyone will not be so favourably situated?—It applies, as I said before, to the hill part which will be most likely three-quarters of the county, or, perhaps, more than two-thirds.

Hill farms.

57,165. But in the hill farms the principal produce will come from sheep?—Sheep; but they make butter and cheese.

57,166. Do you run cattle on the hills much?—Yes, they run a few—they keep young cattle.

57,167. Is it from dairying, or breeding, that they derive their profit?—From breeding; they breed cattle.

57,168. Do they fatten them?—No; they generally sell them as two-year-old steers.

57,169. Then they will not sell the lean cattle?—But that is one item. Say that a man keeps 8 to 10 cows he would probably rear the produce of those cows, and he would sell them as two-year old.

57,170. He would sell two-year-olds, but are they fat or lean?—Well, the principal produce would be the cheese and butter from the cows, and a few sheep.

57,171 And he is not dependent upon the colliery for the lean cattle that he sells from the mountains?—No.

57,172. So that it only resolves itself into this: that they benefit by the milk, butter, and cheese that they make?—And the mutton.

57,173. Does he feed sheep?—Welsh sheep are generally kept three or four years, and then they are sold fat.

57,174. Off the mountains?—Off the mountains. They do not get very much oil-cake. I do not suppose that they would eat it if they got it.

57,175. (*Chairman.*) Do your colliers eat a good deal of meat?—Yes.

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57,176. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding the price of wool, they are black-faced sheep, are they not?—They are white faced.

Price of wool.

57,177. You have mountain sheep?—But they are white faced.

57,178. What is the price per pound just now of the wool from the white-faced sheep?—I do not think it is worth more than 6½*d.* to day.

57,179. Is that a paying price?—No, certainly not.

57,180. And your black-faced wool, have you none of it?—No.

57,181. But you have the black-faced mountain sheep in Wales?—Not in our part. We have a mixture now of Cheviot; they are white-faced. There is a good deal of Cheviot and Radnor Forest amongst some of the sheep.

57,182. Does not that command more than 6*d.* per pound?—It was 6½*d.*

57,183. As far as you know there has been no rise in your wool?—I do not think there has been.

Rateable value of land.

57,184. (*Chairman.*) I should like you to consider the evidence you have given with regard to rents and the value of land when you correct your evidence, because it would seem from the return which has been laid before Parliament both by the assessment committees of the different unions and also by the income tax officers, that the value of land in Glamorganshire, as a whole, has considerably increased since 1870, and has gone down a little since 1879; but not at all so much as it rose between 1870 and 1879; and that the value of land at the present moment in Glamorganshire is considerably above what it was in the year 1871. That seems rather inconsistent with the statements you have made that rents have been reduced 25 per cent. What I cannot help thinking is that in some parts of the vale the land may have fallen, but that it has risen in the hill country, and the one balances the other?—I think I told you that. In the purely agricultural part I think the rent has fallen quite as much as 25 per cent.

57,185. But it has risen in the hill country?—It has risen in the hill country.

57,186. In what proportion does the hill country compare with the low country?—I think at least two-thirds, but certainly one-third, if not more.

57,187. Then, in fact, the rise in the hill district may have more than balanced the fall in the vale district?—It may.

57,188. That may account for what you have said; and in the vale district where they have grain in the past their rents have fallen?—Yes.

57,189. But in the pastoral districts—in the hill country—they may have risen?—There rents have not fallen, but if anything they have increased.

57,190. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You say that 15 per cent. has very recently been taken off from the amounts in your union. Could you give me the date of that, was it this year or last year?—Last year (*see question* 56,911).

57,191. For Lady Day 1894, or Lady Day 1895?—It was, I think, taken off the May assessment.

57,192. The May assessment in 1894?—Yes.

57,193. Then that would not appear in this return?—No, it would not.

57,194. This return is for the assessment at Lady Day 1894; and, therefore, the present assessment in your union, if it was in May 1894, has reduced the amounts since this return was made?—I should think it has.

57,195. Would you ascertain that, because it makes all the difference?—Yes, I shall do that.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. P. P. Pennant.

Mr. Philip Pennant Pennant called and examined.

Mr. P. P. Pennant.

57,196. (*Chairman.*) Are you the owner of land in the county of Flint?—Yes.

57,197. You are chairman of the Flintshire Quarter Sessions?—Yes.

57,198. And you are late President of the Vale of Clwyd Chamber of Agriculture?—Yes.

57,199. And treasurer and member of the Agricultural Committee of the North Wales University College?—Yes.

57,200. And you are chairman of the Flintshire and Denbighshire Dairy School?—Yes.

57,201. What is the extent of your property in Flintshire?—My own property is something under 2,000 acres; I am not a large landowner.

57,202. Are you connected with other estates?—No, I am not.

57,203. Do you farm yourself?—To a certain extent. I manage my own property; I mean I have no agent between myself and the tenants.

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Mr. P. P. Pennant.
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Small farms.

57,204. What is the general condition of the farming industry round you; are the farms large or small?—The bulk of the farms are decidedly small; there are in the bottoms of the valleys a few large farms, but they are quite the exception.

57,205. Are there many small labour holdings?—There are; there is a very considerable number of what are called the "three acre and the cow" holdings. There is a large number of those, and they have proved a very great advantage, I think.

Cheese-making.

57,206. In the east of the county are they largely occupied in making cheese?—Yes.

57,207. And in the west the breeding of store cattle and rearing, butter making and milk selling?—Yes, they used to make cheese to a considerable extent within my remembrance; but that is almost entirely given up in the west, although I think and I hope it is coming back; because I am quite clear that cheese-making has been the most profitable form of agriculture during recent years.

57,208. Is part of the county an arable district?—Yes, but very much less so than it used to be. The arable land has been turned into grass to a very large extent.

57,209. But a few years ago it was largely an arable district, was it not?—It was.

57,210. In fact, the east of Flintshire partook more of the English style of agriculture, and was more like England than Wales?—The East was more like Cheshire; they made Cheshire cheese there, and they make Cheshire cheese there now. That has always been a grass country.

57,211. That has always been a grass country?—Yes.

Alteration in system of agriculture.

57,212. But what of the arable district?—That is the more western part of the county; the tillage land has been largely turned into grass.

57,213. What did it grow; did it grow wheat?—It used to grow wheat, barley, and oats, it was cultivated on the regular 4-course shift.

57,214. And that has now been completely altered, or largely altered?—It has died out very much, and there is a good deal of rotation grass which is left down till it begins to fade away, and then it is ploughed up, but there is a good deal of land that has become permanent grass.

57,215. Then a certain amount of the land has been turned into permanent grass, and other land by extending the rotation has been turned to temporary grasses for three or four years, and then ploughed up?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

57,216. Have the rents been considerably reduced?—Not so much in the cheese-making part of the county, but in other parts.

57,217. You would say not in the grass districts, I suppose?—No, not so much.

57,218. But in the arable district?—In what was arable they have, to a considerable extent, but it is more particularly on the larger farms that the rents have been reduced, and the reason of that, I take it, is that persons who have to bring capital into farming are disinclined to do so; but on the smaller farms where much capital has not to be brought in the rents have not been reduced in the same way.

57,219. What should you say has been the reduction upon the larger arable farms?—I should say the reductions in the county have been from 30 per cent. to nothing.

57,220. I wanted to distinguish between the arable district that you speak of and the purely pastoral district?—In my district it averages about 25 per cent.

57,221. Is that the arable district?—Yes.

57,222. In the eastern district, which is the cheese district, and which is a grass district, what has the reduction been?—It is comparatively small.

57,223. Is it 5 or 10 per cent.?—I should think that is more like 5 or 10 per cent. Then also there is not the same reduction in the neighbourhood of watering places or collieries.

Depression in Flintshire.

57,224. Then the depression has not been so much felt even in the corn-growing districts as in the rest of England?—Oh, dear no, nothing at all like that.

57,225. And in the case of the grass districts comparatively little?—No, it would be more as in Cheshire, in the cheese-making districts.

57,226. What has been the range of prices for store cattle, have they fluctuated a good deal?—They have fluctuated most enormously, but I think that since what is called the depression began they have been as high or higher occasionally than they ever were before. I think it was in the year 1883, but I will not be quite sure as to the year, that they reached, perhaps, as high a point as any, but they also have been equally low. There have been great fluctuations.

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Price of cattle.

57,227. I suppose it is rather difficult to average them?—It is very difficult to average them. Two years ago they were very low, this spring, again, they were very high, and I think if there had only been rain throughout England we should have had them extremely high at the present time, only the sale has been checked and stopped now.

57,228. Then the great drought in England caused a very great fall in the value of the store cattle in your part of Wales in 1893?—Undoubtedly.

57,229. And, I suppose, led to a scarcity of animals?—It did.

57,230. Then the next year the price rose again?—Yes, it improved.

57,231. Did it rise to its former level?—I think barely, last year; but this year it is a high price, or it was in the early part of the year.

57,232. That was checked by the long drought of this spring and summer, I suppose?—That was checked by the long drought in England. We are very dependent upon the rainfall in the eastern and southern parts of England.

57,233. I suppose the recent fall of rain and the consequent prospects of better pasture and roots in England has checked a fall?—Yes.

57,234. And things are rather improving again now?—Yes, as we shall see after harvest, which is the time when store cattle go into England when there is food for them.

57,235. I suppose we may expect in consequence of the change there may be a better price now?—I am in great hopes that there will be a fair price this autumn.

57,236. Then this fluctuation of price is mainly due to the conditions in England?—It is.

57,237. In the districts where these cattle go to be fed?—It is; I look upon great fluctuations as a disadvantage to a farmer; if it was kept steady at the average between the high and the low prices it would be better for him.

57,238. These great fluctuations seem to be due to conditions over which you have no control, so to speak?—No.

57,239. And for which your district is not responsible?—No.

57,240. It is mainly due to conditions in the east and centre of England, where these cattle are sent to?—It is so.

Price of butter.

57,241. Then with regard to butter, have you anything to say?—I think butter has this year been as low as it has been for many years.

57,242. What is that due to?—I suppose it is due to large foreign importations, and also partly, no doubt, to the depression of trade in the manufacturing districts. We are so near the large manufacturing centres of population, that we, no doubt, are affected considerably by the state of the markets of those places, Liverpool, Manchester, Leeds, and those large towns; and we are also affected in this way, that when there is depression there, the watering places are in a less flourishing condition, and they act directly upon us, and very quickly.

57,243. Such places as Llandudno, I suppose?—Llandudno and Rhyl and so forth.

57,244. Is there still a good price for the best class of butter?—Last year our dairy school butter got 1*s.* 3*d.* per pound all through the season. We have had a travelling dairy up to this date, and our stationary dairy school is just opened this week, and I am curious to see whether we are able to maintain our old price.

57,245. Is 1*s.* 3*d.* the price of the best butter?—Yes in the summer time.

57,246. Should you say that the price of the best butter has been fairly maintained or not?—I think so far it has had to yield.

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57,247. You say in your brief that "butter is much "lower, except the best for which there are good "markets at the watering places"?—I am not speaking so much of the present moment; in fact, this was written some time ago. I am not speaking of this year particularly, but I am speaking of the last few years.

57,248. Taking generally the price of the last few years, has the price of the best butter been maintained? It has.

57,249. It has been maintained?—Yes, the price of the best.

57,250. Do you think the lower price of the inferior qualities is due in part to the superior uniformity in quality of the imported butter?—Yes, I think so.

57,251. Especially the Danish butter?—Undoubtedly.

Quality of butter.

57,252. Have any efforts been made in your county to improve the general quality of the butter and to secure uniformity?—We have an active dairy school, and we send a travelling dairy through the county.

57,253. Is there any co-operation among the farmers?—No

57,254. No attempt, such as they have made in Denmark so successfully, to secure uniformity of quality over a large district?—No, no attempt has been made yet. Yet there has been a good deal of talk about it, and I hope we are getting to it, because I am quite convinced that it must come.

57,255. It must come?—And the sooner the better.

57,256. Then the competition has told upon you mainly in that direction, namely, that the better butter coming from Denmark is of a greater uniformity of quality?—Yes.

57,257. And therefore, your inferior butter does not compete with it?—Large dealers insist upon uniformity, and we are out of the market altogether with our various qualities.

57,258. At the same time your best butter fetches a good price?—Yes, choice butter.

57,259. Therefore, if you could only raise the general quality, and bring about uniformity of quality throughout the districts of production, you might compete on fair terms with this foreign butter?—We could, and it would not be so much quality as uniformity that is required, because the large dealers will not look at people who merely sell butter, but not of uniform quality.

57,260. They prefer uniformity to any other quality?—Yes.

57,261. They must have it?—They like to know exactly what they are dealing with.

57,262. Exactly what it will be, so that they may ensure their customers being satisfied with it?—Yes.

Wages.

57,263. Then with regard to wages, what has been the course of agricultural wages in the district?—Wages took an upward jump about the years 1873 and 1874; the collieries at that time were extremely brisk, coal was a higher price than it has ever been before or since, and that sent up labour, and it has never gone down since.

57,264. Have wages never gone down since?—No, practically the wages of agricultural labour have never gone down since.

57,265. What has been the average, then?—It varies with the distance from the collieries and works. If you took about a 30-mile distance from them a labourer would be worth about 15*s.* a week, and as you got nearer the collieries it would increase up to 18*s.* or 1*l.*

57,266. Then should you say a large proportion of the labourers in your district got the higher rate or the lower rate?—It depends on the distance they are from the collieries.

57,267. I mean roughly speaking?—About even, I should say.

57,268. That is to say, one-half of them being at a distance from the collieries get the lower rate of 15*s.*, and one-half of them being within easy reach feel the competition of the collieries and get the 18*s.*?—Yes, it would be a gradually increasing scale.

57,269. In both cases, I suppose, there was a rise in 1873?—Yes.

Demand for labour.

57,270. Then looking to the great fall in prices of the main articles of subsistence, the labourers in your district must be very much better off than they were?—Very much, unquestionably. The labourers have decreased in numbers in the purely agricultural part of the district, but that, I take it, may be due to the tillage land having become grass land.

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57,271. There is not so much demand for it in the purely rural districts?—No.

57,272. Owing to the conversion of arable into pasture?—Yes, and the worst of it is that the best labourers have gone away. A clever man will see his way to better himself by going into the district where there are works and so forth, and they go and they leave the worst behind, so that there is no doubt the labour has increased in price, and at the same time it has deteriorated in quality.

57,273. You think there is reason to believe that the average has rather deteriorated?—Yes, for that reason.

57,274. In consequence of the best men being attracted away?—Yes.

57,275. In spite of the higher wages?—I do not say that the individual has deteriorated, but I say that the best—the cream—of the labouring class gravitate either to the works, or to Liverpool or Manchester, which are within easy reach.

Size of farms.

57,276. I suppose the small farmers do not employ much labour?—No, they do not.

57,277. What is an average small farm in your district?—I should think that the farms run from 50 to 120 acres. Farms of that size would cover the greater part of the country.

57,278. The large farms beyond that are the exception?—Yes, they are merely in the valleys.

57,279. And not many of them?—No.

Labour on small farms.

57,280. Now with farms of from 50 to 120 acres, would the tenant employ much labour or not?—Very little indeed.

57,281. He and his family would work?—Yes; of course, if he has no family, he employs a certain amount of labour.

57,282. But where they have families, the families themselves work?—Yes; of course, at harvest time, he must get help.

57,283. Should you say the profits of farmers have been much reduced or not?—Yes, I am sure they have.

Demand for farms.

59,284. Where the farms are vacant, is there still a demand for them?—Yes; there is no land that is not let.

57,285. Taking the good classes of farms you have spoken of, namely, the grass farms in the Eastern district, as compared with the others, I think you state that there has been no great reduction of rent in those grass farms?—No.

57,286. It has only been from 5 to 10 per cent.?—Yes.

57,287. Where farms of that kind are vacant, is there a great demand for them?—Yes, they are easily let.

57,288. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) The little farms?—No; the Chairman is speaking of the farms in the cheese-making district, I understand, and there is no difficulty in letting them there. There is no real difficulty in letting them in any part of the county.

57,289. (*Chairman.*) Going on to the others, the small farms in the cheese district when such a farm is vacant, is it easy to let it at the same rent as was obtained from the former tenant, subject to this reduction of from 5 to 10 per cent.?—Yes, a reduction of something of that sort.

57,290. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You are now speaking of a small farm in the cheese district?—Of the farms generally in the cheese district.

57,291. (*Chairman.*) There there is no difficulty in letting?—No.

57,292. Are there plenty of applicants for a vacant farm?—Of course I cannot speak much from experience there. I have just a farm or two which gives me an opportunity of knowing something about it; but I have friends who have land there, and I can speak from my general knowledge.

57,293. You can speak from the general knowledge of the district?—Yes; there is no difficulty in letting the cheese farms.

57,294. Now coming to the other district, the district that was arable, and which was lately more turned into

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grass land, is there a difficulty there in letting the farms?—There is no difficulty in letting any farms unless they are large.

57,295. Unless they are large?—Then there becomes more difficulty.

57,296. But for the smaller farms, even there it is easy to find a tenant?—Yes.

57,297. At the reduced rent?—At a reduced rent; yes.

57,298. That is to say at the rent it has been reduced to the previous tenant, I suppose?—Yes.

57,299. But in the case of the larger farms when you get to farms of 400 or 500 acres, there is some difficulty?—Yes; I am sure there would be great difficulty. I have had no experience of that kind myself for I have had no farm of that size. I had a smaller farm which I had difficulty in letting, and I divided it into two, I was able to do so owing to the buildings, and almost before I divided it I had applicants.

Sub-division of farms.

57,300. Have there been many cases of farms being broken into smaller ones in that way?—It is a difficult thing to do unless there happen to be buildings suitfor the purpose, but in some cases farms have become large by consolidating two together, and there it has been comparatively easy to re-divide them.

57,301. The reverse action has taken place; you redivide it, and you find you can easily let them in smaller farms?—Yes.

Large and small farms compared.

57,302. I suppose with the larger farms the labour difficulty is considerable?—The labour difficulty comes in there to a much larger extent.

57,303. That accounts largely for the difficulty in letting the smaller farms as compared with the larger ones, does it not?—Yes; that is the principal reason.

57,304. In the smaller farms the man himself works with his family?—Yes.

57,305. In the larger farms he has to employ labour, and then he is met either by the increase of the wages of the labourer, or by the fact that there has been no reduction in the wages in proportion to the reduced prices of his products?—Yes; and I think on a large farm it is more difficult to alter the management. On a small farm it is easy to put down a few fields in grass, or let them down into grass, and the difficulty is more easily overcome; but on a large farm it is not so easy to change the system of management; the buildings and everything make it more difficult.

57,306. But I gather from you that even in the larger farms there has been nothing like the difficulty there has been in the east of England?—No; it is totally different to the east of England. I am acquainted with the east of England to a certain extent, and the two things are totally different.

Average rent.

57,307. What should you say is the average rent of land in your district?—In a hilly district the land has so many different elevations that it is very difficult to average, because it is from 30*s.* to 5*s.*, or something of that sort.

57,308. It is very difficult to average it, then?—Yes; it is very difficult.

57,309. It depends on its altitude and its nearness to a town or a market, I suppose?—Yes; and also that with grass land, whether there is water in the fields, and so forth, is a very important consideration.

57,310. In the case of the farms in the vales, what is the average rent there; that, I suppose, is more easy to average?—At the bottom of the vales you will be able to let land near the rivers for 30*s.* or more—45*s.*

57,311. In this district that you spoke of as having been arable land, what is the average price of land there?—I should think 1*l.* would be about it.

57,312. About 1*l.* an acre?—Yes; or more.

57,313. There the reduction has been 25 per cent., I think you say?—Yes.

57,314. Therefore it was about 26*s.* or 27*s.*, and is now 1*l.*?—Yes; that is a sort of a rough guess at what it would be.

Cost of production.

57,315. Then the cost of production due to the rise of wages has been a serious matter, and also the inferior quality of the labour has been a difficulty which larger farmers have had to submit to?—Yes; unquestionably.

Rates.

57,316. Has there been any increase in the rates?—The rates are growing, unquestionably, I have some details with regard to rates, I think there is one rate that has decreased, and only one, so far as I know, and that is the poor rate proper. The expenditure in maintenance and out-relief and salaries in Unions has decreased.

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57,317. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Which union?—Any union—all over the county, but I can specify exactly what it is in the St. Asaph Union.

57,318. (*Chairman.*) That is in Denbighshire?—It is put down in Denbighshire; it is half in Flintshire, and it is half in Denbighshire. For the three years 1878, 1879, and 1880, the expenditure was 9,230*l.*; and for the three years 1892, 1893, and 1894, it was 8,308*l.* That is a reduction of 10 per cent. as near as possible; but that is the only rate that has decreased.

57,319. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is that in maintenance or what? I did not quite catch?—That is for poor law purposes proper. The poor rate of course covers a great number of things.

57,320. (*Chairman.*) What has the rate in the £ been in respect of the poor rate?—I cannot tell you that. I can tell you what the total rate is. Then for lunacy purposes I can give you the rates for the same, or rather the expenditure on the rates—the charges on the rates for the five counties in North Wales for the same period.

57,321. I think that is perhaps going rather more into detail than we want, going into all these counties; perhaps you would say in reference to your own county whether the aggregate rates have increased or diminised?—They have increased.

57,322. What were they in the £ a few years ago?—At the time the county councils were formed a considerable subvention was received from the Imperial Exchequer amounting in value to about a 7½*d.* rate, and that brought down the rates to 2*s.* in the £ at that time.

57,323. Had the rates been 2*s.* 7*d.* in the £?—No; we received the money from the Exchequer before that, but we received a considerable amount more with the formation of the county councils, and that brought the rates down to 2*s.* in the £.

57,324. What had they been before that?—They had been about 2*s.* 4*d.*

57,325. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Where is this?—That would be in 1889, I suppose.

57,326. What area?—I am talking of Flintshire.

57,327. (*Chairman.*) It is one union only?—Yes, I am talking of my own rates, but the same would apply to the rest of the county excepting where there are education rates or special drainage rates.

57,328. Then, looking back a few years previously, had they been higher than 2*s.* 4*d.* in the £?—Yes, they had been.

57,329. They had been?—Yes, 2*s.* 6*d.*

57,330. Should you say there had been a continuous reduction of the aggregate rates, due partly to the reduced expenditure upon the poor, and partly to the increased subventions of the State?—Yes, but all other rates have increased enormously.

57,331. I thought you were speaking of the aggregate rate just now, when you said 2*s.* 4*d.*, brought down to 2*s.*?—I say the rate had been 2*s.* 4*d.*; the County Council Act, with the subvention that was received from the Exchequer, brought that down to 2*s.*, and that now has gradually increased. The rate for the first half of this year was 1*s.* 4*d.*, so that if it is the same in the second half that will bring it up to 2*s.* 8*d.*

57,332. (*Lord Rendel.*) There was a gradual reduction down to 1889?—Yes.

57,333. Since then there has been a gradual increase?—No; the reduction in 1889 was due to the money received from the Exchequer with the County Council Act.

57,334. (*Chairman.*) Did they remain at that level, namely, 2*s.*, for some little time?—They did; then they began to go up.

57,335. Then there was a tendency to go up?—Yes.

57,336. Of course, it may not be that the second half of this year will be so much as the first half?—It may not.

57,337. Therefore, you could not take that into account?—No.

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57,338. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In Flint there is but one union, and in Mr. Fowler's return for 1890 and 1891 the poor rate for poor law charges there was 1*s.* 7·9*d.*, and the county rate was 5·25*d.*, so taking those two alone, it comes to over 2*s.* Then there is the highway rate, the rural sanitary rate, and the rural school board rate. Those are the figures in the return for 1891, and they seem at first sight completely at variance with what you have given us?—Yes; might I look at that?

57,339. Certainly. (*Return handed to Witness.*) I think there is only one union in Flint?—There is only one union mentioned in Flint. Of course, I do not know why the Hawarden Union is not mentioned in Flint.

57,340. That is the Flint union county which is mentioned there?—A very large portion, almost half, of St. Asaph Union is in Flintshire, but it is called in Denbighshire, as I think, a rather larger portion is in Denbighshire.

57,341. (*Chairman.*) At all events, apparently your own experience in your own parish has been that the rates have been falling continuously for some period until quite lately when they rose again?—I say that the subvention under the County Council Act reduced the rates at a jump to a considerable amount.

57,342. Previously to that you told me that, some years ago, the rates were much higher then the 2*s.* 4*d.*?—Yes.

57,343. Therefore there had been a reduction from that to 2*s.* 4*d.* before the Local Government Act?—Yes.

57,344. Then the Local Government Act came into operation, and it reduced your rates to 2*s.* in the £?—It did.

57,345. Then you said that that went on for some little time, but that within the last year there has been an increase again?—Yes, it has been increasing.

Assessment to rates.

57,346. Now, have the assessments on land been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent?—They have been reduced in proportion to the reduction of rent, but no notice has been taken of abatements.

57,347. But where the actual permanent reductions have been made there the tenants have had the full value?—Yes, if they have gone to the assessment committee, which, I suspect, they generally do; I do not suppose it comes into operation quite at once.

57,348. When you spoke of a reduction of 25 per cent. did you mean permanent reductions?—No, I did not; I meant a reduction altogether—abatements and reductions.

57,349. What should you say has been the permanent reduction of rent in that district, apart from abatements?—It would be about 15 per cent., I should think.

57,350. Then, besides that, there have been now and then abatements?—No. In some cases, and in many cases, there have been abatements made in addition to reductions which practically become permanent. Now, there is my own case; I readjusted the whole of my rents; they were reduced about 15 per cent., but for the last four years I have, in addition to that, made an abatement of 10 per cent.

57,351. In that case, I suppose, the tenants have had the benefit of the reduced assessment to the extent of the permanent reduction of 15 per cent.?—They have.

57,352. But not for the abatements?—That is so.

57,353. Although those abatements have been continual year by year?—That is so.

57,354. Would it not therefore be desirable to convert these abatements which have been continued year by year into permanent reductions, because then the tenant would get the benefit of the reduction in his assessment?—I think it certainly would, of course, so soon as it becomes clear, but we have always been living in hope from year to year.

57,355. Apparently the hope has not been realised?—No, it has not; but I wanted to point out this with regard to the rates; I gave you one rate where there was a decrease, but in almost every other rate there has been a considerable increase. For instance, the rates for the lunatic asylum have increased about 45 per cent.

Rates.

57,356. Still there has been a great reduction in the poor rate apparently, and looking over a period of years, the reduction of that has more than met the increases in the other rates?—No, it has not nearly met them.

57,357. The figures in the statement you gave seem to show that they have?—No.

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57,358. Because you said that previous to 1888 there had been a reduction of the aggregate rating; then of course you must take into account the subventions?—Yes.

57,359. There was a reduction of 4*d.* in the £ in 1888 and that brought it down to 2*s.*?—Yes.

57,360. That 2*s.* went on for a few years till quite lately when there was somewhat of a rise?—Yes.

57,361. Therefore taking the aggregate of the rates and taking into account the subventions there has been, generally speaking, taking the term of years, a considerable reduction of rates in your district?—Apparently it has got to about the old point.

57,362. That is only the last year?—Yes, it is so.

57,363. But up to the last year there was a considerable reduction?—Yes, there had been a reduction; but there is one point that ought to be explained. The reduction in the rate is due to a considerable extent to the increase of the valuation, the country was not valued at its real value. All the valuation lists were below the real value and they vary very much between one union and another.

57,364. When was that, how long ago?—I am speaking of an experience going back, say, 30 years.

57,365. Yes, 30 years; but we have been speaking of later times than that?—I am taking the whole time, and it is only very gradually that the valuation lists have represented the real value of the property in the districts.

57,366. When was that completed?—I think it is complete now, but it was not a very few years ago, for in readjusting the county basis in Denbighshire comparatively a very few years ago, certainly not more than 10 years ago, we in the St. Asaph Union were obliged to complain of the Llanrwst Union and the whole assessments of that had to be raised 25 per cent. to bring them up and make them fair with the rest of the county.

Assessment to rates.

57,367. When I turn to the figures which have been supplied to the Local Government Board about the assessment of land, it would seem that in the case of land at all events there has been a very considerable reduction in the assessment?—Yes, but not so much as has really taken place.

57,368. In 1870 the land as distinguished from buildings and other property was valued at 79,000*l.* for the whole of the county of Flint and in 1894 it was valued at 64,000*l.* which is a reduction of 15,000*l.* which is at the rate of more than 20 per cent.?—Yes.

57,369. That would seem to be more than the reduction of rent that you have spoken of, because you have only spoken of permanent reductions to the extent of 15 per cent. over a part of the land, and not over the whole of it?—Yes.

57,370. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the Holywell Union?—Yes.

57,371. (*Chairman.*) From 79,000*l.* to 64,000*l.*, that is a reduction of 15,000*l.*; and that is something over 20 per cent. over the whole, if you take per-centage?—I think that in the Holywell Union the assessments were very fairly made; but the Holywell Union does not represent the county of Flint.

57,372. (*Mr. Dalton.*) It is not the geographical county of Flint but the union county of Flint?—It is not half the county, I think.

57,373. (*Chairman.*) Is it not half the county?—No, I should not say it was half; it may be nearly half, but barely half.

57,374. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the other union?—There is the Hawarden Union, and the St. Asaph Union.

57,375. (*Chairman.*) I see that in the Hawarden Union it is very difficult to make a comparison, because there have been several parishes transferred from Hawarden to another union; therefore it is almost impossible to make a comparison; but the figures in the return show a very large reduction in the assessment of the Hawarden Union. I thought we were dealing mainly with Flint, and in the case of Flint undoubtedly there has been a large reduction in the assessments?—In the Holywell Union.

57,376. You think that has not been so in the case of St. Asaph, and possibly some of the other unions which form the county of Flint?—I am certain that

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the valuation list was not a proper valuation list so soon in some of the other unions.

57,377. Taking the county of Flint the farmers there have gained not merely in the reduction as compared with a few years ago, up till the last year of the rate in the £, but also from a considerable reduction in the assessment of their land; is that not so?—No.

57,378. If the assessment of land has been reduced in the 25 years by 20 per cent. the farmers must have gained that?—Yes, of course they have gained that.

Rates.

57,379. They have also gained, as you have explained, up to the last year in the reduction of the rate in the £?—Yes, but the highway rates have increased 50 per cent.

57,380. Then you must take into account the subventions and everything. I have looked at the aggregate of rates, and taken into account the subventions, which, of course, is a fair way of looking at the thing?—Yes.

57,381. You must not only look at one separate rate, you must look at the aggregate of rates and take into account also the subventions?—What you must look at, I take it, is the burden of the rate that falls upon them.

57,382. Yes, the whole?—Yes.

57,383. You have explained that with the exception of those parishes where there is a school board rate or a sanitary rate there has been a reduction up to last year?—There has been a reduction from 1889 which has gradually vanished up to the present time, and it has gone now.

57,384. Before 1889 there had been a considerable reduction too?—No, I do not think that there had.

57,385. I thought you said there had?—No, I did not.

57,386. I thought you said previous to the Local Government Act there had been?—What I said was this: I said that the poor law proper—that is to say the charges for in-maintenance and out-relief—had decreased, but other charges, rates for other purposes, had been increasing at the same time.

57,387. Then you cannot tell us exactly what the aggregate rates were, say, 15 or 20 years ago?—I say they were about the same as they are at the present moment—they have gone back.

57,388. Perhaps you will look into the matter, and add it to your evidence later, to see if you can give us a comparison between the different periods?—Yes. Within very recent times the charges for main roads have increased. I take the average for the five years; from 1884 to 1889 they were 6,290*l.*, and the same main roads for the last three years have averaged 9,510*l.*

57,389. Yes, but I tried to look at the aggregate of rates which after all is the true method of comparison?—Yes.

57,390. What has been the aggregate rate levied over a term of years? that, of course, would take into account the subventions, and if one rate has been raised and another fallen that would be taken into account?—Yes, and the position we are in is this: that we are now in the same position that we were some years ago. For a certain number of years we have been favoured through these subventions, but the advantage of that has now vanished.

57,391. What has that been due to; has that been due to an increase of expenditure or not?—Increased expenditure.

57,392. Do you think the form in which the subventions were made has had something to do with that—that it has rather tended to promote expenditure?—No, I do not think so.

57,393. You think not?—The subventions now are in the form of a lump sum.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,394. Now turning to the Agricultural Holdings Act what have you to say with reference to that?—It does not come into play much in our district.

57,395. It is not much in operation?—No.

57,396. What is that due to?—I do not know I am sure.

57,397. Is there a custom of the country?—There is nothing like the Glamorganshire custom.

57,398. But there is a custom?—Yes, with an outgoing tenant and an incoming tenant there are customs under which matters are arranged.

57,399. You think the matter is generally settled between the out-going and the incoming tenant without reference to the Act, or without litigation against the landlord?—Yes, it is.

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57,400. That is the result?—It is so.

57,401. Is there a desire expressed for a greater simplification of the Act?—Yes.

57,402. And a greater security for compensation?—You will hear that asked for. I think people are afraid of litigation.

57,403. What it practically means is that the Act involves litigation between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—It is so.

57,404. Whereas apart from that it would be a mere arrangement between the incoming and out-going tenants?—Yes, or the outgoing tenant and the landlord.

57,405. I suppose the tenure is yearly tenure as a rule?—Yes. Tenure.

57,406. Almost invariably?—Leases are very seldom asked for.

57,407. Were there leases at one time?—No; they occasionally have been asked for.

57,408. Do the agreements contain many restrictions as to cultivation?—Yes. Restrictions.

57,409. Are they enforced as a rule?—There is nothing except the ploughing up of old pasture that is enforced.

57,410. That is the only one which is enforced?—Practically that is the only one.

57,411. Is there a complaint in the district that the railway rates are not fairly assessed?—Yes; you always hear complaints about the railway rates; they seem to be heavy. Railway rates.

57,412. Then there are complaints I see about the sale of imported goods as home produce?—Yes, certainly that is another subject of complaint.

57,413. Have the Allotments Act and the Small Holdings Act been in operation?—No. Small Holdings Act.

57,414. Has there been no operation under the second of those Acts?—No, not yet. I think there has been a great deal of talk about the Small Holdings Act and I think it may come into operation in a certain number of cases; I am sure I wish it would because I think it is extremely desirable and I should like to see a number of occupying owners.

57,415. Are there any occupying owners of land?—There are not many now. Within my recollection a great many have disappeared. In the busy and good times about 25 years ago people who had small holdings were anxious to sell them and take their capital to one of the big towns where they thought they could do better; and they did so. Occupying owners.

57,416. Were those holdings brought up by the adjoining landowners?—As a rule.

57,417. But now the tendency is rather in the reverse direction?—I think there is a tendency in the opposite direction.

57,418. Now with regard to the suggestion for remedies, you would suggest, I presume, an improvement in the Agricultural Holdings Act by the light of the experience of the last 12 years?—Yes. The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,419. And in that direction that you have suggested, namely, in the direction of simplification?—Yes. There is one point that I have not mentioned, and that is that a tenant should get compensation for his own corn consumed upon a farm which he otherwise might sell.

57,420. Then you also approve of the suggestion that there should be official arbitrators appointed by the Board of Agriculture?—Yes. Official arbitrators.

57,421. So as to get rid of the multiplication of persons employed in these disputes, I suppose?—Yes. I think you want people who will give confidence to both landlord and tenant. I think the persons appointed by the Board of Agriculture, who would be really good men would be very valuable, because where there was a difference between landlords and tenants the parties would voluntarily refer the matter to these men instead of having any litigation.

57,422. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do you mean that there should be a single official for a district, or do you mean that there should be a list of officials?—A list; there ought to be certainly a choice.

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57,423. (*Chairman.*) Then you also consider that the principle of the Merchandise Marks Act should be extended to other articles of agricultural produce?—Yes.

57,424. (*Mr. Clay.*) Regarding one of the last questions you answered the Chairman, in respect of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883, you are of a mind that it should be amended?—I think it would be very odd, if, with the experience of 12 years, it could not be improved.

57,425. Its procedure to your mind has been too long, and its means of getting compensation for either landlord or tenant has been expensive?—Yes. I have not had much experience of the Act; in fact, practically I have had no experience of it, because I have never had any difficulty with any tenant, and I have never been mixed up in any litigation; therefore, I am not a very good authority to speak on alterations.

57,426. No, bu from what you have seen and read of the working of the Act, it does not appear to your mind that it has been successful?—It has not been so successful as I think it ought to be.

57,427. You are of opinion, are you—I have gathered from your answers to the Chairman—that you would like to see official referees appointed by some competent body, which could get the best men for that situation?—Yes, for that purpose; and I think they would also be used for voluntary reference besides, which, I think, is a much more valuable thing. I would much sooner see landlords and tenants, if they cannot quite agree among themselves, voluntarily refer a matter to these official referees, instead of going to law on the subject and spending their money on the lawyers.

57,428. It was put in an answer made by a very important witness we had here much on the same line that you were speaking just now, that what we require is a strong man who will maintain the confidence of both landlord and tenant, and who will give a judicial and honest award on these matters?—That is what we require, and I think it is a very important matter.

57,429. Will this not follow, if you had men of that kind, that they might become, I do not say a compulsory board, but that they may be used as a board of reference between landlord and tenant when there were any difficulties coming up or any disagreement, and that so they may be the means of settling some of the knotty points, and both benefit the landlord and keep many good tenants in their place?—Yes, I feel sure that landlords and tenants would voluntarily make use of them and so avoid litigation.

57,430. These men would keep a moral standard between landlord and tenant, dividing things aright?—Yes.

57,431. That is your opinion?—Yes, but I think they must be men of ability, and they must be paid a good salary, so as to make them independent and make the landlords and tenants feel that they are independent persons.

57,432. They should be able to put forward—and it depends upon the size of the country how many there should be of them—before the Board of Agriculture suggestions the same as the Drainage Commissioners, who really have their appointment from that Board?—Yes, they hold their appointment from the Board of Agriculture.

57,433. How would you pay these men, would you pay them by results or give them a fixed salary?—I should give them a fixed salary, I think. You might pay them by fees as well, but I would give them a salary, and make them independent persons. Why is there is so much confidence in the judges of our land? It is because they are paid a good salary and are perfectly independent, and they do not care for either plaintiff or defendant.

57,434. The Drainage Commissioners appointed by the Board of Agriculture, you know, are only paid by results?—Yes, but they are not quite in the same position, nor would they have quite the same duties that these arbitrators would have.

57,435. How many arbitrators or how many official referees would you have to a county or a group of counties?—I would not confine a man to one county by any means. I would allow the landlord and tenant to choose whoever they pleased—anybody that was on the list. Some men would get a reputation and they would be employed more than others, no doubt.

57,436. The most expert man would be brought to the front and have more employment than others?—Yes; but I think that the great point is their knowledge and their independence, so that persons will have confidence in their decision. *Mr. P. P. Pennant.* 8 Aug. 1895.

57,437. If these men were appointed and had a practical knowledge of the different departments of compensation, and a knowledge of chemistry, and the value of manures, they would, naturally, through experience become, like lawyers and doctors, more proficient experts?—They would; they would become experts, and I think people would be only too glad to refer the matter to them.

57,438. You look forward, as far as I can gather from your opinion, to these men becoming very valuable between landlord and tenant in settling many disputes, and in keeping both landlord and tenant better together than they are just now?—Yes, I do; I think also that these persons, who would be so many right hands to the Board of Agriculture, would be extremely useful for other purposes at times when they were not employed in these abitration cases.

57,439. And these men might become very valuable in keeping the sitting tenant where he is instead of letting him go?—Yes; the sitting tenant would get what he wanted without having any unpleasantness with his landlord, which is a very great point.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

57,440. The tenant who farms well would have a good deal of compensation for the improvement he left behind him, and if he was sitting should not that sitting tenant be entitled to have a reduction from his rent according to the value of the compensation for that improvement?—Any matter that they chose could be referred to a competent individual. I will take the case of myself. I had spent a considerable amount of capital on a farm, and improved it very much; I thought in consequence of that that the rent ought to be so much, in fact, we agreed that it should be, but when the improvements were done the tenant thought the rent was too much; we agreed to refer that to a person in whom we both had thorough confidence, and he decided for us, and I acted upon his decision. I and the tenant were fortunately able to find such an individual. I want to create individuals of that character, and I think it can be best done by the Board of Agriculture appointing these individuals, and then I am sure that landlords and tenants like myself, and my tenant would make use of them in the future with very great advantage, and would be glad of them.

57,441. Or if a sitting tenant had a great deal of unexhausted value in his land you think he should not be rented upon that unexhausted value?—No, of course he should not; this was a case of increase of rent in consequence of improvements done by myself, but the tenant had helped and assisted me in doing them—in the planning of them and so forth—and we wanted a person to decide fairly between us, and we secured the person.

57,442. Perhaps I am taking you at a little disadvantage, because our Scotch system is a lease system. I do not say that what I am putting to you holds with a yearly tenancy, but if a man has a 19 years' lease and has managed the farm well and improved his land, then what I am aiming at is: Is it fair and just that he should be rented upon that improvement?—No. I do not think it is.

57,443. If he was to leave he could take away the unexhausted capital?—Yes, but I should say that he ought to take care that the lease he is under gives him the power of taking away his improvements.

57,444. The Agricultural Holdings Act would give you the power, would it not?—Yes.

57,445. What I want to aim at is to keep an old tenant, a sitting tenant, and there is nothing better than an old tenant and a good old landlord, is there?—You are quite right.

57,446. Many a good tenant is shifted when he might not have been if there had been a medium, some official referee or some other man to come in and smooth matters between both?—Yes.

57,447. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) If this sitting tenant does not think he can get value by remaining and paying his rent he is not likely to remain, I suppose?—No.

57,448. He has the other way of doing?—Yes.

57,449. He can get his value under the Agricultural Holdings Act, by leaving his farm and getting compensation?—Yes.

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57,450. Therefore, in fixing his next rent, undoubtedly that man, if he was a wise man, would see that his next rent is a fair one?—Yes.

57,451. Taking into consideration all that he had done himself?—Yes.

Official arbitrators.

57,452. In regard to these valuators, has every county not within its bounds, do you think, suitable men, with a thorough agricultural and practical knowledge, who would perhaps be as reliable as a few of those high salaried officials?—They have good men, no doubt, in every county. Of course Flintshire is a very small county.

57,453. Are not local men more likely to know the customs better?—Yes, unquestionably.

57,454. Would it not answer your purpose quite as well if it was carried out something as it has been done under the late Finance Act, where valuators are appointed by the county as referees, so many men being nominated by the county council?—Yes, but I think I would have them for a larger district: and I do not think I would have them appointed by the county council.

57,455. Who is to recommend these men to the Board of Agriculture?—The county council might recommend a number of names, but I think that the Board of Agriculture should appoint.

57,456. Then they would naturally follow the recommendation of the county council, would they not?—No, if there was a large list sent, and the responsibility of the appointment rested with them.

57,457. Do I understand that you would have a large list in every district to choose from? This is very important, I think. If you are going to pay these men a salary, you can only have a very limited number over the country, or the expense would be far too great, but they might be unpaid local men of standing, and what I want to get at is, if you do not think that they, under the circumstances, would probably meet the requirements; and then let those who differ and desire to have a reference, pay the rest of these men?—Well, that would meet it, but I do not think it would meet it as well.

57,458. Perhaps you think they would not be so thoroughly independent; is that your reason?—Yes, that is my reason.

57,459. If these men were looked upon by a county or a district as these men would be with continuity, and with the responsibility that would be really imposed upon them, would that not be likely to make these men very careful to see that their decisions were such as would bear the keenest scrutiny?—I think it would, to a certain extent.

57,460. Because they would have to be in a different position to what they are at the present time, you must remember?—You have not got to look to the independence of the men, but you have got to think what is in the mind of the people who employ them; you have got to create a confidence in the minds of the landlords and of the tenants.

57,461. Yes; but those men are appointed to deal with the facts as they are apart from what is in the minds of the people who employ them?—The point that you have got to get at—or else they will not be employed by these people voluntarily—is, that you must get the landlords and tenants to have confidence in their independence; that is the point.

57,462. Their decisions, under those references, if they are practical men, would surely come to carry that weight that would give confidence to these people?—I have no doubt that many of them would grow into confidence; I have no doubt they would.

57,463. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I think you said that these official arbitrators that you propose were to have good salaries; whom do you contemplate the salaries should be paid by?—They should be paid by the Board of Agriculture.

57,464. Then do I understand you that no valuations are to be made except by the men appointed by the Board of Agriculture?—Yes.

57,465. Do you mean to say, even supposing the two parties might wish to appoint some man of their own, you would make it a hard and fast rule?—No, voluntarily, they might appoint anybody of course.

57,466. What you mean is that as a matter of convenience the Board of Agriculture should nominate a list of official valuators, or arbitrators?—Yes.

57,467. Who would always be available if they were wanted?—Yes.

57,468. And that they are to be paid a salary by the Board of Agriculture?—That they should be paid partly by salary and partly by fee. I think that when they were not used for these arbitrations, they would be extremely useful people with the Board of Agriculture. The Board of Agriculture ought to have a certain number of inspectors about the country, as they have now I believe.

57,469. You are aware that they have inspectors in almost every county in England now, and that their inspectors as a matter of fact now are very often used as valuers?—There it comes out; you have got the thing in a certain shape already.

57,470. What you are aiming at is very nearly in existence now?—Yes, I expect it is from what you say.

57,471. The question of salaries of course would be a matter upon which the Board of Agriculture naturally would have something to say themselves?—Unquestionably. I want these arbitrators to be people whom landlords and tenants would have thorough confidence in, then I think they would employ these arbitrators whenever there was a difficulty, and you would have practically no litigation.

57,472. What it really comes to is this: that you think that in each county there should be a certain list of men who, so to speak, are stamped by the authority of the Board of Agriculture as reliable men?—Yes.

57,473. And that landlords and tenants can apply to them or not just as they please?—Yes.

57,474. You are of opinion that if there was such a list they would be usually employed?—I am.

57,475. People would be glad to go to them?—I think so.

57,476. (*Chairman.*) Then you do not contemplate that if a dispute arises between landlord and tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act that the matter should be compulsorily referred to one of these people?—Voluntarily, of course, they may appoint and use whom they like, but under the Act when it comes to litigation then these, and these alone, must be employed.

57,477. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That would meet two purposes then; one is that there should be a list of men who would be useful valuators for people to go to when they like?—Yes.

57,478. And then they are also to perform this other duty, that they are to be referees to whom disputes must be referred under the Act?—Just so.

57,479. What sort of disputes now are you contemplating?—When the Agricultural Holdings Act is put into operation there is to be a reference invariably, and I say that this reference should be to these men.

57,480. Whenever a valuation takes place under the Act then it must be to one of the arbitrators appointed by the Board?—Exactly.

57,481. You would take away then from the two parties the liberty to employ anybody they liked under those circumstances?—Under the Act, yes; if they go to law they must abide by the law.

57,482. It is quite possible to have a valuation under the Act without going to law about it?—I do not think it would be necessary to go to law if you had these people who could be voluntarily employed.

57,483. I do not think you quite follow me; we will suppose that a farm has been quitted which is held under the Agricultural Holdings Act; under those circumstances some valuation must occur between the landlord and the tenant; is that to be necessarily made by one of these official valuers?—If the matter has not gone into court in any kind or shape I do not see why they should not employ just whoever they please.

57,484. That is just what I wanted to arrive at?—As a matter of fact, I think they would take advantage of those experts.

57,485. If it is a case which is taken into court, if disputes arise and it is taken into court, then the matter must be referred to one of the official valuers?—Certainly.

57,486. (*Chairman.*) Supposing, instead of proceeding under the Act, the tenant proceeds under the custom, and a dispute arises under the custom as to the amount of the valuation, are the parties then to be compelled

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to go before one of these official arbitrators, or may they select anybody that they then choose?—If the proceedings are legal, then I say certainly employ one of these official arbitrators.

57,487. If it amounts to a legal proceeding?—Yes.

57,488. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) That is, if it is taken into court?—If it is taken into court in any shape.

57,489. Any dispute that is taken into court must be referred to one of these official men?—Yes.

Custom in Flintshire.

57,490. On that question of your customs, do they ever lead to disputes that are taken into court?—Yes, of course, occasionally; but it is not often.

57,491. You do know of cases?—Yes; they have arisen, unquestionably.

57,492. Are you speaking now of the custom which prevails in your county?—Yes. For instance, there might be a question as to the right of sowing wheat, or anything of that sort; if that came to a question of law, then I say it must be referred to one of these, but as long as it is quite out of court I do not see why the parties should not employ whom they like.

57,493. Are disputes common on the change of tenancy?—No, they are not.

57,494. They happen very rarely?—That is so.

57,495. But you do know of some instances?—Yes, occasionally I have seen cases that have gone into court.

57,496. Both under the Agricultural Holdings Act and under the custom?—Yes, but they are the exception, not the rule.

57,497. You heard the last witness, I think, make some statements about the custom of the county of Glamorganshire?—Yes.

57,498. Is your custom analogous to that at all?—No, it is not. I do not know exactly what the custom in Glamorganshire is, but I have always heard it warmly and highly spoken of, and I only wish, from what I have heard of it, that we had it in our country.

57,499. Could you give us the details of your custom?—No, I cannot.

57,500. Where could we get that information?—I do not think there would be any difficulty in getting it, it is well known.

57,501. We could get it from any of the valuers, could we not?—Yes, easily.

57,502. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) You are referring now to the Flintshire custom, are you not?—I thought the Commissioner was speaking of the Glamorganshire custom.

57,503. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) No, I am speaking of the custom of your county?—I think the next witness would give you that information better; he can give you all the details on that point better than I can, because he is practically engaged in it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,504. Then I will ask him. What do your tenants generally hold under—under the Act or under the custom?—They all hold under the Act.

57,505. With you?—With me.

57,506. Without exception?—When I say under the Act it is broadly under the Act and the custom, because the customs are something over and above; they do not clash much together. The customs relate to the amount of land that the outgoing tenant may sow in wheat, and so forth, and regulations of that kind.

57,507. But the custom provides for compensation? Yes, all my tenants hold under the Act.

57,508. (*Chairman.*) I suppose there is no mention of the Act in your agreements, but it is left to the parties, when there is a change of tenancy, to take proceedings either under the Act or under the custom?—In some cases; I have said that in most of my agreements compensations are to be according to that schedule. *[Handing in printed schedule prepared by the Vale of Clwyd Chamber of Agriculture.]*

57,509. That is in your agreement?—Yes, this is in my schedule. This is a schedule that was drawn up by the Vale of Clwyd Chamber of Agriculture in the year 1883.

57,510. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In addition to those two points which you have mentioned, namely, the appointment of official arbitrators, and that compensation should be given for home-grown corn, are there any other points on which it is desired that the Act should be amended?—I do not think that there are.

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57,511. As far as you know, then, generally speaking it is satisfactory?—Yes, in its general provisions. Of course, simplification is desirable if possible.

57,512. Have you any suggestions to make as to how it could be simplified?—No, I have not had sufficient experience of it.

Queen's premiums.

57,513. Among your remedies, I see you propose that there should be an extension of the Queen's premium stallions to cart stallions and bulls?—Yes.

57,514. Upon that I should like to ask you whether premiums are given now in the Welsh counties for thoroughbred stallions?—Yes, we have a Queen's premium stallion in my neighbourhood, and it has certainly given a considerable impulse——

57,515. To horse breeding?—Yes; it has done a great deal of good.

57,516. Would you like to see the system extended?—I would.

57,517. Both as regards thoroughbred stallions and others?—Yes.

57,518. Would you like to see more thoroughbred stallions?—Yes, I think it would be an excellent thing if it was extended to cart stallions.

57,519. Do they breed horses considerably in your county?—No, they do not do that, but there certainly has been an impulse given to horse-breeding, and I think through this to a very great extent.

57,520. Might it be made a considerable addition to agricultural industry, do you think, if other things fail?—Yes, as long as it is not overdone; if everybody went into it, I suppose it would not be very profitable.

57,521. You would be afraid of competition if that was so?—Yes, but where I believe it would be advantageous is that it would be another leg for agriculture to stand upon.

57,522. A great deal at present, of course, is left to private enterprise?—Yes, it is.

57,523. In the case of stock and bulls that is entirely left to private enterprise?—Yes, entirely.

57,524. You would like to see premiums given for bulls, would you?—I have seen considerable advantage arising from these Queen's premiums for horses, therefore I would like to see the principle extended. I think it draws people's attention to the thing, and it makes them appreciate the importance of breeding very good stock.

57,525. There has not been time yet to show any considerable improvement in the horses which are bred by the use of these premium stallions, has there?—That is a very difficult thing to say.

57,526. They have only been given for a few years; about four or five years?—Yes; unquestionably it has given an impulse in our neighbourhood.

57,527. Have you seen any of the stock yourself three or four years old got by these premium stallions?—I hardly know about that, but it has turned the attention of the farmers to the subject, and made them take up the question.

Landlords' and tenants' improvements.

57,528. With regard to the making of improvements, I observe that you are anxious for the promotion of the expenditure of capital in that direction on the land by the landlords; are all the permanent improvements made by the landlords?—They are.

57,529. Do the tenants never make them?—I am speaking of the bulk of the farms which are small and medium sized farms; the tenants of those farms have no capital to make improvements with themselves.

57,530. They never make the improvements, you say?—No, they do not; on larger farms no doubt tenants do sometimes, but not on those farms.

57,531. On some of the large farms the tenants occasionally make the improvements?—I believe so, but my actual experience does not extend to those large farms. I think that they might perhaps. On the small farms the rule is that the tenant has no spare capital, and the whole of his capital is put into the farm. Supposing somebody were to leave to him some money, the way in which he would expend that capital would be that he would take a larger farm.

Drainage.

57,532. Do they ever do drainage, for instance?—I know of no instance where it has been done.

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57,533. On this smaller class of farms they do not even do the drainage?—No.

57,534. Is that done by the landlords?—Where it is done.

57,535. When you say "where it is done" is it sufficiently done, or is there room for more improvement in that respect; is more drainage wanted?—There has been a great deal of drainage done, but I have no doubt——

57,536. There is some still remains to be done?—Yes; I do not think there is on my property. I believe I have drained the last acre that would benefit by it.

57,537. Would it pay to do it in these days at these prices?—In some places I think, certainly.

57,538. You think every encouragement should be given to the landlords to make the improvements themselves?—Yes.

57,539. Do you propose that money should be lent them by the State for that purpose?—Yes. I think that in many cases we have been able to keep up the rent by doing improvements. I think there has, perhaps, been more done in improvements in the last few years—I think quite as much, at any rate, if not more—for the purpose of keeping up the rent, although the difference of management has required a certain amount of alteration in buildings.

Allotments Act.

57,540. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is there any demand for allotments and small holdings in your part of the world?—I do not think that anybody really thought about allotments till the Parish Councils Act; since that there has been a talk of allotments, and I daresay there will be some now.

57,541. The Parish Councils Act has stimulated the demand for allotments?—Yes, it has brought the subject to their attention.

57,542. Which was not done, I presume, with the Allotments Act of 1887?—No, I do not think that they thought anything about it then.

Small Holdings Act.

57,543. And the Small Holdings Act, that has not been taken up?—That has been talked about, and I am inclined to think that it will get into operation. But these kind of things require a good deal of talking about and looking at from different points of view before they get into operation, particularly perhaps in Wales where the two languages make us rather slower than we otherwise should be.

Distribution of produce.

57,544. Have you thought out any scheme as to facilities for the distribution of agricultural produce through the agency of the Post Office?—That point which is mentioned in my brief does not profess to be a recommendation of my own so much as what I have heard asked for; I am quoting that as having been asked for.

57,545. But you have not thought out any particular scheme?—No, I have not.

57,546. Nor gone into the details of any scheme?—I understand that it is in operation in some countries, at least so I have heard. That has been stated in the newspapers, and people have thought that what could be done elsewhere could be done in this country.

57,547. You merely wished to draw the attention of the Commission to it?—Yes, I did.

Official arbitrators.

57,548. (*Mr. Channing.*) About the arbitrations; as I understand you contemplate getting rid of the referees and valuers now and referring to a single arbitrator, do you not?—I think where that can be done it simplifies the matter very much, but you must have a really good individual.

57,549. In reference to the question asked by Mr. Chaplin, what you really meant would be this, would it not, that where the parties do agree upon this arbitrator the arbitrator should be selected by the county court judge—or how do you propose that he should be selected?—By the county court judge that is the procedure now.

57,550. The same as the procedure now?—Yes.

57,551. I thought that point was not left quite clear; you would wish this arbitrator to be compulsorily selected by the county court judge where the parties do not agree?—Exactly.

Ground game.

57,552. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Is there any complaint about the Ground Game Act in Flintshire?—No, I think there is very little complaint about game.

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57,553. Have you heard of any damage done by ground game to crops?—I cannot say. I think since the Ground Game Act I have heard of very little. I think as far as the landlords are concerned that they have been too anxious to keep up their rents. They take care that the tenants have nothing to complain of as far as they can.

57,554. In that case of course there has been no occasion to compensate a tenant for any damage?—No.

57,555. Would you say that the present rents in Flintshire are fair rents?—Yes, with the abatements I think they are.

57,556. With the abatements?—Yes.

57,557. Are the tenants fairly satisfied?—Well, I should say so.

57,558. As far as the rent is concerned?—I think they are.

The currency

57,559. (*Mr. Everett.*) I see you say in your brief "Nothing worthy of the name of remedy can be "suggested"; you probably have not paid attention to the monetary problem?—I have to a certain extent.

57,560. Do you not think that if money were more plentiful so that we could get more of it in exchange for our produce that would lessen the depression?—Agriculture improved no doubt when gold was discovered in Australia and California; there is no doubt about that, and if the Cape and Western Australia send out a great deal of gold, I have no doubt that it will be beneficial.

57,561. If the laws which in the last 20 years for preventing the old free use of silver along with gold were repealed would not that have the same effect?

(*Chairman.*) Have you given any attention to the subject of bimetallism?—Yes, I have. I think that you must not give an arbitrary increased value to silver; I should call that robbery.

57,562. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is not giving an arbitrary increased value to gold robbery also?—If you take the present value between gold and silver and fix it at that ratio, then I should see no objection to bimetallism; I think it would perhaps be useful, because you would have less fluctuation between two metals than you would with only one.

57,563. Should you like to see a fixed ratio?—Yes, but you must not put the old ratio back.

57,564. Supposing that the old ratio has been departed from simply by artificial means?—Has it?

57,565. There are the facts on the statute books of the different nations, that as one after another have refused free circulation to the silver gold has been driven up in value?—I think that it was from the extra quantity of silver that had been mined that silver altered in value so much.

57,566. You are aware that there were enormous discoveries of gold in California and Australia?—Yes, enormous.

57,567. And they did not affect the ratio between silver and gold?—I think they did. I am certain if you multiply the quantity of available gold in the world you will depreciate its value with every other article in the world, silver included.

57,568. Historically that was not the case; the divergence between the two did not take place until the legislation stepped in in 1872 in Germany?—During the same period I suspect that there was an increased production of silver also.

57,569. I rather gather from the answers which I have received that you have not paid a very close attention to the historical facts of the last 25 years?—Of course if silver is not used for a particular purpose so much, if, for instance, it has not been used for money so much, that is equivalent to an increased production.

57,570. If you close an unlimited market to an article you are very likely to produce an effect upon the price of that article, are you not?—Certainly.

57,571. That is exactly what happened in regard to silver?—Yes, that certainly did happen.

Rates.

57,572. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I found a little difficulty in following the figures as to rates which you have given, but I think that is owing to the very exceptional nature of the county of Flint, which is partly in two unions, or three unions in fact?—It is in fact in four unions.

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57,573. But only one of those unions appears in it when it appears as a union county in the return?—Exactly; that is so.

57,574. Therefore it is very difficult to trace the figures?—It is.

57,575. But you are firmly persuaded that the rates of the area of which you are speaking are nominally the same now as they were many years ago; that they fell to some extent prior to 1888 or 1889, or up to 1888 or 1889, but that they have since risen?—Yes.

57,576. And attained their former level?—Yes.

57,577. You feel no doubt about that from your personal knowledge?—No. I have had considerable opportunities of knowing the facts; I have been chairman of the board of guardians, and on assessment committees, and I was chairman of the Finance Committee of the County Council. So that I have perfect opportunities of being quite conversant with these questions.

57,578. And in saying that you are speaking now of the nominal rate in the pound of the rates?—Yes.

57,579. But I think you also said that in some of those areas, I am not clear which, the valuation was too low, until within a comparatively recent date?—Yes.

57,580. You feel quite clear as to that?—I am certain that the valuation list did not represent the real value of the property.

57,581. And I think you mentioned 25 per cent. as the difference?—In one case.

57,582. To take that case of 25 per cent. difference; what is now rated at 100*l.* then appeared as 75*l.*?—I would not say that in that union it is right now.

57,583. No; but supposing it were right, that would be the difference?—Supposing it were right, yes.

57,584. And the same amount which appeared when it was rated at 75*l.* as a 2*s.* 8*d.* rate would now be raised by a 2*s.* rate; the difference between 75*l.* and 100*l.* you met by adding a third on, and so you would have to add a third on to your rate, and to levy a 2*s.* 8*d.* rate if the rate were raised on 75*l.*, whereas if raised on 100*l.* it would appear as a 2*s.* rate?—Yes, it would be so.

57,585. Therefore, if you had such a case as that, where there now appears to be no difference in the rate in the pound, there has been an increase in the rates really to the extent of 33 per cent.?—Yes, that would be so

57,586. That is to say, a 2*s.* rate in the one period is equivalent to a 2*s.* 8*d.* rate in the other?—Yes.

57,587. Therefore, it is very important to get at the fact as to what reduction in the valuation there has been. Can you give us any precise figures as to that?—I am afraid I cannot. Assessment committees have gradually and steadily worked the valuation of the unions up to the proper basis.

57,588. (*Chairman.*) You admitted to me that that was not the case in the Holywell Union; when I called your attention to the fact that the assessment had been reduced in Holywell by 20 per cent. in the last 24 years, you then, in answer to me, admitted that that operation that you are now speaking of had not taken place in the Holywell Union?—I think that the Holywell Union has been fairly assessed.

57,589. All through?—Yes, all through.

57,590. That is what I understood you to say, because otherwise your statement is inconsistent as to the great fall in the valuation of assessments which has taken place in the last 24 years?—I think they have had a good and active assessment committee in the Holywell Union.

57,591. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What were the districts in which you consider that they were under-assessed?—I know—that is some years ago—that in the parishes in the Wrexham Union they were under-assessed, because for county purposes in fixing the county basis we had to raise these parishes a considerable amount. That is some years ago, but I cannot say exactly when. Still more recently than that in the Llanrwst Union they were raised, I believe, to the extent of 25 per cent.

57,592. The evidence you have been giving has, to some extent, been with respect to one of those unions, I think, but not with regard to the Llanrwst Union, has it?—I think I mentioned the Llanrwst Union before. The incident in regard to Wrexham Union occurred some years ago.

57,593. But so far as they were under-assessed previously there has been, if the rate stands now at the same nominal amount as it did formerly, a real though not an apparent rise in the rates?—Yes. *Mr. P. P. Pennant,* 8 Aug. 1895.

57,594. Then I think you also said that they had been rising steadily during the last few years?—Yes.

57,595. Are they still on the upward move; has that come to an end, or has it been going on for some time? (*Chairman.*) I think you said that the rise had only been within the last year?—Yes, it has been more marked lately.

57,596. (*Mr. Dalton.*) For how many years; could you give us the figures?—Within the last year or two. This year it is more decided than it has been before, that is to say, since the institution of the county councils.

57,597. Of the county councils?—Yes.

57,598. They have been in existence now for six years?—Yes.

57,599. (*Chairman.*) You told me that after the institution of the county councils the rates still remained at the low point to which they were brought by them now for some few years?—They were reduced.

57,600. Therefore we gathered that they remained at that point for four years?—Coincident with the institution of the county councils, owing to the subvention from the Exchequer, the burden of the rates was decreased.

57,601. (*Mr. Dalton*) And then what happened?—Then I say from that time——

57,602. From what time; from 1890?—From the institution of the county council, that is, in 1889, it has been growing up again till it has got to probably about the same amount as it was before the institution of the county councils.

57,603. Has that growth been steady and continuous, or has it been sudden?—It is more marked this year than it has been at any time before.

57,604. Then that would appear to lead to the conclusion that these Treasury subventions for a time kept down the rates?—They did.

57,605. No increase has been made in the subventions of late years?—They have remained stationary during that time—at least they have been given on the same basis.

57,606. And they have not increased?—They have been practically stationary.

57,607. Therefore now the increase in expenditure is catching up the relief or has caught it up?—Yes.

57,608. It has you say caught up now the relief that was given?—Yes.

57,609. And unless further subventions are given you would expect to see the rates go on rising, I presume?—Yes, I do.

57,610. Do the figures that you have given us include any expenditure of the parish councils, or has that got yet to come?—I believe that in the rate that was paid this year, there would be a halfpenny for the parish council.

57,611. Only a halfpenny?—Only a halfpenny. That was so, I know.

57,612. I think you say that the small farms do not employ so much labour as the larger ones?—Oh, dear no. Small farms.

57,613. What is the exact meaning of that; do you mean that on a certain acreage, say 120 acres, there is a smaller amount of labour?—No, I do not mean that.

57,614. You mean less paid labour?—Less paid labour. On a large farm the farmer cannot do any labour himself, as he must look after his labourers.

57,615. You do not mean that there is less labour employed on the smaller farm but less paid labour?—Yes.

57,616. The occupier does it himself?—On a small farm the man takes off his coat and he works.

57,617. The small farms are not well cultivated?—Yes, I think so.

57,618. They are not going out of cultivation?—No, certainly not.

57,619. Do the small farms fall vacant as often as the large ones?—I should think much about the same.

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57,620. Do they frequently fall vacant in your district?—No.

57,621. But they do from time to time?—Yes. A man if he has got some money left him would probably like to go into a larger farm, or if he saved some money he would like to go into a larger farm.

57,622. Would he find one vacant for him?—He would have to wait his turn. He would hear of a farm vacant and he would ask for it, and that smaller one would naturally become vacant too.

Markets in Flintshire.

57,623. (*Lord Rendel.*) Referring to the broader question of the agricultural condition of the county, did I understand you to regard Flintshire as in a somewhat exceptional position compared with the neighbouring counties?—I think that we are well placed because we are near watering places, and we are also not distant from Liverpool and Manchester and markets of that kind.

57,624. You have a long seaboard?—We have.

57,625. Very closely studded with watering places?—Yes; not a very great deal in Flintshire; still all the watering places in North Wales are not far from us, and they unquestionably do benefit us.

57,626. A very great deal of money is brought into the country in that manner?—Yes.

57,627. Then there is the neighbourhood of Liverpool and Manchester you say?—Yes.

57,628. And there is the existence, which I think you referred to, of considerable collieries and of large slate quarries, and so forth?—Yes; but the slate quarries do not affect us much. There are collieries, alkali works, and brickmaking and pottery works.

57,629. In those respects and in regard to the high importance of local markets to agricultural prosperity, Flintshire you consider to be in a somewhat exceptional position?—Yes, we are better off than those who are further from those markets.

Small farms.

57,630. I think you say, that so far as there is a tendency in the smaller holdings to grow and multiply, you attribute that tendency mainly, as I understood you to suggest, to the increased act of hired labour?—I say that the small holdings have an advantage over the larger ones owing to the price of labour.

57,631. Do I gather that the condition favourable to the multiplication of the small holdings is, in your view, the steady increase in the cost of hired labour?—Yes, partly.

57,632. That is the main condition at present operating?—Yes, I think that is one condition. Another is the existence of a much greater number of people, who have a small amount of capital which they are willing to embark in agriculture, than of persons with a larger amount.

57,633. Is your district largely bilingual?—Yes, it is.

57,634. Is that bilingualism found more in the smaller holdings than in the larger ones?—Yes, I should think it was, but I do not know.

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57,635. Is there much monoglot Welsh population?—No, very little.

57,636. So far as it is bilingual, I think I understood you to suggest that it took a little longer time——?—It took a little longer time with a new measure like the Small Holdings Act for the people to become acquainted with it.

Instruction in dairying.

57,637. I think you spoke of cheese-making as one of the most profitable forms of industry?—Yes.

57,638. And you referred to the dairy school of which, I think, you are chairman?—Yes.

57,639. Do you attribute very high value to the operations of the dairy school?—We certainly have been very successful in one way. We have instructed a great number of persons, many out of the immediate neighbourhood, who have got excellent situations all over England and Scotland. We have been very successful in that way. But we have come, I think, to the end of that kind of work, and now this year we are going on a different principle. All who have sufficient enterprise to come and pay have done so I think, and so we have had to go out into the highways and bring them in. We have had for three months a travelling dairy which has gone into different parts of the district and taken up their quarters for a fortnight, then at the end of the fortnight we have a sort of rough examination of those who have attended, and we offer what are called dairy scholarships to the most proficient. Those who have these dairy scholarships come to our fixed dairy school, which is opened now for three months from the beginning of August, and these will have a six weeks' training there, and that will be of enormous advantage to them I have no doubt.

57,640. I suppose you would regard the dairy produce of the district as of relatively higher consequence to the district than in the case of the average agricultural districts of the country?—Yes, certainly.

57,641. Much higher?—Yes, decidedly.

57,642. Would you also regard the success with which the dairying has been hitherto conducted in Wales as distinctly below the average general through the country?—I should think much on a par with other parts of the country, excepting cheese-making; excellent cheese has been made.

57,643. Then there has been great room for the dairy school?—Yes.

57,644. And great success has attended it so far?—Yes.

Horse-breeding.

57,645. One word as regards the breeding of horses; has not North Wales in past generations derived considerable advantage from the success in the breeding of various stamps of horses?—You do not mean ponies?

57,646. I mean hackneys?—Yes, I think they have done a good deal in that way.

57,647. Is it the fact that if there has been a comparative failure of late years because farmers were tempted at one time by the higher prices obtained by cart stock, and have lost ground in the breeding in which they succeeded before?—I do not know that I should be inclined to say that.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. O. Williams.

Mr. Owen Williams called and examined.

Mr. O. Williams.

57,648. (*Chairman.*) Are you a tenant farmer living in the Vale of Clwyd Bodfari, in the county of Denbigh?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farm.

57,649. Do you farm yourself?—Yes, I do.

57,650. What sized farm?—My farm is only 142 acres, but I take some grazing land besides.

57,651. Whom do you hold under?—I hold under Mr. Hughes.

57,652. At what rent?—The rent I pay for the farm is 242*l.*, including the tithe.

57,653. What is your farming mainly; is it rearing stock?—Rearing stock and arable land.

57,654. How much of the land is arable?—About half; I have about 70 acres of arable land or a little more.

57,655. What do you grow upon the arable part of it?—Wheat, oats, and barley.

57,656. Do you sell off much or do you mainly feed your cattle?—I used to sell up the whole, but now of late years we are unable to get any sort of price for it, and we grind it up for our own stock.

57,657. Then of late years you have made your main profit by selling stock?—Selling corn and stock; now we are feeding the stock.

57,658. But of late years you have made your profit mainly by selling stock?—Yes.

57,659. Fat stock as well as lean?—Fat stock and lean.

Depression in Wales.

57,660. When do you say the depression began in Wales?—I maintain that it began about 1879.

57,661. Had the farmers then been doing well for some years?—They had been doing very well for 10 or 15 years before that.

57,662. And since then they have done badly?—Very badly.

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57,663. I suppose the very wet seasons about that time first had a bad effect upon them?—Yes, we had been having some wet and some dry seasons which affected the crops very much. I remember seeing the wheat crop entirely a failure sometimes.

Reduction of rent.

57,664. Has your rent been reduced in consequence of bad times?—It was reduced about seven years ago.

57,665. How much?—50*l.*

57,666. It was nearly 300*l.* then?—Yes; I was paying nearly 300*l.*; indeed, with the tithe, I was paying more than 300*l.*

57,667. Had the rents generally in your neighbourhood been reduced in about the same proportion?—Not all; there are a few yet which have not been reduced at all.

57,668. But some have?—Yes.

57,669. Most of them, would you say?—Most of them have been reduced.

57,670. In about the same proportion?—Yes; the tenants have been changed in almost every place.

57,671. Are there many hill farms in your district?—Yes, there are a good many.

57,672. I suppose the rent of those has not been very much reduced?—No, very little.

57,673. It is only the rent of the arable farm that has been reduced, like your own?—Yes.

57,674. Now previous to 1879 had stock rearing paid the farmers well?—Yes, very well.

57,675. Since then has there been a decline in the value of stock?—Yes.

Prices of stock.

57,676. The last witness told us that the price had been very fluctuating?—Very.

57,677. Sometimes it had been high and sometimes low?—Yes, so it has.

57,678. Do you agree with what he said, that it was mainly due to the conditions in England that the price of stock had had those great fluctuations?—Yes.

57,679. That when times were good in England the price of stock rose; and that when they had bad seasons here, like 1893, that then the price fell very seriously?—It fell very much. I know some of my co-farmers have lost in sending cattle down this year. I know of one especially sending six beasts to Smithfield Market, losing 20*l.* besides their keep.

57,680. 1893, I suppose, was a very bad year for you?—Very bad.

57,681. On account of the very great fall in stock?—Yes, it was a very bad year.

57,682. Then there was a recovery again in 1894?—There was a recovery for a time. It was in August when the cattle got up; the latter part of 1894 was very good for selling the stock.

57,683. This spring, I suppose, or this summer when the drought set in again in England it began to fall again?—It began to fall in June very much.

57,684. Have you not now hopes for the remainder of the year that it will rise again?—I have a brother who is a very large dealer; seeing him in a fair on Tuesday last, and not buying a single beast, I asked him, Was he not beginning to buy? for he used to take stock down from this to the end of August. He said: "It was no use whatever, I have no sale for a single "beast, but I hope to be able to sell some at the end "of September." We have very little hopes of prices recovering before the end of September.

57,685. I suppose the present difficulty is due to the long drought of this summer?—Yes.

Laying down permanent pasture.

57,686. The low prices of corn you say induced others like yourself to change their arable land into permanent grass?—So they did, a good many.

57,687. Is there any difficulty in laying down grass in your farm?—No, not so much.

57,688. Does it readily carry grass?—Yes. There are farms, I ought to say, and especially in some parts of the vale as well as in the hill sides, that will not take it and will not keep it more than three years.

Reduction and abatements of rent.

57,689. Do you consider that the landlords of farms like yours were too long in making their reductions of rent?—Yes, I do.

57,690. You think they were?—Yes, a good many of them.

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57,691. Then, when they began, they made abatements only, I suppose?—They made abatements mostly. Some good landlords are making permanent reductions. I do not know that we have any on our estate; but on other estates round me we have had a gentleman, who was here before you some time ago, valuing the farms, and both parties agreeing to his valuation. He reduced them from 20 to 30 per cent.

57,692. Did you get an abatement in 1893 besides the reduction of rent?—In 1893 we had 10 per cent.

57,693. Was that general?—That was general through the estate; and this year we are getting only 5 per cent.

57,694. Did not many landlords make a further and larger abatement than that?—Some did. We know of some, especially in some parts; I know three or four who made 15 per cent., and one of them 20.

57,695. Then a good many landowners, you say, were too long in making reductions and did not make enough reductions?—Yes.

57,696. And that led to the farmers losing their capital?—Yes, in the case of a great many.

Wages.

57,697. What has been the case with the wages in your district?—The wages have risen very high, in my opinion considerably too high, according to the present prices of agriculture to meet them.

57,698. When did the wages rise?—About 20 to 25 years ago.

57,699. About 1873 and 1874?—Yes, and after that.

57,700. Did they fall again or did they keep up their price?—They fluctuated a little, but not much.

57,701. What should you say is the average rate of wages now?—The average rate of wages, taking the country round, is about 16*s.* to 17*s.* a week, I should say.

57,702. Are they more in the neighbourhood of collieries?—Yes.

57,703. Are there any collieries in your country?—Not exactly in the Vale of Clwyd, in our district, but they will soon get to the collieries and to the mines as well.

57,704. Are the wages higher when near the collieries?—They are. We are pinched very hard with wages in the two harvests, the hay harvest and the corn harvest.

Causes of depression.

57,705. Then, in your opinion, there are two causes for the depression—one is the high rent and the other is the depreciation in value of agricultural produce?—Yes.

57,706. And farmers have not got so much money to purchase manures, and apparently they have had to pay higher wages for their labour?—Yes, so they do.

Low prices.

57,707. So part of the low prices are due, in your opinion, to the diminution in the demand for agricultural produce owing to the general bad trade?—Yes, there is no doubt about that, because there is also the effect, of course, upon labourers and mechanics and all classes of people who consume the stuff of the farmer.

57,708. Then you think that the rents ought to be still more reduced?—I do, very much.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,709. Then what have you to say with regard to the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I have had a good deal of experience in that of late years with some people as I am a valuer. I have been valuing this last 20 or 25 years, and I have had a good many cases to deal with between landlord and tenant, and have experienced great difficulties in settling matters between them. Most of the Welsh people do not understand the Act; I believe it ought to have been published in Welsh as well as in English.

57,710. You gave evidence upon the subject before the Welsh Land Commission, did you not?—I did.

57,711. And you gave details of your cases there?—I did.

Restrictions on cultivation.

57,712. We need not go into them here then. Do you think there are too many restrictions on the method of cultivation in the agreements made with tenant farmers?—Yes, I do.

57,713. Do you think they should be done away with?—I should not say they should be entirely done away with, but when a tenant farmer is a practical farmer he ought to know best how to cultivate his

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land, and he is certain to cultivate it to the best of his ability for his own benefit as well as for the benefit of the landlord.

Law of distress.

57,714. Then with regard to the law of distress, do you consider it should be abolished?—It is hard to say. I am of opinion that all farmers ought to pass some sort of an examination under which they would be proclaimed; and if they know best how to farm the land in such cases the law of distraint ought to be abolished.

Adulterated produce.

57,715. Then with regard to the sale of adulterated products, do you think it would be an advantage if greater security were taken to prevent adulteration?—Yes, I think it would be.

57,716. And that imported goods should be in some way or other marked as such?—Yes.

Railway rates.

57,717. Have you got complaints to make about the railway rates?—We have had a great deal of complaint about railway rates in our district especially in carrying cattle, which are the most valuable produce of our country; the charges are very high.

Small Holdings and Allotment Acts.

57,718 Then what have you to say with regard to working the Allotment Act and the Small Holdings Act?—Very few have taken any advantage of these Acts so far, but now that parish councils have come into existence, that has opened the eyes of people very much, and by degrees I expect there will be a good demand. But, as labourers are now, in general they have not got the means to purchase a cow and to start with a small allotment.

57,719. Do you think that great efforts should be made to make the people understand the working of those Acts?—Yes, I do, indeed.

Ground game.

57,720. Then what have you to say with regard to the Ground Game Act of 1880?—I say it is entirely a dead letter. I should like to give you one instance.

57,721. Did you go into that question before the Welsh Land Commission? Did you give evidence about that?—Yes, I did.

57,722. Then I do not think we need have the specific case here?—Five weeks after I wrote my brief out for this Commission, I went on a farm in Flintshire of 348 acres, with another valuer, valuing the trespass of rabbits alone; and our total amount is 175*l.* 6*s.*, and by this I have no doubt it has increased 30*l.*, 40*l.*, or 50*l.*

57,723. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) In Flintshire did you say?—Yes, in Flintshire, just on the coast. The fact is that with the Ground Game Act the tenants have not the permission to go to the covers; they dare not touch even the hedges of the covers, and therefore it is impossible to kill the rabbits. It is impossible for the tenant farmer to be free of them, unless the landlords prevent the rabbits from coming out, and to prevent them they ought to make it a warren entirely.

57,724. (*Chairman.*) What do you suggest should be done?—I quite agree with Mr. Jenkins this morning, that the ground game should be the property of the tenant, but still I would not go as far as he did in saying that the landlord should not touch them. I would like to see the landlord shooting a rabbit or a hare, whatever might happen to be on a farm; but the ground game ought to be the property of the tenant, there is no doubt. I have some experience as a valuer in valuing trespass by winged game too. Last year I was the valuer between two tenants, one tenant for the game and the other tenant for the farm, where there was a a field of clover, and nothing but pheasants had damaged it—nothing else at all. There was a very heavy damage on the field, and my valuation was over 22*l.* 10*s.*

57,725. (*Mr. Channing.*) How many acres?—Nine acres.

57,726. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What was the total value of the crop?—The total value of the crop would have been from 70*l.* to 75*l.*

57,727. Then it was worth 22*l.* 10*s.* less, owing to the damage by pheasants?—Yes.

57,728. (*Chairman.*) Would you apply the same principle with regard to winged game as is applied to ground game?—No, I would not do that. In that case it was impossible to keep them away as they had wings.

57,729. What would you do?—The fact is that in our country the landlords are, most of them, letting the game to a second tenant, and we would rather by far have the landlords shoot the game.

57,730. You do not object to the landlord, but you object to the landlord's tenant?—Yes, we do, because we provide the food for the game mostly.

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57,731. What would you do? Would you pass a law prohibiting the landlords letting their game rights?—Yes, I think the landlord ought to let them to the tenants themselves.

57,732. In preference?—Yes, in preference. If the tenant could have them, then it would be his own fault if he would not look after them.

Remedies for the depression.

57,733. Your remedies for the depression are, first, that the rents ought to be reduced; secondly, that loans should be made to farmers to buy their holdings; thirdly, that there should be reductions of the burdens on land, particularly in respect of rates?—Yes.

57,734. I will not go into the question of land tenure, because that has been dealt with by the Welsh Land Commission, has it not?—Yes.

57,735. Then you propose that there should be full compensation for all unexhausted improvements under the Agricultural Holdings Act; that there should be greater facilities to destroy the rabbits or the total abolition of the game laws, and then, that there should be more freedom of cultivation; then you suggest that there should be agricultural education, with a view of establishing butter and cheese factories, and the improvement and extension of cheese factories; then that there should be light railways, which would improve trade in many localities; and further, you propose the improvement of small cultivation in suitable localities?—Yes.

57,736. You also propose that there should be encouragement given to forestry?—Yes.

Forestry.

57,737. Do you think there are many districts in your country which might be planted with advantage?—Yes, I believe so. There are a good many portions where it would improve the country very much in my opinion.

57,738. Do the landowners plant at all in your neighbourhood?—Some of them do. I have been planting myself; I am a bit of a land agent myself as well as a tenant farmer.

57,739. Do you think the owners have found it pay?—In time they will. In that little estate a plantation of about 10 acres was planted 25 years ago, and it has given a very good production, and paid better than any other of the fields in the same time.

Co-operation in butter-making.

57,740. Then, lastly, you think there should be some co-operation in the manufacture and distribution of agricultural production?—Yes.

57,741. Do you think the competition from countries like Denmark is largely due to the uniformity of their butter?—There is no doubt about it, in my opinion. The better class of people in this country will have uniform butter, there is no doubt about that.

57,742. You think a good deal might be done in that direction by improving the uniformity in the quality of butter made by the farmers and sold in the district?—Yes.

57,743. Why do not the farmers do it themselves?—They cannot have plenty of markets for it as yet. I have three daughters who are certificated teachers, one taught in Essex for three years, and did a great deal of good there.

57,744. Have you attempted to bring your brother farmers to endeavour to get co-operation with a view to greater uniformity of production?—Yes, I have been doing my best in our neighbourhood I live close to the dairy school, of which the last witness spoke, and we have turned out scores of very good young ladies, and young men too, to be teachers, but still we cannot find the purchasers of our butter to make it pay anything. Our butter went so very low this year, especially in May and June, when it came down as low as 7*d.* a pound and 8*d.*

57,745. It seems to me, from what you say, that the difficulty is not to be met by sending out a certain number of dairy maids?—No.

57,746. But by establishing co-operative factories?—Yes.

57,747. Where the milk may be brought in by the surrounding farmers and treated in a uniform manner?—Yes, quite so.

57,748. Apparently you have not attempted that?—No, we have not attempted that.

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57,749. Why have you not done that?—I do not think we have the means to start butter factories.

57,750. Surely if it is a good thing to be done the farmers ought to co-operate together to do it?—Yes, but I do not know where there are any farmers now who have the means to do anything of the sort.

57,751. Would not some of the landowners help in that direction?—Yes, some of them, especially the last witness, who has been very faithful and enterprising in doing his best with the dairy school, and with agriculture, in every way in his power.

Demand for farms.

57,752. Are there any farms vacant in your district?—I do not know that there are; there are a few going vacant now.

57,753. When a farm is vacant, is there a demand for it?—Yes, there is plenty of demand.

57,754. At the old rents?—No. The new tenant will get a reduction, I am sorry to say before your honorable Commission that the new tenant will get a reduction, but the old tenant will not; they will stick to the old tenant till they get the last blood out of him. That is how it is with us.

57,755. Still there is a demand for farms?—Yes, there is plenty of demand.

57,756. What kind of reduction does the new tenant get?—Sometimes he gets a very heavy reduction for a few years, to rise again perhaps to the old rent, or to so and so, somewhat near it.

57,757. That is, I suppose, in cases where the land has been left in bad condition?—Yes, of course.

57,758. But where the land has been left in good condition, do they generally then get the same rent out of them as out of the new tenant?—In some cases they do, especially for small holdings, that is holdings which are not too large. There are a good deal more applicants for small holdings than for large ones.

57,759. If a small farm is left in good condition, there is a good demand for it, and the owner can get as good a rent out of the new man as out of the old?—Yes.

57,760. Is that the case?—That is the case in several instances, but he will be obliged to do a good deal in the way of new buildings and repairs, which he will not do for the old tenant. That is what it is.

57,761. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose according to the evidence you have been giving, a landlord would rather give more to a new tenant than he would give to an old one?—They generally do.

57,762. You have said here that there is a difficulty, amounting practically to an impossibility, of reducing the rent to a sitting tenant?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

57,763. The landlords will not reduce to a sitting tenant?—No, they will not.

57,764. What is the reason of that?—I cannot tell you what is the reason of it, but I may as well say there are a good many of the landlords who are rather in difficulties themselves; they try to get as much money as ever they can in some estates.

Quality of cultivation.

57,765. Is the condition of the land with you keeping up or going down?—It is in general farmed fairly, but in some instances the land has gone down very much.

57,766. The tenant farmer has not as much inducement as he ought to have to improve the land, has he?—No, he has not.

57,767. Has the rent been too high for him?—Yes, it has been too high for the last 15 or 20 years I should say.

57,768. If there were a good Agricultural Holdings Act, giving good compensation, would it not be the means of bringing more capital to the land?—If there was a good Agricultural Holdings Act it might, no doubt.

Rent.

57,769. You have given evidence that a farm in good condition maintains its rent, whereas a farm in bad condition goes back?—Yes, quite so.

57,770. You say in your proof that under the law of distraint—this is rather a question that I do not know whether I should put, or not—that politics and religon have had a good deal to do with dismissing tenants, in your experience?—Yes, it has been very much so in years gone by.

57,771. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Not so much now, I suppose?—Not so much now, I think; to speak plainly they have found out the folly of sticking to that.

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57,772. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you think the landlord gets much by taking the highest rent he can from an inexperienced man; is he not very often the loser? Is not a landlord grasping a large rent from an experienced man a loser by his farm running out of condition?—No doubt he will lose in the end. I know several farms where they have been obliged to let them for a year or so with no rent at all.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

57,773. You state in your brief that landlords—and perhaps it is the agents more—promise what is not often fulfilled?—That is so. They promise everything that a man asks when he is a new tenant, but he may be for a great many years without having them fulfilled.

57,774. Is it not a mistake that the tenant should not have that in writing, and should not see the words of the promise?—Yes, but tenants are so anxious to get some boldings.

57,775. So it is sometimes the tenants who are to blame in not getting it in writing?—Yes; they are not sharp enough, of course. I say the tenant is the weaker party in the covenant always.

57,776. Would you say he is the weaker party in reference to the Ground Game Act, for he dare not shoot the game and rabbits because he would be dismissed?—Yes, it is the case in the farm I have mentioned that they dare not; the keepers keep them out.

57,777. So for fear of that the Ground Game Act thereby becomes a dead letter?—Quite so, especially in a case like this.

57,778. In reference to security of tenure are you upon one year's lease?—Yes, I am.

Tenure.

57,779. In the latter part of your brief you sum up your opinions in this way, that "Government must "legislate in the interest of agriculture, and give us a "good, sound, and substantial Land Bill;" what do you mean by that?—Some security for the tenant for his home; and if required to leave that he gets full compensation for improvements, and, of course, no restrictions or interfering at all with his farming if he has farming abilities.

57,780. Amongst your remedies—the Chairman passed it over—you suggest that if there were less notice taken of a man's politics and religion and more of his farming capabilities it would be better for the country?—Quite so.

Restrictions on cultivation.

57,781. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) You said, I think, in answer to the Chairman that while you approved of doing away with most of the restrictions, you thought it was necessary to have some restrictions?—Yes, I have felt that in some cases, seeing the tenants taking too much advantage. I think there ought to be some remedy for the landlord in cases where the tenants might go too far. I should like the tenant to sell his crops off, and we, generally speaking, have permission in many estates to sell wheat, straw, or hay in some cases, when, of course, we have to produce the bills of our artificial manure or bone manures or something like that in lieu of it.

57,782. You are in favour of restrictions to this extent, that a man is to be allowed to sell off the produce and then that he brings back an equivalent value for it?—Yes.

57,783. One of your replies to Mr. Clay, I understood, was, that he should have freedom and should have no interference with his farming?—Yes.

57,784. But I understand now that to guard against a bad farmer you would have some restrictions upon his farming?—Yes.

57,785. Are these restrictions generally insisted upon in your country?—When we take their farms and see something in their agreement as we read it over, or as it is read over to us, and we say we cannot sign it, they tell us immediately "We will not interfere with you as "long as you will go on decently," and then we venture to sign it, but when we are going to leave we are taxed very heavily sometimes. I have had instances where the tenants have had to pay very heavy penalties.

57,786. For mis-cropping?—Yes.

57,787. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Although they did not deteriorate the fertility of the soil?—Yes; they had improved the land very much; very considerably indeed in many cases.

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57,788. And yet they were mulcted for mis-cropping?—Yes.

57,789. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) In fact, for departing from their agreement?—Just when they were leaving.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

57,790. They did not keep their bargain?—They did not keep to the bargain. As to the Agricultural Holdings Act, of course, we were always in our country deprived of the benefit of the Act of 1875 because tenants were contracted out of it; but as for the Act of 1883, in several cases that I know of, on account of the tenant not having given notice of this improvement or the other, he has been entirely deprived of the benefit of it on leaving.

Wages.

57,791. You said that 16*s.* or 17*s.*, was the average wages; do these agricultural labourers get any perquisites besides?—In some instances we give them their houses, and in some instances they get a team to fetch their coals and they get milk almost daily.

57,792. Do you include that in your 16*s.* or 17*s.* a week, or is that extra?—That is extra.

50,793. They get in cash 16*s.* or 17*s.*?—They get in cash 16*s.* or 17*s.* A great many of the labourers in our district, especially in the Vale of Clwyd, are on the farmers' meals; they get 8*s.*, 9*s.*, and 10*s.* per week, and their meals, and in some cases we give them 11*s.* and 12*s.*, with their meals during the week.

57,794. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) You board them of course all through, and everything done for them?—We board them all through.

Tithe.

57,795. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you pay 242*l.* rent including tithe?—Yes.

57,796. Does the tenant usually pay the tithe in your part of the country?—Yes, always.

57,797. He has throughout?—Yes, but in some instances the landlords have. When the depression started, for instance, Mr. Pennant, the last witness, I know in the case of several of his tenants took the tithe upon himself.

57,798. But in most cases the tenant still pays it notwithstanding the passing of the Tithe Act?—Yes.

57,799. Is your tithe heavy?—Yes, very heavy.

57,800. What does it amount to?—The tithe on my farm was—according to the par I am speaking now, 100 per cent.—about 6*s.* 3*d.* to 6*s.* 4*d.* per acre.

57,801. But is that exceptional, or is that the common tithe in your neighbourhood?—There are some even higher than that. The next neighbour to me had to pay between 9*s.* and 10*s.* for tithe.

57,802. Then it is rather a burning question in your district, I suppose?—Yes, very; I know of a township in the Vale of Clwyd where it was 10*s.* throughout the township altogether.

57,803. How does it come about that the tenant pays this tithe; I thought that under the Tithe Act it has to be paid by the owner?—Yes, but of course they collect it from the tenant.

57,804. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) The tenant pays the landlord now instead of paying the vicar or the rector?—Yes, the tenant pays the landlord now.

57,805. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is your rent without the tithe; it is 242*l.* including the tithe, but you say you pay the tithe for the landlord?—My rent in former years was 260*l.* and the tithe. The tithe then was, I remember it, as high as 45*l.* and 46*l.*, making it over 300*l.* altogether.

57,806. Now it is 242*l.* including the tithe?—Yes.

57,807. Even without the tithe it is 200*l.* now?—I do not get the reduction in the tithe now, only the abatement in the rent.

Permanent improvements.

57,808. Have permanent improvements in your district been carried out by the landlords or by the tenants?—In our district, as a rule, they have been carried out by the landlords. There are some exceptions where the tenants themselves make a good many improvements.

57,809. Permanent improvements?—Permanent improvements in buildings and in drainage.

57,810. The greater part is done by the landlord?—Yes, the greater part; I have been draining myself to the value of a little over 50*l.* on my farm.

57,811. Have you a yearly tenancy?—Yes, I am a yearly tenant.

57,812. Are they all yearly tenants in your part?—Yes, very nearly all.

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57,813. You say in one part of your proof that there is very little demand for small holdings or allotments, but in another one of your remedies is loans for farmers to buy their own holdings?—Yes.

Small holdings and State loans.

57,814. If there is very little demand for it, why do you think it is desirable?—The reason why there is such a little demand for it is that there is not more money, but in some instances where the people could get money I believe there would be a demand.

57,815. But they could borrow under the Small Holdings Act if it were put in force in your district, I suppose?—Yes.

57,816. But it has not been put into force, I suppose?—No, it has not been put into force.

57,817. You are the chairman of a board of guardians, I think?—I am.

57,818. What is the union?—The Ruthin Union.

57,819. Did you hear the evidence of the last witness as to local rates and valuation?—Yes, I did.

Assessment to rates.

57,820. What is your experience as to valuation?—I have a table here that I can show you upon that.

57,821. The point I was asking you upon was as to whether the valuation now more nearly represents the value of the farm than it did formerly?—Yes, it does.

57,822. You heard what he said as to that?—Yes.

57,823. What is your opinion?—I have been on the assessment committee for the last 14 or 15 years, and have been myself chairman for the last three years, and we are coming as soon as we can to the value of the land. Of course we keep to the rents when we can. We very seldom go over the rents because we know all the landlords——

57,824. You take the rent as the basis?—Yes.

57,825. Was that so formerly?—No. I remember the time very well when it was not so.

57,826. When was that time?—32 or 35 years ago.

57,827. Then if you compared the rate now in your union with what it was 30 years ago, you would say it was not a fair comparison; because you would say the valuation was on a different principle then from that on which it is now?—Yes.

57,828. Are you quite clear as to that from personal experience?—I am—in our union, at any rate.

57,829. Then, in your union, when did it get right do you think, because the whole question of the comparison of rates, in your union, would depend upon the time when you got right with it?—I do not say that it has got entirely right even yet, but we are coming to it as soon as we can.

57,830. How far off were you from being right 20 years ago—what per-centage was it?—I should say we were above it a good deal then; I could not say what per-centage, taking it through. What I mean is this, that there were a good many farms rated at the net value then, but others were too high by far.

57,831. Rated too high?—Yes, some of them were too high.

57,832. Not too low?—Not too low, but some might be too low.

57,833. (*Chairman.*) Some too low, and some too high; you have raised some and lowered others?—Yes.

57,834. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The last witness we had was under the impression that they rated them too low formerly, and too high now. What is your opinion?—My opinion is, that some of them were too high a good deal, and some too low.

57,835. But taking one with another, they counterbalance each other?—Not far from it, perhaps. Our rateable value in the union is now about 11 per cent. lower than it was in 1882 and 1883.

57,836. Is that the rateable value of the whole union?—Yes.

57,837. What county is that?—Denbighshire.

Rates.

57,838. The rateable value of the land has gone from 101,000*l.* to 90,000*l.* Then, as to the rates, what has been your experience of the rates in Ruthin, what do they amount to now altogether?—They amount now, according to this blue book we have, to 2*s.* 4*d.* on an average.

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57,839. What blue book is that?—The blue book of the Ruthin Union.

57,840. That goes up to what date?—Up to now.

57,841. What do they come to?—2*s.* 4*d.*

57,842. Does that include everything?—That includes everything with the exception of the towns and the boroughs.

57,843. Does it include the school-board rate?—Yes.

57,844. The highway rate?—Yes.

57,845. The county rate?—Yes.

57,846. And the sanitary rate?—Yes.

57,847. It is 2*s.* 4*d.* now?—Yes.

57,848. What was it formerly; is that higher or lower than it used to be?—I could not tell you. They have been complaining very much that their rates are higher this last year or two. We have been lowering them considerably for the last 10 or 12 years, but this last year, and the present year they are higher on account of some expenditure in the county mostly.

57,849. Is that a temporary rise, or is it a permanent rise?—I hope it is only temporary, from what I should expect.

57,850. Speaking generally, you do not consider that they have risen or fallen much in your union?—No, not so much; I could not say.

57,851. Could you say whether they have risen, or whether they have fallen?—I do not think they have much.

57,852. Neither way?—They fluctuate a little; they are not exactly the same all the while. We have some parishes going as high as 3*s.* 2*d.*

57,853. Which parish is that—is it a school board parish?—Yes; and the lowest is 1*s.* 9*d.*

57,854. What makes it low there?—I cannot tell you.

57,855. Have you got many school boards?—Yes, we have a good many in the district.

57,856. What is your main complaint against the rates; I see you have put it out at considerable length in your brief?—What I should like is to lower the rates, and try to get at wealth, wherever it is.

57,857. Do you want more subventions, or do you want to alter your own local system of rating?—Of course it would not affect us so much in our union, but there are still many wealthy people, and we cannot touch them.

57,858. What do you mean by saying you cannot touch them; do they not pay?—Some of them live in lodgings; we cannot get to them.

57,859. Have you got many there?—Not so many, but we have a few.

57,860. Have you got any plan for doing it?—No, I have not. But I say in my brief that there are some people who are making a good deal more money than the farmer, and they are making it out of a mill, or a factory, or anything like that, and are paying very little in rates; they are paying rates perhaps on 10*l.*, or 15*l.*, when the farmer in making the same amount of produce has to pay on 120*l.* or 150*l.*

57,861. But you have no particular plan in your mind as to how to put that right?—No, I have not.

Agricultural education.

57,862. As regards agricultural education, is there much done by your county council?—Yes.

57,863. Have you spent a good deal on it?—Yes; I happen to be on the committee.

57,864. In what direction is it spent mostly?—In the dairying school mostly, and in lectures and so forth.

57,865. Is the education popular?—Not so very popular as it ought to be.

Light railways.

57,866. I see you are an advocate of light railways; is your part of the country particularly suitable for that?—Yes, some parts of the county would be very much benefited by light railways going through the middle of the country.

57,866*a*. Do you think they would pay in your part?—I question that.

57,867. Do you think a company would be willing to start them, or do you propose that they should receive any assistance from the State?—They have been surveying two or three of them, but they never came to anything, on account of the shortness of money I should think.

57,868. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the average size of farms in your district?—They differ very much; they run from 20 acres up to 400.

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Size of farms.

57,869. What is the average size?—The average size, I should say, would be about 120 acres to 150 acres.

57,870. What would that fetch; how much a year?—The land in the vale is let at from 20*s.* to 30*s.* an acre.

57,871. And how much on the hill?—On the hill it is from 10*s.* to 20*s.* I should say.

57,872. How much of that would be grass?—Most of it would be grass.

57,873. Nearly all grass?—Yes.

Demand for farms.

57,874. How many competitors would you have for a farm of 120 acres, at, say, 25*s.* an acre rent, supposing it were put up to tender?—I should not wonder but there might be a dozen.

57,875. The fact that the farmers are unable to get fair play from their landlords you attribute to the number who compete for a single farm?—Quite so.

Custom in Flintshire.

57,876. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) What is the custom in Flintshire; I think the last witness said you would know something about the Flintshire custom?—I have been several times acting on behalf of both parties. They value the remaining crop at what they call consuming price to the new tenant or to the landlord. In general those are the conditions respecting crops. Then he is paid for seeds, and he is paid for any amount of labour he does, such as ploughing and tilling the land, and anything like that.

57,877. Of course all that is paid by the incoming tenant?—Yes.

57,878. And it has nothing to do with the landlord?—As a rule.

57,879. You know of cases, I have no doubt, in Flintshire as well as in Denbighshire where tenants have improved their farms to a certain extent?—Yes.

57,880. Is there any provision in this custom for that?—No, nothing.

57,881. Therefore the landlord gets the benefit of any improvement?—It falls entirely on the good mercy of the landlord or the new tenant.

57,882. Is the custom in Denbighshire something similar?—Yes.

Assessment to rates.

57,883. I think you misunderstood, at least I do not know whether you did understand Mr. Dalton when he asked you about the rateable value, is it a fact that the assessment is the actual rent, or have you not got special valuers to go round and value these farms independently of the rent?—It has not been done so since somewhere about 30 years ago in our union.

57,884. That old assessment is still really brought forward, and possibly altered occasionally by valuers that you have got at the present time, it has nothing to do with the rent?—It has nothing to do with the rent. About 30 to 32 years ago, I think it was, we had a re-valuation throughout the whole union, that is, without a valuer, only by the assessment committee and the overseers of the parishes.

57,885. How did you arrive at the value?—We tried to get at, and we did get at, the rent in almost every case, and of course we were putting it at the rent if we could, in a very few instances we put it lower than the rent.

57,886. Taking accommodation land, land that you pay 3*l.* or 4*l.* an acre for, would you have to pay rates accordingly?—No, I do not pay rates on those.

57,887. How would you arrive at the proper valuation of that land?—We have some of them in our union, and we know very well what they will make. Supposing they are let by auction, we get a number of fields, and perhaps they let at, say, 200*l.* or 300*l.*; then we give 10 per cent. out of that towards making up fences and ditches and gates and so forth; we allow that and we rate the land about 10 per cent. less in cases of that sort.

Management of estates.

57,888. You do not make any allowance of the kind with other farms?—No, we allow only 5 per cent. on the farms and buildings towards repairing.

57,889. Are the estates in Denbighshire pretty well managed?—Some of them, I must say.

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57,890. Are the agents practical men?—No, they are not.

57,891. That is a grievance, is it not?—It is a grievance.

57,892. And sometimes, we farmers are unable to speak to them?—Yes.

57,893. On account of the language?—Yes, on account of the language a good many of the tenants are unable to speak to them.

57,894. There are very few Welsh land agents in Denbighshire, I suppose?—Not many.

57,895. Throughout Wales it is the same, is it not?—I am afraid it is throughout Wales.

Depression in Wales.

57,896. (*Mr. Everett.*) I understand from the general tone of your evidence that there is great depression in the part of Wales you speak of which has sorely afflicted both the tenant of the land and the owner of the land?—Yes, I think we are more afflicted in Denbighshire than in Anglesea or Carnarvonshire because they do not depend so much on the corn as we do—I am not sure about Montgomeryshire.

57,897. I understand that there have been many ruined, and that you anticipate the ruin of hundreds more unless some amelioration takes place?—Yes, I do so.

Effect on occupying owners.

57,898. I see you suggest as one remedy, loans for farmers to buy their own holdings?—Yes.

57,899. I also observe that in another place you say the occupying owners have suffered probably more than any class of farmers in Wales?—Yes.

57,900. Why multiply a class on whom the depression falls so cruelly?—I will tell you, if you please. Those occupying owners that I speak of bought the land when the land was very dear some 15, 20, and up to 25 and 30 years ago, but I do not think the land has returned to its level yet, and I should not advise legislation on that point until the land comes to its level.

Mr. O. Williams. 8 Aug. 1895.

57,901. That is what I was going to say; is it not a very dangerous thing to provide facilities for people to become owners of land when they will have for many years to pay a fixed sum of money; before you know whether prices have got to the bottom?—Certainly, I quite agree to that; but, of course, we generally live in hopes and we hope it is very near at the bottom now. I think I qualified that by saying that I want the farmer to be proved to be a farmer and not something else.

57,902. It has been the fact, has it not, that all the advantages which the occupying owner has in having complete liberty to cultivate his land how he likes, and to buy and sell how he likes, and in being master of the game, have not saved the occupying owner from being involved in the disaster that has overwhelmed the tenants?—That is so.

57,903. It looks as if the difficulties of agriculture were not in matters between the landlord and the tenant, but in the change in the price of agricultural produce?—Quite so.

Official valuators.

57,904. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Would you be in favour of official valuators being appointed to settle rents and other disputes?—Yes, I should be in favour of an official valuer. I think it would be very good to have him to act as an umpire. In most frequent cases we are obliged to have umpires; of course the landlord and tenant might appoint their own man.

57,905. But you would have an official valuer?—Yes.

57,906. And his decision should be final?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 11 o'clock.

One Hundred and Seventh Day.

Friday, 9th August 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

Mr. THOMAS JONES called and examined.

Mr. T. Jones. 9 Aug. 1895.

57,907. (*Chairman.*) You are a tenant farmer on the estate of the Earl of Dudley, in the parish of Llanderfel, Merionethshire?—I am.

57,908. And have you lived there for over 50 years and farmed on your own account since 1862?—I have.

Particulars of witness' farm.

57,909. And have you had considerable experience as a valuer of land and farming stock?—I have.

57,910. What is the size of your farm?—250 acres.

57,911. What is the system of agriculture principally carried on?—It is principally pastoral; but along the western coast, and also in the east end of the county, mixed husbandry is followed.

57,912. What is the character of your farm?—It is mixed.

57,913. Is it partly arable and partly grass?—It is partly arable and partly grass.

Mr. T. Jones. 9 Aug. 1895.

57,914. How much of it is arable?—There is under cultivation not more than 60 acres.

57,915. I suppose you do not sell much corn; you only grow enough for your own consumption?—That is all, excepting a little for seed.

57,916. And is that generally the case with farmers on arable land, that they only grow enough for their own cattle?—In the east end of the county there is a little barley and oats grown for sale, but nothing in comparison with what there was some years ago.

57,917. There has been a great deal of change in that respect?—Yes.

57,918. Have you changed?—I have put more land down to grass.

57,919. How much have you put down to grass?—To put it safely, I have put down 80 acres to grass in my farm.

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Mr. T. Jones. 9 Aug. 1895.

57,920. Did you grow corn some years ago for the purpose of sale?—Yes.

57,921. And now you consume it all?—And now I consume it all unless I have some very good for seeds.

57,922. What do you make your money out of; is it lean stock, or fat stock, or dairying?—Dairying, and sheep, and cattle, and ponies.

57,923. Have you got a run on the hills?—I have.

57,924. For about how much run have you on the hills?—For about 400 sheep.

57,925. Have the farmers mostly got runs on the hills?—Mostly.

Low prices and depression.

57,926. Has there been depression in agriculture since 1886?—Very severe.

57,927. Has the depression mainly arisen from the low prices of cattle and sheep, or what?—The low prices for cattle, sheep, and produce, wool especially.

57,928. Have your rents been reduced in consequence?—In a measure we have some rents reduced, and we have had abatements.

Abatements of rent.

57,929. On your farm has the rent been reduced?—No.

57,930. Not at all?—No.

57,931. What is the rent you pay?—169*l*.

57,932. But you have had abatements?—I have had abatements of 15 and 10 per cent.

57,933. Every year?—No; when the depression was very severe.

57,934. Like the witness we had yesterday, you suffered in 1893 from the very low prices of stock?—We did.

57,935. What abatement did you get then?—I think 15 per cent. that year.

57,936. And that was due to the drought mainly?—Yes, we had also a very bad season in 1891.

57,937. What was that owing to?—We had a wet season. My own farming book shows a loss of 300*l*. in that year alone.

57,938. Did you get any abatement?—Yes, 15 per cent.

57,939. Well then, in 1892, I suppose, you paid your full rent?—I paid my full rent and got an abatement.

57,940. You suffered from the low prices and had an abatement?—Yes.

57,941. In 1894 the prices rose again?—The prices rose again and the abatement stopped.

57,942. Well, in this year have you had an abatement?—No, I have had no abatement.

Prices of stock.

57,943. Have prices fallen again?—Well, perhaps I ought to say, that the trade in store cattle in our country has two periods, the spring and autumn, and so far we do not know what the autumn trade will be.

57,944. Since the spring it will have dropped again?—They have dropped since the spring.

57,945. But not during the spring?—No, it has been pretty good trade.

57,946. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You say it is pretty good?—Much better than last year.

57,947. (*Chairman.*) What is the price of lean stock; has it got back to the average of a few years ago?—Oh, no.

57,948. What should you say is the difference, compared with what it was a few years ago?—Lean stock are 2*l*. per head dearer than they were two years ago.

57,949. But 10 or 15 years ago, what was the general average before the bad times came?—2*l*. a head below that for yearlings, and 3*l*. to 5*l*. for three-year-olds.

57,950. (*Mr. Lambert.*) When would you put the highest time for lean store stock?—I think in the seventies—in 1874 or 1875; I cannot tell each year; it was in the seventies.

57,951. (*Chairman.*) What were the two-year-olds then selling for?—12*l*. to 15*l*.

57,952. And the three-year-olds?—15*l*. to 20*l*.

57,953. Are there any farms unlet in your district?—There are a few, not many.

Demand for small farms.

57,954. When farms are vacant is there a demand for them?—Yes, but there is a better demand for small and medium sized farms.

57,955. Up to what acreage?—Up to, say, 80 or 100 acres.

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57,956. When the farm falls vacant up to that size are there plenty of applicants?—There are plenty of applicants.

57,957. At the old rents?—No, at reduced rents in every instance.

57,958. When the farm is vacant?—Yes.

57,959. What kind of reduction is it?—It is generally from 20 to 30 per cent.

57,960. Is that reduction not given to the tenant in possession?—No.

Demand for large farms.

57,961. Now for the larger farms, is there any difficulty in letting them?—There is. On one estate there are two large farms on hand at present in my immediate neighbourhood.

57,962. Are these farms mixed agriculture that you are speaking of?—They are the hill farms—the pastoral.

Reduction of rents.

57,963. Have the landlords suffered much from the depression?—Oh, they have, they have had to reduce their rents.

57,964. I thought there had been no reduction of rents to tenants who were in possession?—I beg your pardon, I said in my case there was no reduction.

57,965. But generally there has been a reduction?—Generally there has been a reduction.

57,966. What should you say was the amount of the reduction?—The reductions have not come, mark you, except when the farms were vacant, and on large estates where the landlord could afford it.

57,967. On the large estates the landlords have made reductions then?—Yes, in some cases.

57,968. All round?—Not generally all round; they used their discretion. If they saw anybody who could pay they would not reduce the rent.

57,969. What reductions have they made?—They have been from 10 to 30.

57,970. I suppose the less reductions were on the small farms?—Generally.

57,971. Still the reductions have been nothing like those we have heard of in the east and centre of England?—I take it not.

Depression in Merionethshire.

57,972. The depression has not been so severe in your district?—I do not believe it has. You must remember that it is very difficult to say anything that will be true of all landlords because there are some landlords who will listen to their tenants and appoint somebody to value and accept that valuation. I have known several do that; in other cases nothing will be done till the farm is vacant.

57,973. Did the farmers do very well before 1886—say between 1870 and 1886?—Yes, very well.

57,974. Did they lay by money?—I believe the majority of them did.

57,975. Did you, yourself, do well in that period?—I do not know whether I can say that—I have a business as well. If I have it is all gone.

Occupying owners.

57,976. Are there many persons who own farms?—There are in some districts—there are many.

57,977. A good many?—A good number.

57,978. What is their position?—Extremely bad.

57,979. Are they generally mortgaged?—Always; or with very few exceptions.

57,980. To what extent are they mortgaged, two-thirds?—Three-quarters.

57,931. And I suppose they have to pay interest on their mortgages?—They have to pay 4 per cent. as a rule—under 1,000*l*.

57,982. And there has been no reduction of that interest during those bad times?—Not a penny.

57,983. And they are paying rent to the mortgagee?—They are paying rent to the mortgagee and will not get either a post or a window or anything from the mortgagee.

57,984. Have many of those small owners been sold up?—I have known some sold up.

57,985. Not many?—Not many, but I know the others are in great trouble and wanting second mortgages or borrowing money one way or the other. That I could prove.

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57,986. And these men have had to do all the improvements themselves?—Of course, but there has been no improvements on them.

Permanent improvements.

57,987. Do the landlords where the land is let make the improvements?—Yes, that is the custom with us.

57,988. Have the tenants never done anything?—Yes, sometimes.

57,989. I mean in the way of permanent improvements, in the way of drainage and buildings?—As to drainage the custom is for the landlord to find the pipes and the tenants to cut the drain and lay the pipes.

57,990. But in the way of buildings do the landlords erect the buildings?—Yes, permanent buildings; but such as hay sheds the landlords, as a rule, give the posts, and the tenant supplies the galvanised iron sheds.

57,991. Have they done much more in the bad times?—They have done less during the bad times.

57,992. They have not been able to pay for it?—They say they cannot afford it.

Large and small farms compared.

57,993. Now with regard to the farmers; the larger ones I suppose have done worse than the smaller farmers?—Yes.

57,994. That is on account of the rate of wages?—Yes.

Wages.

57,995. Have wages risen?—Wages have been on the increase for the last 40 years.

57,996. Has there been no decrease of late years?—Not with us.

57,997. Have they increased since the depression—since 1886?—They have not increased.

57,998. Have they been maintained?—They have been maintained.

57,999. When was the last rise?—The last rise came I should say, in the early eighties.

58,000. (*Mr. Clay.*) Has there been an increase of wages since 1850?—The wages paid by my father, including keep, came to 152*l.*

58,001. (*Chairman.*) What year was that?—That was the year 1853. With me now it comes to 290*l.*, a balance in favour of 1853 of 137*l.* 14*s.* as against 1893.

58,002. Do you employ the same number of labourers that your father did?—The same number.

58,003. And how many do you employ?—I employ a waggoner, a husbandman and shepherd, two labourers, a cowman, a boy and a woman servant.

58,004. That is five men, a boy, and a woman?—Yes.

58,005. And the wages paid in 1893 were 290*l.*?—Yes.

58,006. And in 1853 they only amounted to 152*l.*?—Yes.

58,007. That is very nearly double?—It is very nearly double.

58,008. What do the wages average now per man?—16*s.* per week.

58,009. With any perquisites, or anything else?—The husbandman and shepherd, I consider, gets better than that by a shilling or two per week.

58,010. But do the ordinary men get anything in the way of milk?—If the wives like to send for the milk for the children they get it.

58,011. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Butter milk, you mean?—Skim milk and butter milk.

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58,012. (*Chairman.*) Do they pay rent for their cottages?—They pay rent for their cottages.

Employment of labour.

58,013. (*Mr. Everett.*) And you have got something like 80 acres less of arable land than your father had?—I have.

58,014. You have laid down 80 acres to grass, and still the wages come to nearly double?—Yes.

58,015. (*Chairman.*) How is that? If you laid down more land to grass you would employ less labour?—I have tried to do with less labour, and I found that my farm got untidy, and I had to have the men to keep it in order; there is a great deal of fencing to do.

58,016. Still you had all that fencing, and a great deal of land to plough which you do not plough now?—I keep them in better order than we used to.

58,017. Possibly your other business enables you to be a little lavish?—I have devolved that business on my son.

58,018. Your other business you mean?—Yes.

58,019. And you have made profits in your other business, and you are rather inclined to spend it on this?—No; we cannot get as much work from the men as we could in those days; we cannot get them to work.

58,020. But it seems rather a poor experience giving up 80 acres of arable, and yet employing the same amount of labour?—Yes.

58,021. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you employ the same number of hands that your father did?—Yes.

58,022. Before this land was laid down?—Yes.

58,023. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How many hours a day do the men work?—They come at 6 o'clock and leave at 6 o'clock.

Wages.

58,024. (*Chairman.*) It would seem to me that in making a comparison with the past, your main difficulty is the rise of wages. When one compares the present with the past is not that the main difficulty, or a great part of the difficulty?—It is in a great measure, for not only the labourers, but the bills of the mechanics, such as smiths, and carpenters, and sadlers, are very much heavier than they used to be.

58,025. Do you buy much manure and feeding stuffs?—Yes.

58,026. I suppose you get those cheaper?—We get those cheaper. I have never had them so cheap.

58,027. You make a saving there then?—Twenty years ago we never thought of feeding cattle on grass; why I cannot make out; we have to do it now.

58,028. You buy a great deal of food also?—I buy a tremendous lot of cake and meals.

58,029. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You keep more men on the farm?—Yes, I keep more men on the farm. In fact there is one man engaged, the cowman, nearly all day in the summer looking after the cattle and the cows, and feeding the cattle here and there, so that we cannot expect any work from him to rely upon.

58,030. (*Chairman.*) Well, then, the labourers must be a great deal better off than they were, because of the increase of wages, and they get the benefit of the difference in the low price of food?—But their style of living is very different from what it was when this table was made. (*Handing in a table of wages paid in 1853 and 1893.*)

WAGES PAID in 1853 by THOMAS JONES, Senior, Brynmelyn, Corwen.

	£	s.	d.
Robert Owen, waggoner	13	0	0
Thomas Edwards, waggoner	6	10	0
Hugh Jones, husbandman	13	0	0
Evan Edwards, shepherd	8	0	0
Robert Williams, cowman	7	16	0
Thomas Roberts, boy	1	10	0
Ellen Hughes, woman servant	4	0	0
Extra wages at harvest	7	10	0
	61	6	0
Food and lodging for seven, 52 weeks at 5*s.* per week	91	0	0
	152	6	0
Balance in favour of 1853	137	14	0
	290	0	0

WAGES PAID in 1893 by THOMAS JONES, Brynmelyn, Corwen.

	£	s.	d.
Edward Jones, waggoner	25	0	0
Benjamin Jones, husbandman and shepherd	26	0	0
David Hughes, labourer	23	8	0
Peter Roberts, cowman	26	0	0
Thomas Roberts, labourer	23	8	0
John Richards, boy	6	0	0
Jane Griffith, woman servant	16	0	0
	145	16	0
Extra wages at harvest—			
One man, eight weeks at 15*s.*	6	0	0
Four men, eight weeks, addition 5*s.*	8	0	0
	159	16	0
Food and lodging for seven, for 52 weeks at 7*s.* per week	127	8	0
One man, eight weeks, harvest, 7*s.* per week	2	16	0
	290	0	0

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58,031. Their condition has been a gradually improving one all along?—Yes.

58,032. They have benefited by the cheap prices for food?—Yes. How they lived on the small wages and reared families formerly I cannot make out.

58,033. The ordinary labourers appeared to get from 8*l.* to 13*l.* a year in 1853, and now they are getting 23*l.* to 26*l.*?—Yes.

58,034. So that they have almost doubled their wages, and in the meantime the prices of food have enormously decreased, so that they are better off in that respect too?—Yes.

Small farmers.

58,035. The small farmers do not employ much labour, I understand?—They do not.

58,036. And they and their families do the work?—Yes.

58,037. And therefore they are able to get on better than the larger farmers?—Yes.

58,038. (*Mr. Everett.*) At the expense of very great hardship and privation?—Yes; they work very hard.

58,039. Being worse off than the labourers?—Oh, far worse; they work far harder, and fare harder. I am sure that they have not the table that ordinary farmers give, or anything like it.

58,040. (*Chairman.*) Has much land in your district gone out of cultivation?—Yes.

Land laid down to grass.

58,041. That is then laid down to grass?—It is laid down to grass.

58,042. Does the land easily take to grass?—Yes, mostly in Merionethshire.

58,043. You soon get a fair pasture?—Yes, in three or four years.

58,044. I suppose you do nothing for a few years till the land grows grass?—Nothing; there is a very great difference between our county and the adjoining county of Denbighshire, and there is a very great difference between our land and that, for it naturally takes to grass.

58,045. The witness from Denbighshire yesterday told us that it takes 10 years before it is laid down to grass in his county?—Yes; with us it is three to four.

58,046. You do nothing to the land, and after a short time you feed the cattle upon it and it grows grass?—It grows grass, but on the hillside it soon deteriorates and goes to its primitive condition.

Uncultivated land.

58,047. When you speak of land going out of cultivation you mean that it is growing grass instead of being ploughed?—Yes. For example 40 years ago there was a great deal of land reclaimed from the hills and fenced in and ploughed up, and it grew oats, clovers, and grand pasture for two or three years, and then it was ploughed again after four or five years. That land now is fast growing into gorse and heather nearly everywhere in our valley.

58,048. Then that land does not grow grass?—That is going to its original primitive condition. It wants to be ploughed again.

58,049. Will that land not grow grass?—I maintain that it reverts to its primitive condition in four or five years.

58,050. Have you got any of that land yourself?—I have a piece; 40 acres that was enclosed in 1853 by my father.

58,051. Is it worth anything in its present condition?—Yes, 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre.

58,052. Not more?—I keep ponies on it now.

58,053. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Would you get a crop if you ploughed it now?—Yes.

58,054. Why not plough it then?—The labour is too expensive; it would not pay.

Changes of tenancy.

58,055. (*Chairman.*) Have there been many changes of tenancy in your district?—Not many.

58,056. Not more than in ordinary times?—Excepting in one of the eighties; there were a great many changes after the great depression of 1886; I think it was 1888 or 1889.

Management of estates.

58,057. Are the estates mostly managed by land agents?—Mostly.

58,058. Are any of the landlords resident?—There are several resident, and some non-resident.

58,059. Do they take interest in agricultural matters?—They do.

58,060. Do you find that the young men among the labourers are going off into the large towns?—Yes.

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Rural depopulation.

58,061. And you cannot keep them?—It does not pay. They see their fathers working for a generation, and making no money, and they go to where they can get money.

58,062. You are speaking of the farmers' sons now?—Yes.

58,063. What about the labourers?—The labourers are the same. They have more money to handle in the towns and a better chance of getting on. I know several labourers who have gone to Liverpool, saved a little money, bought a horse and cart and developed into master carters.

Low prices.

58,064. With regard to the causes of depression, what do you consider they are?—Low prices, owing to foreign competition.

Wages and depression.

58,065. Still you have told us also that the increase of late of wages has a great deal to do with it?—No, not causing the depression; I did not say they caused the depression.

58,066. Not the whole cause, but it must be one of the causes?—It is no cause of the depression.

58,067. At all events it is the cause of difficulties?—Because when prices were high, we were able to pay those wages; but they are not the cause of the depression.

58,068. Still, you told us that they had been gradually increasing those wages to the year 1886?—Yes, to the year 1886.

58,069. They were gradually increasing?—They were gradually increasing.

58,070. And only since 1886 have they remained stationary?—Yes, but that is no cause of the depression. When prices were high we were able to pay the wages; but we cannot get the wages down the same as prices have come down.

58,071. You cannot get the wages down to the fall in other things?—No, we cannot.

Commercial gambling.

58,072. You consider that the speculation on "futures" in produce has had a depressing effect on prices?—It has had a depressing effect.

58,073. But, still, speculation in "futures" can hardly affect you, dealing in cattle?—No.

58,074. It does not affect your industry?—Not directly.

Butter-making.

58,075. Have you an opinion that the quality of your production—especially butter—might be improved?—Yes, it is of a very uneven quality.

58,076. Has there been no attempt by co-operation, or otherwise, to improve it?—None by co-operation; but there have been dairy schools in our county.

58,077. And that is hardly enough. There ought to be co-operation among the farmers to secure a uniform standard?—It cannot be done without it.

58,078. Have you suggested to your neighbours that they should combine together?—I have suggested it, but it was received very coldly.

58,079. You have not succeeded in inducing them to take it up?—Oh, no.

58,080. Is there a good price still for the best quality of butter?—No, not as good as the prices we used to have.

58,081. What is the price now?—The price of the very best butter with us now is 11*d.*

58,082. In the winter or summer?—This week it is 11*d.*, up to a fortnight ago it was down to 9*d.* and 10*d.*; it goes up in the winter sometimes to 14*d.*

58,083. What is the price of the improved butter?—I believe it went down to 8*d.*, and less than that last winter. I mean the "tub" that comes into competition with foreign butter.

58,084. Is there any reason why it should not be all brought up to a good standard"?—Certainly not. If you could get them to make it in a uniform style we could beat them all.

58,085. Is it a good country for butter?—Very.

58,086. And have the farmers like yourself taken to making butter of late years?—I do not believe there is much change in that.

58,087. And do they make about the same that they used to do?—For the last ten years I have been selling milk.

58,088. Do you find that more profitable?—A little, there is not so much in it as I thought.

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Mr. T. Jones. 9 Aug. 1895.

58,089. Are you near a railway station or near some town?—I am half a mile from a railway station, and I consign it there.

58,090. Where?—Festiniog.

58,091. Is that a good market?—There is no end of competition there now.

58,092. I suppose those farmers who live further from the station would do better to make butter?—Yes, to make butter.

Price of milk.

58,093. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How much do you get for your milk?—I sell it at Festiniog and get 9*d.* per gallon delivered there, that is equal to 8*d.* per gallon or 2*d.* per quart at the station where I consign it.

58,094. (*Mr. Everett.*) Are you speaking of a gallon of eight pints?—The Imperial gallon of eight pints.

58,095. Not a barn gallon?—Oh no, no barn gallons with us.

Rates.

58,096. (*Chairman.*) As regards the rates, what is the condition of the rates in your district?—Do you mean railway rates?

58,097. No, poor rates, &c.?—They have been on the increase continually. In 1853 the amount of rates collected in our parish was 401*l.* 13*s.* 11*d.*, and the average for the ten years up to 1862, came to 440*l.* 15*s.*, and the ten years up to 1872 averaged 515*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.*, and the average for the ten years up to 1882 was 626*l.* 11*s.* 5*d.*, and the average of the ten years ending 1892 was 621*l.* 18*s.*

58,098. Then during the last 20 years they have been about the same, that is from 1872 to 1892?—No.

58,099. You said the ten years ending 1882 was 626*l.* and the ten years ending 1892 was 621*l.*, so that they have remained about stationary?—Yes, the ten years ending 1882 and 1892 were about the same.

58,100. Those were the averages for the ten years that you gave?—Yes, there was a gradual increase.

58,101. There was an increase up to 1862, and since then it has remained about stationary?—There was a gradual increase up to 1876.

58,102. But taking the average of the ten years it was about stationary?—Of the last ten years it was about stationary, but this year again we are a step higher. The rates for 1895 and 1896 will come to 738*l.*

58,103. What is the rate in the £?—This year it is 3*s.* and last year it was 2*s.* 3*d.*

58,104. What was it 10 years ago, or 15 years ago?—It was 2*s.* 3*d.*, 2*s.* 6*d.* and so forth.

58,105. And going back further was it about the same?—Yes, but the rateable value up to 1870 was much smaller than it is now.

58,106. The rateable value has increased?—Yes.

58,107. That is the rateable value of other property than land, the land has rather diminished in value on account of the fall in rents, is that so?—Only since the reductions have come in the last few years. The highest rateable value is 1885. We come down till now it is 4,673*l.*

58,108. What was it in 1885?—5,213*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.*

58,109. That represents the difference in the value of the land probably?—Yes, in a great measure.

58,110. But in the interval, I suppose, the value of other property has increased; the buildings, for instance?—Very little in our parish. It is purely agricultural.

58,111. What is your union?—The Bala Union.

58,112. I see for the whole union the value of the buildings has increased from 4,700*l.* to 7,700*l.*?—Yes, very naturally, because there is a whiskey distillery built; but that is not in my parish.

58,113. But taking the whole union, because the main rates are spread over the union, that is the case?—Yes; but there is a much greater increase of property in the town. The only increase in our parish was when the house of your late friend Mr. Robertson was built; that was in 1870.

58,114. I see by the income tax returns in Merionethshire there was a great increase in the value of land for income-tax purposes between 1870 and 1879, of no less than 17 per cent.?—I quite agree with that.

58,115. Well, then, between 1879 and the present time there has been a decrease of 8 per cent.?—That would correspond with our valuation very nearly.

58,116. Therefore it is still 8 per cent. above what the value was in 1870?—Not quite as much with me. The valuation of my parish in 1870 was 4,352*l.*, and now it is 4,673*l.*

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58,117. Taking the whole county it would seem that between the years 1870 and 1879 there was an increase in the rental value, for income tax purposes, of 16 per cent., and since then there has been a reduction of 8 per cent.?—Yes.

58,118. So that it is worth 8 per cent. more than it was in 1870?—Up to what year is that?

58,119-20. That is the year 1893-94. It may have gone down a little?—Since then we have come down 400*l.* in the value of our parish. I have here a table of poor rates (*producing a table*).

PARISH of LLANDDERFEL. ACCOUNT of RATES COLLECTED.

Year.	Rateable Value.	Amount in the £.	Rates Collected.	Remarks.	
	£ s. d.	s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
1853	—	—	401 13 11		
1854	—	—	400 8 6		
1855	—	—	402 13 10		
1856	—	—	426 3 6		
1857	—	—	426 12 3		
1858	—	—	464 10 0		
1859	—	—	477 13 9		
1860	—	—	474 15 7		
1861	—	—	417 12 6		
1862	—	—	515 10 0		
				Average 10 years -	440 15 0
1863	—	—	449 4 2		
1864	—	—	556 8 6		
1865	—	—	564 4 5		
1866	—	—	434 0 5		
1867	—	—	521 8 2		
1868	3,326 3 10	—	522 0 2		
1869	3,473 7 8	—	473 5 10		
1870	4,352 8 1	3 0	536 19 9		
1871	4,361 16 0	2 0	538 7 10		
1872	4,563 17 7	„	563 16 3		
				Average 10 years -	515 19 6
1873	4,659 4 1	—	571 1 9		
1874	4,650 14 6	—	570 0 1		
1875	4,865 3 6	2 6	582 19 2		
1876	4,882 17 9	3 3	721 10 8		
1877	4,884 10 5	2 6	602 3 5		
1878	5,030 12 6	2 6	610 19 3		
1879	5,127 0 6	2 3	564 7 10		
1880	5,262 0 6	3 0	766 0 7		
1881	5,203 14 3	2 6	646 15 2		
1882	5,189 14 3	2 6	629 16 5		
				Average 10 years -	626 11 5
1883	5,153 14 9	2 6	637 9 5		
1884	5,171 0 9	„	640 1 2		
1885	5,213 11 9	„	634 10 7		
1886	5,175 2 5	„	635 12 5		
1887	5,150 17 2	„	649 12 0		
1888	5,062 19 2	„	649 14 11		
1889	5,032 2 4	2 4	574 4 9		
1890	5,040 1 7	„	587 19 1		
1891	5,024 7 10	„	583 3 6		
1892	5,037 3 9	2 6	627 0 9		
				Average 10 years	621 18 0
1893	—	—	601 14 2		
1894	5,030 12 10	2 3	560 19 2		
1895	4,994 2 3	—	557 17 4		
Rate signed 1895-6	4,673 3 3	3 0	738 9 4		

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58,121. Among the causes of the present state of things, you put diminished production due to insufficient capital?—That has something to do with it no doubt.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,122. And some deterioration in farming you say?—The cases are not numerous.

58,123. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, what do you say?—It has no effect whatever with us.

58,124. Do you mean to say it is not resorted to?—Very seldom.

58,125. Is there a custom of the county?—Yes.

58,126. Under which the incoming tenant pays to the outgoing tenant?—Yes.

58,127. And they do not resort to the Act?—Very little.

58,128. Are there no complaints about the Act?—Well it is said that it ought to be made more effective.

58,129. Do you think so yourself?—Yes.

58,130. How would you make it more effective?—I have not got it before me, and I cannot give it to you at present.

58,131. Do you think that there should be greater security for improvements?—Yes, greater security for improvements.

58,132. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Is there any security for improvements now?—No.

58,133. None whatever?—None whatever.

58,134. The custom does not provide it, or the agreement?—Well, all that you can do is to try and bargain for it.

Tenure.

58,135. (*Chairman.*) Are the agreements generally from year to year?—Yes.

58,136. (*Mr. Everett.*) At what time of the year do farms change hands?—On the 25th of March.

58,137. In the spring time?—In the spring time.

Railway rates.

58,138. (*Chairman.*) Have you made complaints of the railway charges?—We consider them high. Our district has only one railway, and they charge as much for carrying, or very nearly as much for carrying from Ruabon to Bala as they do to Dolgelly or Festiniog, which are competing points.

58,139. It is only of late years that you have had the railway?—Yes.

58,140. It has been of great benefit to you?—Yes.

58,141. Still you think that your rates are too high?—They should be cheaper.

58,142. Who is it worked by?—By the Great Western Railway Company; the line belongs to several companies, but it is worked by the Great Western.

58,143. Under lease, I suppose?—I suppose so; by some agreement, I think.

58,144. You think they might be more liberal to you in the valley?—I think so.

State loans.

58,145. Would you recommend that money should be lent by the State to occupying owners, and to landlords for making improvements in the land?—I would; to the occupying owners by all means; as I have said before, this class is in a very bad state.

58,146. And these improvements should be for farm buildings and labourers' cottages; and general improvements such as drainage and so forth?—For general improvements; but I press it more for the occupying owners than for any of the others.

58,147. (*Mr. Everett.*) Could the State take over their mortgages?—The small occupying owners, do you mean?

58,148. Yes?—With ease, I should think.

58,149. Is the land still worth the amount of the mortgages?—I should say it is.

58,150. (*Chairman.*) Where a farm is already mortgaged to three-fourths of its value, there does not appear to be much margin for the State lending money?—Not much.

58,151. Do you think the loan of the State should take precedence of the others for the purpose of effecting improvements as it does now?—Yes.

58,152. You think there should be a reduction in the burthens upon land I see?—Yes.

58,153. And you suggest that the tithe should be appropriated for county and parish purposes, and that the maintenance of the poor should be transferred to the Imperial Exchequer?—Yes.

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58,154. On these large questions we are satisfied with the expression of your opinion?—I think we are pretty unanimous about it in Wales.

58,155. (*Mr. Clay.*) You seem to have some other profession than that of farming?—I had.

58,156. What was it?—I was a corn and flour dealer, a business which my son manages now.

58,157. But you have been a practical farmer all along?—I have always been on the farm.

Abatements of rent.

58,158. You seem to have got reductions, or abatements rather, from 10 to 15 per cent.?—Yes, for some years.

58,159. Would you never know before rent day what abatements you were going to get?—No.

58,160. Is not that rather an unsatisfactory business?—Very unsatisfactory indeed.

58,161. You feel that it is going with your hat in your hand like a beggar for abatement instead of having a regular reduction?—It makes you look more like a beggar than anything else.

58,162. You think that the landlords should re-value their farms in accordance with the price of produce, and give you a substantial reduction?—Yes; that in a great measure accounts for the reduction in the value of our parish during the last three years. Sir Henry Robertson has re-valued many farms, and the rental has been reduced instead of those abatements.

58,163. So that both you and the landlords and the tenants were paying rates upon the full rent notwithstanding those abatements that you are getting?—We were paying rates upon the full rent notwithstanding the abatements.

58,164. And that was an injustice to both parties?—Certainly.

58,165. Is it the general rule that they give these paltry abatements and keep the tenant farmers constantly in a state of suspense?—Yes.

58,166. And that is not business?—It is not.

58,167. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You were going on to say that during the last three years something had taken place?—Sir Henry Robertson, a great landowner in our parish, feeling that this mode was unsatisfactory, re-valued a great number of farms, and they were reduced in rent, and that counts in a great measure in the re-valuation of our parish for the last three years.

58,168. (*Mr. Clay.*) And those rents are put on a valuation roll, and they are assessed upon the valuation roll and not upon the former rents?—Yes.

58,169. The rates were paid upon those abatements you said?—Yes.

Sheep farming.

58,170. You seem to have a run for a certain number of sheep, 400 you say, on the hill; is that included in the 169*l.* rent?—Yes.

58,171. What is the value of these sheep per annum for the run? What is the advantage of it?—It is a very very poor sheep run, and they are only on the hill for a very short time; in fact, we are beginning to bring them down already, in the beginning of August.

58,172. Is the price of sheep going up anything?—They went up two years ago, or rather 18 months ago.

Price of wool.

58,173. What is the price of wool?—It is down all the time.

58,174. What is the price now?—It is 6½*d.* to 7*d.*

58,175. Unwashed?—No, washed. We all wash in our part of the country.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,176-80. Will a re-adjustment, and improvement, and strengthening of the Agricultural Holdings Act of 1883 meet your difficulty as regards security for improvements, or keeping the sitting tenant in a sound position?—It might do a little good; it would improve it. But my opinion is that something stronger than that Act is necessary.

58,181. Is that the general opinion of the tenant farmers in Wales?—Yes.

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58,182. Did you say the larger farmers were in a worse position than small farmers?—Yes.

Large and small farms compared.

58,183. That is by having to pay for more labour?—Yes, for more labour.

58,184. And the small farmer does not pay for labour. But still you say that the small farmers' profits have been nil?—They have been nil; that is so.

58,185. That is not very satisfactory?—The situation is very unsatisfactory all through.

Employment of labour.

58,186. And you say that labour has been doubled from 1850 to 1893?—I do.

58,187. But it is no cause of the depression?—It is no cause of the depression.

58,188. When the wages were high the tenant farmer did not feel the high wages?—He did not.

58,189. Is the labourer getting more than his share for the labour that he puts into the soil?—Oh, dear me, no.

Ground game.

58,190. You have something here about ground game. You complain, like a number of tenant farmers, that this is rather unsatisfactory?—Oh, yes, very.

58,191. What do you suggest for a remedy to improve the Ground Game Act?—I do not know anything less than the abolition of the game laws that will do it, or a clause in the Agricultural Holdings Act, or whatever it is, that whenever the landlord sub-lets the game he should give the first offer to the tenant; for it is from the gentlemen who take shootings that we suffer most, not from the landlords who shoot over the land themselves.

58,192. You mean the game tenant?—The game tenant is the man I object to.

58,193. He is a greater enemy to the tenant than the landlord?—Yes, he is the greatest nuisance in the country.

58,194. He comes for the purpose of killing game, and his keepers come to sell the game?—Yes.

58,195. And the remedy you suggest is that the first offer, especially for the hares and rabbits—and even game—should be to the tenants?—Certainly.

58,196. Would that satisfy you?—I doubt if that would be sufficient.

58,197. But that would go a great deal towards remedying it?—I would try that first.

58,198. (*Mr. Ererett.*) How about the mansions?—There are people who are game dealers who take no end of shootings from those landlords, and so forth, and sub-let them afterwards to other people; and their whole business is to rear game to eat the tenants crop; and the poor tenant has to pay the rent of the farm and feed these game tenants' game. No country in the world would suffer such a thing. I do not object to the landlord shooting the game for sport, but I do object to the game tenant coming to make a profit out of the game.

58,199. (*Mr. Clay.*) They are only there to supply the poultry market?—Yes; they are the greatest nuisance we have.

58,200. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are the tenants compensated for all game?—Sometimes they get a little, which is not enough to pay for it.

58,201. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is the natural outcome of it that if you complain to the landlord it amounts very often to a notice to quit?—I cannot say that it amounted to that; but of course the landlord refers you to the game tenants, as he is bound to make compensation.

58,202. And the tenant refers you to the gamekeepers, and the gamekeepers say: "Why don't you shoot the rabbits?"?—They will say: "Why don't you shoot the rabbits?" Now, *here* is a cover, and *there* is the game, and you have a field of corn *here*, and you dare not go to the hedge, and the rabbits go through and eat your corn; and if you go with a gun the keeper would be there before you and send them all in, and you could not shoot them.

58,203. You propose that the tenant should go into the covers and kill the rabbits and trap them?—I do not know what to do with them. It is a great nuisance.

Small occupying owners.

58,204. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say that large farmers are in a worse position than the small farmers, but that the small farmer who owns his own land is still worse off?—He is worse off than any of them.

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58,205. You do not look to any improvement in the position by men becoming the owners of small farms themselves?—No, I cannot see that, unless they have enough money to pay for them. I do not say that they would improve their position at all; and how that can be carried on, even if they did, for two or three generations without falling into the hands of larger landowners I do not see. There was a time at the beginning of this century when farm owners were numerous, I have heard my father say.

58,206. Are there fewer small farmers who own their own land now?—There are fewer than there were in the last century.

58,207. Because they have not found it answer?—They did not find it to answer. Then when the good times came people were anxious to buy their land, and they bought it when dear; and now they have mortgages on it, and there are no abatements or reductions of the mortgage.

58,208. And they are worse off than when they rent it?—Yes, because the tenant will get from the landlord by asking, and begging, and praying, some repairs, and gates, and pipes for drainage; but for the poor fellow who has his farm mortgaged he cannot get a penny.

58,209. Do you keep farming accounts yourself?—I do.

58,210. Have you any you could put in?—I have not brought any with me.

Results of farming.

58,211. I do not want you to answer the question unless you like; but have you lost capital of late years?—My farming accounts, as I said before, in the year 1891, which was a most disastrous year for me—much of the land being liable to floods—showed a loss of 300*l.* in that year.

58,212. That was a very exceptional year?—It was an exceptional year; the worst that I ever had.

58,213. But taking the last 10 years, has the loss been serious?—There is no profit, not a penny, and I am doing my best.

58,214. For how many years past has that been the case?—There has been no profit since 1885.

58,215. Did the depression begin in 1885?—It began before that, gradually.

58,216. When did it really begin?—I should say it began in the seventies. In some articles, as horses, as early as 1876, and gradually, one thing and another, it came down, and it was severe by 1885.

Uncultivated land.

58,217. And with regard to this land which has gone out of cultivation, and has reverted to its original condition, is there much of it in your neighbourhood?—A good deal.

58,218. Could you give any estimate of how much there is; is there much in your parish, for instance?—Yes, a great deal in my parish, and the adjoining parishes of Llandrillo and Cynwyd.

58,219. Can you say how much in those two parishes have gone back in that way?—There is one-sixth of it fast going into its original state.

58,220. One-sixth of the land cultivated in the two parishes?—Yes, in each of the parishes.

58,221. (*Chairman.*) Not one-sixth of the whole land?—One-sixth of the cultivated part.

58,222. How much of the land was cultivated; was it one-third, or one-fourth, or what proportion?—During that time?

58,223. A few years ago, before the change began?—Two-thirds of the land was cultivated—in the fenced land I mean.

58,224. Apart from the hill land?—Apart from the hill land—from the enclosed land.

58,225. Two-thirds of the remaining land was cultivated, and of that one-sixth has now gone back again?—Yes.

58,226. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Could you give the acreage of it?—No, I could not.

58,227. Could you send it afterwards, when you go home?—The nearest approach would be thus:—Take 300 acres of land, and, say, 100 of it is permanent pasture, and 200 of it is arable; of that 200 there is, perhaps, 40 acres, we will say—one-fifth that would be—that is fast returning to its original primitive, wild state.

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58,228. About what time did that go out of cultivation?—It went out gradually as the depression increased.

58,229. And is it still going out?—It is still going out.

Fall of prices.

58,230. What are the articles in which a fall of prices has most injured you in your district?—Wool, cattle, sheep, horses, pigs, and everything that we grow—corn too.

58,231. Has the fall of corn hurt you much?—Not in my parish, but the next parish of Corwen, corn has affected it immensely, because I remember the time when every farmer in the neighbourhood of Corwen had a stack of wheat for his summer rent, to thrash in May to pay the rent due in June. How arable farmers pay any rent in our country I cannot make out, with such a climate as we have.

58,232. In this statement of rates, the rate for your last year has rushed up very much?—For this year.

Rates.

58,233. What is the reason for the rise in that exceptional manner?—In the first place, you see the rateable value has decreased, has it not?

58,234. Yes; that is likely to be permanent?—It is likely to be permanent.

58,235. And get worse?—And decrease again.

58,236. Is there no exceptional cause falling upon that particular year that will not go on?—If you look at that list there are recurring years of 3*s.* in the £, that is where we are now.

58,237. I want to know whether it is a temporary rise owing to exceptional causes which will not recur, or any reduction of the value, or any new expense which is not likely to continue?—The instructions given to the overseers were to provide enough rates for the parish councils and the district councils, believing that they would be more expensive. We thought that we should want 4*d.* for the district council, and we did with 1¾*d.* before. We went in for 3*d.* for the parish council, but whether we shall use them all we cannot say yet. We made a demand sufficient to meet the expense.

58,238. The reason I asked was this: on a former occasion when you had the 3*s.* rate in one year you had 2*s.* 3*d.* the year before, and therefore that averaged 2*s.* 7½*d.*, and then there came in the accounts a great many years of half-a-crown apiece, and you have had a low rate last year 2*s.* 3*d.*, and now it is the high one of 3*s.*; is that to make good deficiencies in the past expenditure or is it to meet the expenditure of the current year?—I cannot make out the cause of the 3*s.* 3*d.* in 1876.

58,239. But I mean in 1895: you have had three years with 2*s.* 3*d.*?—I might explain that 2*s.* 3*d.* There is, first of all, the reduction in the re-valuation; that will account for something; and 3*d.* for the parish rate; that makes 2*s.* 6*d.*; and you may put 2*d.* additional for the district council, and that makes 2*s.* 8*d.*; and the other 3*d.* was, I suppose, for fear of extra contingencies.

58,240. What was the date of the fall in the valuation. This last one you mentioned came into force on Lady Day?—Yes.

58,241. In 1894 or 1895?—Perhaps some of them were reduced in the middle of the year, and the year before that, and the tenant not claiming and going to the assessment committee in time.

58,242. But this fall has been made since 1894?—In the valuation list this might have taken place a year or two previously.

58,243. But it did not appear on the valuation list until this last year?—Not until this last year.

Tenants' capital.

58,244. I do not quite understand whether the farmers have lost much capital?—They must have done.

58,245. I understand that they have not gained anything—there is no profit?—You see the farmers capital is his stock, and if he sold out he would lose his capital.

58,246. But he has got more now than he used to?—More what?

58,247. Stock; a larger quantity of it?—I did not say that.

58,248. I understood you to say that, in consequence of the arable land going out of cultivation, there was more stock on the farm?—No; you see when the land is under the plough, where there is more arable there is more stock; you may keep more in the summer to sell in the winter.

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58,249. But you say you keep more?—In the summer, but not in the winter; we keep 60 cattle through the summer, but not 40 in the winter, because we do not plough.

58,250. But you have more capital invested in the stock?—That is principally through my having 30 milk cows when I only had 10 before.

58,251. You do not consider that is general in the district?—Certainly not.

58,252. But you say the cases of diminished production, due to insufficient capital, are not numerous?—They are not numerous; there are some, of course.

58,253. But if there had been any great losses of capital you would have expected diminished production?—Yes.

58,254. But there has not been much of it?—As a rule, our class of farmers, the majority of them, have sufficient capital to farm properly.

58,255. Still, notwithstanding the depression?—Notwithstanding the depression.

58,256. And have most of your farmers been there a long time, or are they new comers?—They have mostly been there a long while.

58,257. Then they still retain a sufficiency of capital to enable them to carry on their farming as well as they can?—Yes, and the Welsh farmer will stick to his holding as long as he can.

58,258. But would they not be able to carry on their cultivation better if they had more capital?—They would be able to do it better with more capital.

Butter factories.

58,259. (*Mr. Channing.*) I see that you say that the butter is of very uneven quality?—It is.

58,260. Is there any attempt being made to introduce the creamery or factory system?—We have had dairy instruction by an instructor from Aberystwith, all through the county, but I am sorry to tell you, having some experience in our district where they arranged for it, that the persons who came there were the daughters mostly of those who made good butter already, and we could not get those who made bad butter to come near at all.

58,261. You have not made any attempt to introduce the factory or creamery system?—No, I am sorry to say that our Welsh farmers, in matters of that sort, are very conservative.

58,262. Has no information been given to them as to the gain to the individual farmers, and the increase of prices on the market obtained by the creamery system?—Yes.

58,263. Is there no information spread upon this point?—Yes, several times, we have had lectures by Professor Parry, of Aberystwith, and also from Bangor as well, but still farmers will not move in the matter

58,264. But, in your opinion, it would tend to spread a knowledge of these facts among farmers?—Yes. Where butter is to be put in the tubs, something of that sort must certainly come, or else the sale of Welsh tub-butter will be gone.

58,265. The individual farmer has no chance of getting hold of the market?—He has not.

Railway rates.

58,266. About the railway charges I want to ask you this, whether, since the Act of last year, has there been any change on the part of the railway company?—It is worse for the traders since the Commission sat.

58,267. There is no improvement?—I say it is worse. For example, supposing you took a truck of sheep to Ruthin Market, a distance of 20 miles; before this Commission sat I would be allowed to ride free of charge with my sheep, now I cannot—but will have to pay.

58,268. You mean since 1893 they altered the conditions?—Yes.

58,269. (*Chairman.*) It was not last year, but three years ago?—It was a railway inquiry, I know.

58,270. (*Mr. Channing.*) You mean the series of inquiries which resulted in the increase of rates in 1893?—Yes, that is it.

58,271. You mean those provisional order bills?—Yes.

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58,272. And the conditions of carriage have been altered unfavourably to farmers?—Yes, and the rates have been advanced.

58,273. And the question I asked was whether since last year the companies have tried to meet the farmers in any way by reductions?—They met us on certain rates. We made such protest against the advanced rates that they have reduced them nearly to what they were previously.

58,274. They reduced them partially but not below what they were?—Not as low or quite as low as they were before.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,275. About the Agricultural Holdings Act, is there any wish in your neighbourhood to have greater freedom to make permanent improvements and be compensated for them, that is, to put up the buildings and carry out improvements of that kind on the part of the farmers?—I do not see that there is, the farmer considers that it ought to be done by the landlord.

59,276. And is it your opinion that the tenant should be able to claim for improvements if he does not quit the farm in settling the terms of a new tenancy?—In settling the terms of a new tenancy he ought to be compensated.

58,277. He ought to be entitled to have his improvements allowed for before the terms of the new tenancy?—Yes, so long as the tenancy remains the rent remains the same. I cannot see how he can claim for anything then.

Vacant farms.

58,278. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) I think you said that there are some farms vacant at the present time?—Yes, in hand.

58,279. Why did the tenants leave?—Owing to disagreements about rent.

58,280. They cannot be let now for the old rent?—No.

58,281. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have they tried to let them at a lower rent?—The landlord sticks to the old rent, and rather than reduce it he farms for himself. Another farm I heard was unlet up to the beginning of July, and it was relet in July at 30 per cent. reduction, with no payment for the first half year.

58,282. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are the agents able to speak Welsh to the tenants in your part?—Mostly; oh, yes.

58,283. The tenants are unable to speak English?—The majority of them. They can understand a little, but they cannot express their views.

58,284. Are the agreements in English or Welsh?—Now they are both in English and Welsh, as a rule.

Custom of the country.

58,285. You have no custom in your county as in Glamorganshire and Flintshire; in Glamorganshire they have a very good custom that when a tenant improves his farm it is not judged by the Agricultural Holdings Act but that custom comes in, and they will be paid for everything they have done?—No. Forty years ago a man in leaving his farm would be often allowed, mostly allowed, to choose his tenant and make his own terms with him, and very likely would get something from the new tenant for the improvements he had made. There was a kind of tenant right. When the good times came that was abolished, and the landlord will very seldom now accept a tenant unless he is of his own choosing; he will not accept him of the tenant's choosing.

58,286. (*Mr. Everett.*) You observe in your brief that the prices of all produce commenced to decline soon after the European Powers adopted a gold standard; you have observed that?—I have.

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The currency.

58,287. Are you inclined to think that there is a connexion between the two?—Certainly.

58,288. You think there is cause and effect?—I am firmly of that opinion. But when doctors disagree on that subject, I thought it would be better for me to be silent.

Tithes.

58,289. You suggest that applying the tithes for county and parish purposes would reduce the burdens on land?—Yes.

58,290. That is, if tithes are diverted from their present use you would not wish them pooled and made a national fund to relieve the population, but that they should be used for local purposes?—Yes, according to the principle that they were established for education and the maintenance of the poor. That is my idea.

58,291. Is that an opinion general in Wales?—I think so.

Position of small occupying owners.

58,292. (*Lord Bendel.*) I think you referred to the condition of the smaller farmers as one just now of very great severity and trial?—The occupying owners.

58,293. The occupying owners and the small farmers?—And the small farmers have a very hard life.

58,294. You say they have very long hours?—Very long hours and very poor fare.

58,295. And very hard fare?—And very hard fare.

58,296. And they are an extremely hard-working, thrifty, and steady class of people?—Yes, and they work their children as soon as they are out of school, and clothe them but indifferently and do everything that they possibly can, so as not to leave their home and to pay their way.

58,297. At the same time their attachment to their homes is so great they would rather do anything than leave them?—Yes, they would rather do anything than leave them.

58,298. And there is no inconsiderable population in your district of which you speak which is suffering in this way?—I am sure of it.

58,299. They stick to their occupations?—Yes.

58,300. They cling to their homes?—Yes.

58,301. And they are suffering severely — men, women, and children—in physical condition?—Well; I cannot say that they are suffering physically; the price of food is very low, wheat and flour is very low.

58,302. Then may I put it, that they suffer in physical comfort?—You are quite right.

58,303. The comparatively low prices of the necessities of life keeps their condition fairly good, you think?—Oh yes; they have far better bread now than they had when times were good.

58,304. You spoke of them as being somewhat conservative, and unwilling to change their habit and custom?—They are.

58,305. Do you attribute that at all to the fact that their condition of late has become very hard, and the heart is somewhat taken out of them?—I cannot account for it, but it is noticed that the Welsh are wonderfully conservative in their habits and traditions and customs, and they are peculiar in the love of their country and so forth.

The witness withdrew.

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MR. JOHN THOMAS FISHER called and examined.

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58,306. (*Chairman.*) Are you a tenant-farmer residing at Denant, Haverfordwest, in the county of Pembroke?—Yes, I own it too.

Particulars of witness' farm.

58,307. You own the farm?—I have very lately bought it, two years ago.

58,308. And before that were you a tenant?—Yes, a tenant for 27 years.

58,309. Under whom?—Under Colonel Peel.

58,310. What rent had you been previously paying for this land that you bought?—I had paid 350*l.* per annum.

58,311. That was the highest rent?—That was the highest.

58,312. And had it been reduced?—Yes, from 350*l.* to 300*l.*

58,313. What is the farm, is it an arable farm?—It is mixed.

System of farming.

58,314. Is the general condition of the farming of that district mixed farming?—Yes, it varies, of course, in certain districts. We are divided into hundreds and according to what soil you are—the farming varies.

58,315. Are there hill farms?—Not in my immediate neighbourhood.

58,316. You have no run?—No common: we have in the north part of the country.

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58,317. Has there been much change of cultivation in your district?—On certain soils.

58,318. What change has there been made?—Laying down more grass

58,319. Have you laid down much land yourself?—Yes.

58,320. How much?—About 100 acres.

58,321. And before that you grew corn?—A great deal of corn.

58,322. Did you consume most of your corn?—About half.

58,323. And you do not rely much upon your corn?—No.

58,324. What do you rely upon?—Cattle and sheep and dairy and horses.

58,325. Have you introduced dairying?—I have always kept a dairy.

Purchase of farm.

58,326. What did you give for your farm, how many years' purchase?—30 years.

58,327. I hope you have made some of your money in farming?—No I did not; I did not lose any income in buying it.

58,328. What size is it?—508 acres.

58,329. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is that the usual price 30 years purchase?—25 to 27 years.

58,330. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is there any tithe?—Yes.

58,331. What amount?—The tithe is low—my tithe is about 20*l.* a year.

58,332. (*Chairman.*) Did you leave much on mortgage?—No.

58,333. Were there several farms sold at the same time?—This was the only one.

Division of estates.

58,334. Have there been any estates broken up and sold to the tenants in your district?—No.

58,335. That has been the case in some parts of Wales?—Yes.

58,336. But not with you?—They are not broken up much.

Results of farming.

58,337. Of late years have you found it difficult to make two ends meet on your farm?—Oh, yes, I could not do it unless I had some other means besides.

58,338. In consequence of that difficulty you have made this change in the cultivation?—Yes.

Employment of labour.

58,339. Have you been enabled to economise on labour in consequence?—Not very much. The only way we economise on labour is that we do not get in the extra hands for a harvest.

58,340. And the permanent men are the same?—Yes.

Wages.

58,341. And what is the range of wages?—The wages have been increased certainly one-third within this last 20 years.

58,342. When did the rise take place?—They have been gradually getting higher during the last 20 years.

58,343. Have they increased at all since the depression began?—Not this last 5 or 6 years.

58,344. But up till then?—Up till then.

58,345. What are they now, the average?—The farm labourer with us has so many perquisites, that is to say, he gets a cottage free and potatoes planted for him in the field, and other perquisites, that one cannot say very well; but the general run of wages are 12*s.* per week, which we reckon with these perquisites comes to between 15*s.* and 16*s.* per week.

58,346. What were your own wages 20 years ago?—About 12*s.*

Condition of labourers.

58,347. I need hardly say that the condition of the labourer is very much better than it was?—Very much.

58,348. Considering the low prices of food?—Yes, and education; and the labour is not so laborious.

Size of farms.

58,349. What is the average of farms in your district?—The average size you mean.

58,350. Yes, the average size?—If you take the dairy farms they would vary from 50 to 60 acres. If you take the larger farms they would come I should think, very nearly about 200. Take the hundred that I live in, they are about 200.

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58,351. The dairy farmers with 50 or 60 acres do not employ much labour?—They do not keep more than their own families.

Employment of labour.

58,352. The larger farmers have suffered from the rise in wages, as well as the low prices?—Yes.

58,353. In other words, the price of labour has not fallen in proportion to the prices?—It has not fallen at all. The scarcity of labour keeps the market up.

Reduction of rent.

58,354. Has there been the same reduction in rent generally that you had before you bought your farm?—With the large landlords there has been, but not with the small dairy farms.

58,355. Not the small dairy farms; there has been no reduction in small dairy farms?—In the case of very small dairy farms, perhaps the landlord allowed a little manure, or something of that kind, but he did not reduce any rent.

Tithe.

58,356. Did they take the tithes when the Tithe Act was passed?—Yes.

58,357. Did they add the rent in proportion or relieve the tenant altogether of the tithe?—I think the tenant has to pay.

58,358. The increased rent?—Yes.

58,359. What was the the case in your own farm?—I always paid tithe myself.

58,360. But before you bought it?—But the Tithe Act was not then passed.

Demand for farms.

58,361. Are there any farms unoccupied in your district?—No.

58,362. When the farms are vacant, are there applicants?—There are 20 applicants for each one.

58,363. Taking small and large, would you say that is the case?—Yes; especially for small farms.

58,364. And for the larger farms is there any demand?—Yes, and for the larger farms too.

58,365. How do you account for that, there being so many applicants, when there is so much depression about?—For this reason; the farmers of Pembrokeshire do not like to go away into other counties; they are so fond of the country, and they stick to it, and if they have three or four sons, they want to put them into other farms, and there is a great demand for them in consequence. We have a great number of people who come out of the dockyards, who are pensioners, and I think, like to end their days on land, and they like those small dairy farms.

58,366. They do not involve much capital then?—Not a great deal.

Tenants' capital.

58,367. What capital would a farm of 50 or 60 acres take?—Sixty acres would take 10 or 12 cows, and a few pigs.

58,368. What amount of money would that be?—200*l.* for 50 or 60 acres.

58,369. Are there plenty of farmers with enough capital to stock those farms?—Oh yes, plenty of them.

58,370. Are they sons of farmers?—Sons of farmers and also those retired pensioners.

58,371. And the larger farms of 200 acres and upwards; what amount of capital do they require?—It depends entirely whether it is a corn, arable, or grass farm.

58,372. Take a mixed farm with some dairying; the same kind of farm as your own; what amount of capital would be required?—Well, I could hardly tell you, because some would do it much cheaper than others.

58,373. But what would the landlord generally look for when a tenant applies for a farm; would it be 7*l.* or 8*l.* an acre?—Quite that. But I may say this, that generally speaking, if a farmer's son takes a farm he takes a large quantity of his old implements from the father, and so is able to stock it rather cheaper in that, way.

58,374. But when a farm of that size, over 200 acres, becomes vacant, are there applicants for it?—Yes, plenty.

58,375. Men with sufficient capital?—Yes.

58,376. That would rather look as if there was a considerable number of people in the county of the farming class with capital to enter upon the farms?—They made money in the former days.

58,377. Then they have not lost it?—They have a little; they live very hard as a rule.

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58,378. There seems to be a considerable amount of realised capital still remaining in the farming class, by men being ready to put their sons into farms?—They are ready to put their sons into the farms.

Uncultivated land.

58,379. (*Mr. Channing.*) What are the average rents of these small dairy farms of 50 or 60 acres?—They vary a good deal, as to whether they are near a town or not, from 2*l.* an acre up to 4*l.* I know one close to Milford Haven where they had 4*l.* per acre, and the man failed last Christmas, and the farm is relet at 2*l.* per acre.

58,380. Do you think this competition that you spoke of has raised the rents higher than the produce of the farms justified?—Yes, certainly.

58,381. (*Chairman.*) Then the larger farms of 200 acres and upwards, what do they run at?—1*l.* an acre.

58,382. About 1*l.* an acre?—Yes.

Reduction of rent.

58,383. Then there has been a reduction generally?—Generally, especially with all the large landlords.

58,384. What should you put the reduction at—10 per cent.?—I think some give 10, some 15; Lord Kensington gives 15, I think, and Lord Cawdor gives 15

58,385. Are those permanent reductions?—No.

58,386. Always temporary?—Only temporary.

58,387. Then there has been no permanent reduction in the rent of the land?—No permanent reduction.

58,388. You are quite certain of that?—Yes; I do not say that in certain cases there may not be, but that is so as a rule.

58,389. Taking the country through, you would say there has been no permanent reduction of rent?—No.

Abatements of rent.

58,390. But there have been abatements from time to time?—Abatements.

58,391. Have those abatements been continuous or only in bad years?—No, they have not been continuous; some half years they give it and other half years they do not.

58,392. I thought you said your own rent had been reduced from 350*l.* to 300*l.*?—Yes; that was a permanent reduction.

58,393. Then you are an exception to the rule?—Yes.

58,394. Generally speaking it has only been in the form of an abatement now and then?—Yes.

Low prices.

58,395. Did your district suffer from the low prices due to the drought in 1893?—Very much.

58,396. Do you rely much upon the sale of lean stock?—Lean stock principally.

58,397. Then you suffered greatly in 1893 from the great fall owing to the drought in England?—Yes.

58,398. That was the main cause of your suffering?—Yes, and the low price of butter, wool, sheep, and beef.

58,399. Do you fatten many cattle, too?—Yes, about half.

Butter-making.

58,400. Do you agree with the last witness as to butter, that there is a want of uniformity in quality?—Yes.

58,401. And that the general average price might be considerably improved, if there was uniformity?—Yes, certainly. We have had dairy schools.

58,402. But has there been any attempt at co-operation?—No.

58,403. In the direction of factories, for instance?—We have a factory there in the neighbourhood, but it does not pay, I fancy. They do not pay any dividend.

58,404. Do the farmers not resort to it?—No, very few.

58,405. Very few?—Only a few just in the immediate neighbourhood.

58,406. They do not understand the importance, then, of maintaining the quality?—No.

58,407. Is there a considerable amount of bad butter made in the district?—No, I think not; I think Pembrokeshire butter, as a rule, is considered pretty fair.

58,408. But still the quality might be made more uniform?—Yes; it might be classed, the same as they do in Ireland.

58,409. I suppose you recognise the supreme importance of maintaining the regularity and uniformity of the butter of the district?—Yes.

58,410. Without that, you cannot expect to get a hold upon the market?—No.

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58,411. Has any land gone out of cultivation?—Not in my neighbourhood.

Uncultivated land.

58,412. Are any farms unoccupied?—No.

58,413. Are the farms generally kept in the same family?—Yes, as a rule—they go from father to son.

Changes of tenancy.

58,414. And there are not many changes of tenancy?—The principal change is amongst the small dairy people.

Permanent improvements.

58,415. Are the improvements effected by the landlords?—Yes, as a rule.

58,416. Drainage?—Very little drainage has been done of late years.

58,417. When it has been done, has it been done by the landlord?—It has been done by the landlord, and a per-centage paid.

Labourers.

58,418. Do the young men in the district leave the country for the mining districts?—Yes, a great number they work a couple of years perhaps on a farm, and then go off to the mining districts to get higher wages.

Low prices.

58,419. Then with regard to the causes of the depression, what do you consider them to be?—The causes are the low prices, you know.

58,420. The low prices?—Well, there is foreign competition, of course.

58,421. I suppose you would also include the drought?—The drought as well, certainly—seasons as well.

Price of cattle.

58,422. Since the drought, has the price of lean cattle in your district, risen again recently?—It did this spring for about two months, when there was a prospect of grass in the Midlands. The price increased, but it has gone down again.

58,423. Last year did it rise?—Just for about a month, generally about May and June.

58,424. But the very great fall in price was in 1893?—Yes, in 1893.

58,425. In 1894 did the price rise?—It improved a little.

58,426. In this year when there was a prospect of grass in the Midlands, did it rise?—It improved a good deal.

58,427. And then the drought came during the present summer?—And prices have gone back again.

58,428. I suppose they have gone back and you do not yet know what the autumn price will be?—No.

58,429. I suppose you rather hope the price will rise again in consequence of the rain?—Most of our cattle go out of the country in the spring.

58,430. In the spring?—Yes, for store cattle.

58,431. Not in the autumn?—No; of course there are a certain few.

58,432. Then you did pretty well, I suppose, in the spring of this year?—Yes, very fair.

58,433. Is there a diminished demand in your country for feeding stuffs and manures?—Very much.

58,434. Owing to the farmers having not so much means?—They have not.

Hay crop.

58,435. Did your district suffer from the drought itself in 1893?—Very much; we had no hay crops at all.

58,436. This year too?—Yes, but I think the hay crops are worse this year than they were in 1893; we had to import hay from Ireland in 1893.

58,437. Are you likely to import again this year?—I should think very likely, especially amongst dairy farmers.

Rates.

58,438. Now with regard to rates have they increased of late years?—Yes, very much.

58,439. Can you give any figures upon that point?—No, I do not think I can very well. I did not take the figures, but I can say they have increased. Our rates now come to, I think, about 2*s.* 6*d.* or 2*s.* 8*d.* in the £.

58,440. About 2*s.* 8*d.* in the £?—I think that is near about it.

58,441. What were they a few years ago?—When I first began farming, I think, 1*s.* 9*d.* would be the figure.

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58,442. How long ago was that?—30 years ago.

58,443. The last 20 years how have they been?—They have been gradually increasing. There is the school board rate for instance which we never had before.

58,444. Are there generally school boards in your district?—Yes; I should think over about half the country.

58,445. And there has been no reduction in the assessments, I suppose?—No, or very little.

Tenure.

58,446. Are the yearly tenancies the rule in your part of the country?—Yes, and getting more so.

58,447. Were there leases?—In former days there were leases but they are getting out.

58,448. They are being given up?—Yes.

The Agricultural Holdings Act and customs.

58,449. Has the Agricultural Holdings Act had effect in your district?—Very little indeed; I have only had one case brought before my knowledge at all in the county, and that was abandoned because they found it too costly.

58,450. What is the general rule then as between an outgoing and an incoming tenant?—The general rule now is that the incoming tenant takes all corn, hay, and manure.

58,451. I mean, is the agreement come to between him and the outgoing tenant irrespective of the Agricultural Holdings Act?—It is quite private between the outgoing and incoming tenant.

58,452. Under the custom of the country?—Yes.

58,453. And the custom is as favourable as the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes, I think quite as favourable.

58,454. Then they do not resort to the Act in consequence of the custom which is as good as the provisions of the Act?—Yes, certainly; only so far as concerns the improvements, I think, would they go in under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,455. For what improvement?—If a farmer has improved his farm much then he tries to cut in under the Act.

58,456. Anything in the nature of a permanent improvement you mean?—Yes. I have not heard of a single case being under the Agricultural Holdings Act in my district. I know there was one case where a party was thinking of trying to get compensation under the Act and he found it was so costly that he abandoned it.

Restrictions on cultivation.

58,457. Are old restrictions on cultivation given up?—Very much.

58,458. I suppose they still exist in the agreements?—I think the agreement now is only so far as ploughing up pasture—that is the only restriction, I think.

Allotments Act.

58,459. Has anything been done in your district under the Allotments Act?—It has only been talked of now since the new parish councils.

58,460. Before that nothing was done?—Nothing was done.

Game.

58,461. Then with regard to the game preserving, what do you say?—We have very few large game preserves in our county. There are only two or three, and I have never heard of any complaint under the Game Act. The farmers, as a rule, preserve the rabbits themselves because they find it pays so well.

The law of distress.

58,462. What is your opinion on the subject of distraint?—I do not think it would be a good thing to be done away with, and for this reason: that the landlord would then have no security for his rent, and he would want rent in advance which some of them do now on the small farms.

58,463. You are not in favour of doing away with it?—No, I am not.

58,464. The result would be, you think, that the landlords would require the rent to be paid in advance?—Yes.

58,465. Do they do that now, do you say, in some of the small holdings?—In some of the small holdings they do; although they may not collect it, it is in the agreement that they may.

Railway rates.

58,466. Then, with regard to the remedies, you consider that the railway companies ought to reduce their rates, I suppose?—We are very badly situated; we have no competition, you see, in our country. We have only the Great Western to deal with, and the consequence is that the charges are very high. I will give you an example. Last week I sent off a horse from my place to Bristol; I had to pay 2*l.* 14*s.* for it. If I had sent it from Waterford to Bristol coming across by steamer I should have got it sent for half the money.

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58,467. Do you think that facilities should be given to bring the producer and consumer more directly together?—Certainly.

58,468. How would you do that?—I should hardly like to say.

State loans.

58,469. Then do you consider that loans should be advanced by the State?—No.

58,470. You are not in favour of that?—No.

58,471. Do you think the landlords would not avail themselves of it?—No, I think not.

58,472. Do you think anything can be done in the way of rating?—Yes.

State subventions.

58,473. What is your idea?—I think the Government ought to take over a certain amount of rates say, for instance, the School Board rate, and relieve some of the poor rates.

58,474. Do you mean that the State should add to the subventions already given?—Yes.

Co-operation.

58,475. Do you think more can be done, in the direction of co-operation?—No, but I cannot say that I have thought much about it.

Rates.

58,476. What else is there that you recommend?—There is only the rating, I think; the rates have increased so tremendously. Under the old style of the old quarter sessions our county rate used to be about 2½*d.* in the £; now we have got up to 5*d.* I have here a paper which was read to our Farmer's Club the other day on rating; I do not know whether you would like to see it, but I will hand it in. It is written by a very able man in our country. [*Handing in paper.*]

Railway rates.

58,477. (*Lord Rendel.*) You, I see, hold the opinion that the railway companies ought not to favour foreigners?—Certainly; the railway rates have increased with us.

58,478. Is that feeling general in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

58,479. What is it founded upon; a sense that the railway companies enjoy no opposition?—There is no opposition.

58,480. There is no opposition?—We have only one railway company.

58,481. They enjoy a monopoly?—Yes.

58,482. And you think the feeling is that they ought to give no preference to foreign over home produce?—Yes, certainly.

58,483. Do you suppose that the opinion is entertained, that if any preference were given, it should be given to the product of the district through which the railway runs?—Yes.

58,484. Would it be assumed, do you think, that the powers under which the railway company hold their monopoly were conceded by Parliament practically with the view to the railway company serving the wants of the district?—Yes. Since the inquiry into the railway rates the rates have gone up. For instance, we used to get hay taken to Swansea at about 11*s.* a ton; now it is 14*s.* 6*d.* a ton. So the rates have really increased since the inquiry into the railway rates three years ago.

58,485. And that inquiry has so far not been productive of relief?—No.

58,486. And there is a decided feeling that some relief should be given to agriculture in respect of railway rates?—Yes, certainly.

Low prices

58,487. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you consider that there has been and is considerable agricultural depression in Pembrokeshire?—Yes.

58,488. And that the low prices are the main cause of it?—Yes.

Value of land.

58,489. Has or has not the selling value of the freehold of the land very largely declined in consequence?—There is not the same demand for it as there was 10 years ago.

58,490. It has not gone down in value?—Not very much, I think.

58,491. Not a half?—No.

58,492. You can buy farms in my county at 6*l.* or 7*l.* an acre now—freehold farms, but there is nothing like

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that in your part of the country?—No, there is a good deal of competition for farms now of a certain size.

58,493. And you have still a considerable number of farms belonging to small owners?—Yes, we have a large quantity of small land owners.

The letting of farms.

58,494. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How are farms usually let in your county?—Now they are let on a yearly tenancy.

58,495. How do they arrive at the rent?—They generally hand it on from father to son at the same rental.

Valuers.

58,496. The same rental all through?—The same; there may be some reductions in some cases. We have certain valuers to go round and value.

58,497. What kind of valuers are they?—Land valuers—auctioneers generally.

58,498. Employed by the land owners?—Employed by the landlord.

58,499. Not by the tenant?—Not by the tenant.

Rents.

58,500. Are the tenants satisfied with the rents they are paying now?—In some cases I think they are.

58,501. Have they applied for further reductions or remissions?—No, I do not think they have applied very much for reductions, because they know very well that if they do, and leave the farm, somebody else will take it.

58,502. That really prevents them from applying?—Yes.

58,503. Do you consider that they are paying too much rent in your own opinion?—Yes, with these bad times I do.

58,504. And they have no means of getting a fairer rent?—It is only from hand to mouth, they are only just making a living.

The law of distress.

58,505. Why should the landlord require payment in advance if you did away with the law of distraint?—Because when the rent was about to become due the tenant would clear out of his farm before the 29th September and sell everything off, and there would be nothing to distrain on; he would not have any security for his rent.

58,506. Have you ever seen that done?—Yes, I have known people do it, especially on small farms.

58,507. (*Mr. Lambert.*) With the law of distraint?—With the law of distraint.

58,508. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) With a great many farmers living from hand to mouth, as you say, they have to buy their seed and their manure?—They buy very much less manure.

58,509. Yes, but they get credit for it?—Not the same credit they did.

58,510. Then what is the manure merchant and the seed merchant to do if the landlord is the first man to come forward; he does not trust them, of course; he gives them very much less credit now?—Much less credit than he did.

58,511. Do you not think if you abolished the law of distraint, and gave him, and all other creditors, the same right that the farmers credit would be very much better?—It might be.

58,512. Do you not think that the law of distraint encourages a good many what we call in Wales "landsuckers," men who come and take a farm and take what they can out of it in 4 or 5 or 10 years, and off they go?—We have very few in our neighbourhood, I think, like that.

58,513. I think you know of some?—Yes.

58,514. You have heard of it?—I have.

58,515. The landlord is satisfied as long as the man has some stock on the farm and he takes anybody, but if he had to look out for a good substantial man, then better men would become farmers?—I think the landlord, as a rule, or his agent, inquires generally about what position a tenant holds before he lets a farm.

Game.

58,516. You say there is no complaint about the ground game in your county?—No, I never heard of any; in fact we have no large preserves; with the exception of Lord Cawdor and Lord Kensington, I do not know that there is hardly a preserve in Pembrokeshire.

Rents.

58,517. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did I understand you to say that the rents have been substantially unchanged to the old tenants?—Yes, for this last 20 years.

58,518. Twenty or 30 years?—Yes.

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58,519. Substantially unchanged?—Yes.

58,520. With the exception of the abatements of 10 or 15 per cent. that you referred to?—Yes; there may be some certain cases where there has been a reduction, where farms have been re-let.

58,521. To new tenants?—To new tenants entirely.

58,522. But in the case of the old tenants it is practically the same?—Practically the same.

Rates.

58,523. I think you said rates had increased?—Very much.

58,524. Are you in favour of dividing the rates between occupier and owner as in Scotland and Ireland?—No.

58,525. You are not in favour of it?—No.

58,526. Why not?—When you take your farm you know nearly what the rates are; a man takes his farm according to that; he knows really what the rates are before he takes it, and he must add that on to the rent the same as he does with the tithes.

58,527. That might be so with regard to the new tenants, but I understood you to say that most of the farms are in the hands of old tenants, and the rents have been unchanged?—Yes.

58,528. In those cases have not the rates risen upon the old tenants?—Yes.

58,529. And yet they have obtained no reduction of rent in proportion?—No.

58,530. Do you think that is a just state of things?—No, I cannot say that it is.

58,531. Would it not be more politic to have a readjustment of these new rates as between owner and occupier when they arise?—I should not like to say.

Rents.

58,532. (*Mr. Lambert.*) The rents you say are substantially the same?—Yes.

58,533. But you state in your brief that landlords cannot afford to improve their estates as the land has so decreased in rental value?—I am referring to the per-centage given back, in that observation.

58,534. Do not the landlords now improve their estates?—Not in the same way they did some years ago; they are not laying out the same amount of money on their estates that they did some years ago.

58,535. Not even to keep the old tenants?—Not even to keep the old tenants.

58,536. Which gets a reduction of rent more easily, the new tenant or the old tenant?—I think a new tenant.

Rates.

58,537. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I do not quite understand what your objection is to halving the rates between the landlord and the tenant?—I can hardly say; I can hardly give you an answer.

58,538. In the case of the rise of any rate, that rise would be halved between the two if they had made an agreement of that kind on entering into the tenancy; half of this rise that you have mentioned would have been borne by each party if they had had that system in force?—Yes.

58,539. They could take into account when they entered into the tenancy half the rate as well as the whole one?—Yes, they could.

58,540. Then what is the precise objection to it?—I can hardly say.

58,541. You have a feeling against it evidently?—Yes, I have, but I can hardly explain it.

58,542. Have you got any parish council rates?—Yes.

58,543. What is your parish council rate in your parish?—We have only just started our parish council, of course. I think they have called a penny rate.

Allotment Act.

58,544. You say that the Allotments Act is only just now beginning to be taken advantage of in Pembrokeshire. Is that since the constitution of the parish councils?—Yes, and only in large villages.

58,545. The parish councils are moving in that direction?—They are.

58,546. In your remedies for depression you say "equal rating and fair trade." What do you precisely mean by equal rating?—Equal rating I mean to say is this: Say, for instance, the shop-keeper in a village, he may be making, say, a profit of 70*l.* or 80*l.*; he rents

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a house perhaps at 20*l.* or 25*l.*; he is only rated on that house and premises; he does not pay any rate on the profits of his business at all.

58,547. What would you consider would bring about equality of rating in such a case as that?—I think if I were to show you that paper which was read before our Farmers' Club, that would explain it.

Occupying owners.

58,548. What proportion of the farmers in your district are occupying owners?—Very few indeed.

58,549. You say in your brief, "In most places the "occupying owners have bought their land, having "borrowed all or part of the money on mortgage." You do not mean that in most places the occupiers have bought their land; you mean that the occupying owners who have bought their land have done it on borrowed money?—Yes, shop people, or somebody coming out of the towns.

58,550. But there is not much of that?—Not much; very little.

Labourers.

58,551. You also say that "a large proportion of the "young men leave this county for the mining dis- "tricts, but if they become ill whilst in that employ- "ment they return to their native place and become "chargeable on the rates." Are there any number who do that?—Yes, there are a great many in certain districts; perhaps they go up to the mining districts; they get out of health, they come back and perhaps take a small bit of land, and they get a settlement in the county, and after a time they become feeble or something like that, and then they fall back on the rates.

58,552. Do you find that many of those who go away come back in that state?—Yes, a great many.

58,553. From the mining districts especially?—From the mining districts especially.

58,554. Is that because they get worn out in the mining industry?—Yes, worn out and in ill-health.

58,555. They come back when they are old?—They nearly always come back.

58,556. When they are old?—Yes, we find it at the board of guardians especially; we have to sift it out about their getting their residence.

58,557. You would consider that if they spent the greater part of their life in the mining districts, and had been worn out in that occupation, the mining districts should pay for them?—Yes.

58,558. (*Mr. Clay.*) If rates and wages have increased and the value of agricultural produce has decreased, how are the old rents to be maintained, as you say, and leave a profit to the tenant?—The farmers have reduced their expenses as far as living and bringing up their children are concerned. They have been obliged to reduce their expenses.

58,559. And they have to do that to maintain the old rent with a decreased value for farm produce?—Yes.

58,560. Is that fair and reasonable?—A farmer does not like to give up any farm after being there a great many years.

58,561. A farmer is a man of business, or should be, and he should not even merely keep himself and his family, but have something left for old age, should he not?—Yes, but I am afraid there are very few doing it now.

58,562. How long is this to go on?—We are looking for better times.

58,563. I suppose "hope deferred maketh the heart sick"?—Yes.

58,564. Is it fair and reasonable that these old rents should be kept on, when wages have increased and the value of agricultural produce has decreased; and the difference has to be taken off the living of the farmer, who is not bringing up his family as he should do?—No, but the landlords have no difficulty in getting tenants at the old rents.

58,565. Is it a proper state of matters, for the tenantry to be dragged into that position?—No, certainly not.

Horse-breeding.

58,566. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think you say you breed horses?—Yes.

58,567. Is that a profitable occupation?—Yes, I find it so.

58,568. Is that largely adopted in Pembrokeshire?—Yes, we are rather noted for our horses.

58,569. Do landlords provide the use of stallions or how do you get the use of stallions?—We have the Commission horses. *Mr. J. T. Fisher.* 9 Aug. 1895.

58,570. And the Royal Agricultural Society's?—And some of the landlords keep a stallion for the sake of their tenants—Lord Cawdor and different people do.

58,571. Do you breed a good sort of horse?—Yes, hunters.

58,572. Mainly hunters or others?—Both hunters and cart horses. The climate is very well suited for the breeding of horses.

58,573. That is a profitable occupation?—Yes, I think it is.

Dairy education.

58,574. As to dairy schools I think you said the results are not encouraging?—No, they are not.

58,575. Why is that? Do the farmers not believe in them?—No, they do not.

58,576. Is the teaching there not good or satisfactory?—Yes, I think the teaching has been very good. I have had the management of them under the county council, and we have always had plenty of pupils wherever we go, but they seem to drop back into the old system again afterwards. It has done a certain amount of good in this way: it has taught the dairy maids cleanliness, and it has also taught them about the churning of the butter and the putting the cream at a certain temperature into the churns, and all those kinds of things. It has taught them good in that way, but in other ways I do not see that it has done them a great deal of good.

58,577. Probably farmers will be educated in time to believe in their advantages?—Yes; and also the agricultural lectures I do not think have done much good.

58,578. The lectures on general subjects?—Yes.

58,579. It may be a question of time also?—Yes.

Small farmers.

58,580. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think you said that pensioners from the dockyards are eager to take small farms?—Yes, very.

58,581. Do they understand their work generally when they come to it?—Generally their wives understand dairying.

58,582. Do they prosper, do you think?—I think they make a living, that is all.

58,583. And make rather formidable competitors for anybody else?—They do, very much so.

58,584. Do you have to compete in regard to your labourers with the mining industry?—No, we have no mines in our neighbourhood, nothing to speak of.

58,585. Therefore, what you have told us is really as regards the agricultural population?—Yes.

Railway rates.

58,586. Now as to railway rates. You say that they have increased of late years?—They have.

58,587. Since when?—Since the inquiry, which, I think, was three years ago.

58,588. You gave us the instance of a horse; did I understand you to say that it cost more to bring a horse from Pembroke to Bristol than it did from Waterford to Bristol?—Yes.

58,589. Why is that?—I cannot tell you. The Great Western Railway Company will take a horse from Waterford to Bristol across by steamer, unload it at New Milford, and send it round to Bristol for about half the money that they will send a horse from Pembrokeshire to Bristol.

58,590. Is that the same with all agricultural produce?—Butter, again; they will send butter from Waterford to London for less money than we can send it from Pembrokeshire to London.

58,591. I suppose a very much larger bulk comes from Waterford?—Yes, there is a very large quantity of butter comes across.

58,592. But you would only send it in small parcels?—Our butter as a rule goes into the mining districts.

58,593. Take other agricultural produce?—Take cattle; the greater part of our store cattle go into Northamptonshire Since the alteration of the railway rates a truck load of cattle will cost us, I think, about 15*s.* more than it did formerly.

58,594. Does that go all over the Great Western system?—I am not certain about that. I do not think they do, I think it is only partly over the Great Western.

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58,595. Then you state of your knowledge that railway rates have increased very considerably since three years ago?—Yes.

58,596. You know nothing of the carriage of milk?—No, we do not send milk off as a rule.

58,597. But corn, and cattle, and horses?—There is very little corn goes out of the country now; it is nearly all consumed. In former days we used to send a large quantity of barley off up into certain parts of South Wales for malting; but now hardly any goes; it is all consumed in the country.

58,598. Is that because the quality is inferior?—No, I think there is not the same demand for it. You see the beer is brewed from so many different chemicals now, that they do not use half the amount of barley that they did formerly.

58,599. Therefore the farmer is driven to consume his own barley?—Yes, and they do not grow the quantity. Corn is very much reduced of late years.

58,600. Of all sorts?—Of all sorts.

58,601. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Can you say whether the low rates from Waterford that are charged by this Company are due to the Company wishing to develop the trade with New Milford?—I think so.

58,602. They are very much interested in developing the trade, I suppose?—Yes; for instance, if I take a ticket at Paddington to Waterford I can get it for much less money than I can take it down to my own place. *Mr. J. T. Fisher* 9 Aug. 1895.

58,603. (*Chairman.*) I suppose there is competition to Waterford by sea from London; that may explain it in part?—Yes. I suppose that would make a little difference. I know several people now who often take their ticket to Waterford and stop; they are allowed to break their journey.

58,604. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) There are boats running direct from Waterford to Bristol, not belonging to the Great Western?—Yes.

58,605. Hence the competition would come in there?—I believe so.

58,606. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you made any representation about the increased charge for these cattle trucks?—Yes, it has been done through our Farmers' Club, and complaints have been made.

58,607. What have been the replies of the Company?—I do not think they ever have taken any notice of it.

58,608. Have they not made any concession on that point?—No.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. T. Dutfield.

Mr. THOMAS DUTFIELD called and examined. *Mr. T. Dutfield.*

58,609. (*Chairman.*) Do you reside at Newport, Monmouthshire?—I do not reside there; I reside at Magor, seven miles from the town.

58,610. Have you a farm there?—At one time I had with my father up till about nine years ago. He had no family left besides myself, and he being an old man, I remained there with him, but was carrying on my business in Newport. He had a farm at one time of about 450 acres.

58,611. But since the last nine years you have not farmed?—I have about 30 acres now of pasture land.

58,612. And you carry on business in Newport?—I carry on business in Newport.

58,613. What is your business?—I supply all the requirements of farmers in the shape of machinery, feeding stuffs, artificial manures, seeds, &c.

58,614. You are brought in communication with farmers in that way?—Yes. I may also add that I have been honorary secretary of our Farmers' Association for the last 21 years, and I also hold several public positions really through and for farmers. I am a member of the County Council comprising 13 parishes, the whole of which are agricultural. I am also the chairman of the district council which is purely agricultural, and I hold several other positions of that sort.

58,615. Then you have a very extensive acquaintance with the farmers of the district and with the farming industry?—Yes, and I may also add that I am one of the vice chairmen of the Newport Board of Guardians; therefore a member of the assessment committee. And I have gained some knowledge of assessments through that.

Size of farms.

58,616. What are the sizes of farms in that district?—They range from about 100 to 400 acres; there may be some larger and some smaller.

58,617. Are there many small farms below 100 acres or not?—Not many; not sufficient, I think.

58,618. It is not a district like those we have been hearing of lately, from the last witness, for instance?—It is somewhat the same, but not quite.

58,619. But without the small farms?—There are some small farms.

System of cultivation.

58,620. What is the nature of the cultivation; is it mixed?—Yes, although there is a very broad district just where I live at Magor, which is wholly pasture land, between there and the river Severn and the Bristol Channel—I daresay a district somewhere about 40 miles long possibly, by one to four miles wide, where there is scarcely any arable land at all; it is flat land.

58,621. Is it very good pasture?—It varies a good deal, but still it is fairly good pasture.

58,622. Then beyond that?—Then you come upon rising ground, which is mixed arable and pasture, and fairly good land.

58,623. Then beyond there, is there a hill country?—Then you get on a hill country. I am speaking now of the hill country, apart from the western division of Monmouthshire, which is almost a mineral and colliery district; I am speaking more of the eastern portion and of the southern portion of Monmouthshire.

58,624. When you get into the hill country are the farms smaller?—Yes, they get smaller up there.

Permanent pasture.

58,625. Has there been much change in the cultivation of that arable district you speak of?—There has been some change. I think I set forth in my proof that on this better class of land there was usually the four-course system adopted; that has now been substituted by the five-course, and there has been a considerable portion laid down to grass, or let go down.

58,626. Permanent grass?—Yes, permanent grass.

58,627. Have they not tried the system of temporary grasses?—They did for a period, and eventually let a good portion of it go down, or laid it down.

58,628. Is it a land that takes easily to grass or not?—It takes some years to get into grass. Of course, I daresay you are aware, that it depends very much upon the treatment it receives, how soon it gets into grass.

58,629. Supposing it receives fair treatment and cattle are fed upon it?—With fair good treatment the first couple of years, of course it is good; afterwards it is not so good; but I daresay after six or seven years it begins to assume a permanent character.

58,630. Supposing nothing is done, and it is simply allowed to go down, does it eventually become grass or not?—Not if it is left to take care of itself.

58,631. If it is fed with cattle?—If it is fed with cattle and done well with, I daresay it would assume some kind of moderate pasture, not good.

58,632. Has a considerable amount of land been laid down in grass?—I should say of the arable land there has been something like 20 per cent.; there may be possibly more; I think I am rather under than over.

Reduction of rents.

58,633. What has been the result on rents; have the rents been reduced much?—Not permanently; there have been reductions, at least abatements, made, but there have only been permanent reductions made where there has been a change of tenancy.

58,634. What has been the reduction where there has been a change of tenancy?—That has fluctuated very widely. In some places there has been a reduction on larger farms, say, of 20 per cent., and in some places it has been 40.

58,635. Do you say there has been no permanent reduction where the tenants remained in possession?—Very little that I am aware of. I may say that Lord Tredegar is a very considerable landowner in our county; he has adopted the system of making it for stated periods; he has intimated to his tenants that he would, say, for a given five years, reduce it 15 per cent.,

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and when that time has been up he has perhaps continued it or increased it. I think he has now increased it to 20 per cent.

58,636. Again for a limited period like that?—Yes.

58,637. But not a permanent reduction?—Not a permanent reduction—that is to the old tenants. Other landlords there have adopted a principle certainly not as good; the tenants very often do not know until they meet the agent or the landlord what they have actually to pay.

Assessment to rates.

58,638. Has there been a reduction in the assessment of lands for local purposes?—Our assessment committee will not recognise abatements that are made on the lines I have last indicated, where a tenant does not know what he has to pay. Where a landlord will state that he is going to give 15, 20, or 25 per cent. abatement for a given number of years we do reduce the assessments to that extent for the time.

58,639. That has been done in cases like Lord Tredegar's?—Yes, it has.

58,640. But where there has been no agreement for a definite period, where the abatements have been made year by year at the discretion of the landlord, you say there has been no reduction of the assessment?—Generally not.

58,641. What is your union?—Newport.

58,642. I see there has been practically no reduction in the last 25 years in that union—in the assessments at all events?—It ought to appear so.

58,643. I am comparing 1871 with 1894; there may have been an increase in the assessment from 1871 up to 1879 or 1880?—Yes, I expect there would be.

58,644. But then there has been a corresponding reduction since then?—Yes, that would possibly occur.

58,645. That is probably what occurred there, but taking the whole union now apparently the assessment is at about the point which it was at in 1871?—Yes, there would have been an increase, I daresay, between 1871 and 1878, and possibly it has come down from that—on land only.

58,646. I see that there was an increase in the annual value of land for income tax purposes between 1870 and 1879 of 4 per cent. for the whole county; and the probability is that reductions have again taken place since 1879?—Yes, that may be so. Our union would be very difficult, possibly to assess, because a great deal of the land there would be accommodation land, and some of it, of course, has mineral property under it, and is occupied by the adjoining works, and assessed along with it. It is very difficult really to define the one from the other.

Wages.

58,647. What has occurred in the case of wages?—In the case of wages I think I have stated in my proof that they are practically what they were at the highest point.

58,648. When did the wages reach their highest point?—I should say from about 1870 to 1874.

58,649. What had they been before that?—Going back, say, to 1860, which is about as near as I can recollect, they were then about 10*s.* to 12*s.* a week, and of course the perquisites which I have denoted in my proof added, that is, a cottage and garden free, and an allowance of beer and cider daily, and possibly a potato ground in the farmer's field, which would be free, and also an allowance of food during harvest time.

58,650. Then they rose in 1874, or between that and the year 1874, to the highest point; what did they rise to?—They got to practically what they are now, about 16*s.* to 18*s.* a week.

58,651. With the same allowances?—Including them.

58,652. That is to say with a cottage free, and with beer, and so forth?—Yes, including that.

58,653. And there has been no reduction since 1874?—Very little; if there is any difference there would be a reduction.

58,654. I suppose there is competition with the mineral districts?—Yes, the town of Newport, with its large docks, and the mineral districts which are only a few miles from it, some eight or ten miles, make such competition that the men can usually, when trade is good, go off there and get high wages.

58,655. Then there has been an increase in money wages of nearly 40 per cent., namely, from 10*s.* or 12*s.* to 15*s.* or 16*s.*?—Yes.

58,656. And besides that, the labourers have had the benefit of the great fall in the price of food?—Yes. *Mr. T. Dutfield.* 9 Aug. 1895.

58,657. Then they must be very much better off than they were?—They are very much better off.

58,658. That is, I suppose, one of the difficulties that farmers have had, that their wages bill has been maintained at its highest point, and that the wages have not been reduced in proportion to the fall in the prices of other things?—That is so. I think you will see from my proof that my opinion is, that they were very much underpaid at one time in accordance with what agricultural produce made in those days. I should be very sorry to see the labourers' wages reduced, for those men deserve such extra wages as they get, I think, and therefore I should be very loth indeed to see it reduced.

58,659. Of course it is governed by the market rate, and you say the competition with Newport and the mineral district has kept up the wages, and farmers necessarily have to pay what will retain their men?—Yes, they are bound to pay it.

58,660. Therefore, that has been one of the difficulties in this case?—Yes, but they do] with rather less men.

Employment of labour.

58,661. Do you think there has been any reduced employment of men owing to the amount of land which has been laid down to grass?—I think there must be, because looking at the census of our rural parishes in 1881 and in 1891 I see that they have all gone down.

58,662. In your district?—In our district almost without exception there is a diminution of something like from 8 to 10 per cent. in the population.

58,663. Therefore you gather that the farmers must employ less labour than they did?—Yes, because there is no other employ for them in those parishes.

58,664. Then you would say there has been reduced employment of labour by about 8 to 10 per cent.?—I should think so.

Vacant farms.

58,665. Are there any farms unlet in the district?—There are two now near me unlet in the district. They are rather large farms for that district, that is, they are about 400 acres each.

58,666. Is that the exception?—It is the exception. I have never hardly known farms in the district go unlet.

Demand for farms.

58,667. In the case of the smaller farms, when they are vacant are there applicants for them?—At present there are no small farms. I am only speaking now of large ones, or farms of 400 acres. Small farms as a rule are let pretty readily; there is great competition of course for them.

58,668. What do you call small farms—farms up to 200 or 300 acres?—No, about 50 to 100 acres.

58,669. When they are vacant there is great competition for them, you say?—I look at it in this way, that a great many of the older farmers who are on larger farms have, say, two or three sons growing up, and the temptation has been to save the labour bill, and to keep those sons at home very often if they had no strong tendency to go elsewhere. Then, of course, in the end only one of them can have the farm. The other two, perhaps 25 to 30 years of age, are not fit to go into any other situation, and they consequently are competitors for farms. The number of persons who are farmers' sons increases, and of course the number of farms and the number of acres does not increase.

Tenants' capital.

58,670. Does the father find capital for them to put them into the farms?—That is another difficulty; I am afraid he could not, even if there was a chance, provide his two or three sons with sufficient capital for a large farm.

58,671. When a farm from 50 to 100 acres is vacant, is it possible to get tenants with sufficient capital for it?—Yes, possibly it would be so, although the system—I think we shall come to that later on—is not as good as I should like to see in that way.

58,672. There is not so much capital as there ought to be?—I think they want weeding out very often, as I daresay the agents of the landlord could find out if eight or ten people apply for a farm there would be only two of them with sufficient capital.

58,673. Still there are two of them with sufficient capital?—Possibly so.

58,674. And for the larger farms you say there is greater difficulty in getting tenants?—There is greater difficulty.

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System of farming.

58,675. What do the farmers rely on in this arable district for their profits?—They grow various kinds of corn and on the better class of arable land it is a very good barley district which up to a few years ago was tolerably remunerative for growing.

58,676. Do they rear cattle?—They rear cattle.

58,677. And fatten cattle?—Yes, and also sheep.

58,678. Do they dairy at all?—They do some dairying; they do something of nearly everything.

58,679. As to the grass district that you spoke of, what is that used for; is that for fattening cattle, or is it for dairying?—Very many of the farmers who have land up in the middle class district, as I call it, that is arable and pasture, also have a portion of this moor land as it is called, this flat land, grazing land, let with their farms, or if they do not they get it from some other owner. Then, of course, there are a considerable number of farmers who reside upon this moor land, and some of them go in for dairying principally, others go in for grazing, others go in for mowing the hay for sale. The colliery districts and Newport being near, growing hay for sale was at one time a very profitable thing; of late years it has not been very profitable but it still continues.

58,680. Do any of them dairy in that district?—Yes, some of them dairy.

Butter-making.

58,681. Have you heard what the last two witnesses have said about the butter, and the want of uniformity in its quality?—Yes.

58,682. Do you agree with it?—In the main I do, except as regards the county council, we have found so far that our travelling dairy school has got a fair number of the proper people to come to attend it to be taught the principles of improved butter-making, and we are also now carrying on an improved system of cheese-making. That is at the fixed school.

58,683. That has all been done in the direction of educating the young women or men, I suppose, in the production of butter and cheese?—That is so.

58,684. Has there been any effort made to co-operate with a view of improving the general average and of making greater uniformity?—I do not know that there has.

58,685. Do you agree with the witness as to the importance of uniformity?—Yes, I do. I should like to see the standard raised very much. But one thing I possibly can attribute the failure to; I think one of the witnesses said that they go back after they get home. That possibly may result from their being at the dairy school with all the proper appliances found for them of the most modern design; they go back home and find that they have not those kind of things at home and that it means money to buy them. Again, the dairy too often on farms is, perhaps, in the very worst position that could be found for it and often is not the kind of building it should be as regards situation and size.

58,686. That would all seem to point to the expediency of co-operative factories where the butter can be brought to the same uniform quality?—I am not in favour of those. I think as good butter could be made at farm houses if they had the proper place to make it in, and properly constructed and with the same kind of implements or machinery that is used at the dairy schools; I think that they could make it very much better then than it is made at the present time.

58,687. Have you hopes that these improvements will be made?—That would so very much depend upon the landlord or the enterprising tenant.

58,688. Are the landlords aware of the importance of the subject, and are they prepared to advance money for the purpose of making these improvements?—Too often, possibly, it is not pointed out to them, and where it is, in the case of the large landowners, of course very often it does not really get to them except it be through the agents.

58,689. Are the landlords resident or non-resident in the district?—Some of them are resident; Lord Tredegar is resident, but some are not residents.

58,690. Then the information does not reach some of them?—Possibly not. I do not see much improvement in the direction I have indicated.

58,691. Then it would seem that the work of the Council in educating these people is rather thrown away?—To some extent I fear it is, when they get back home.

58,692. Now with regard to the causes of the depression, what are they?—Foreign competition I have set down as being undoubtedly the greatest cause of the depression.

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Foreign competition.

58,693. Has the district suffered at all from the fall of prices due to the drought in England?—Yes, in common with other localities it has.

The drought.

58,694. Has it suffered from the drought itself?—Yes, I think it was as pronounced there as in other places.

58,695. And this year has it suffered again?—It has suffered again this year and is, I should say, possibly slightly more than in 1893.

58,696. A very short hay crop?—Yes.

Bad trade.

58,697. Has something of the fall of prices in your district been due to bad trade and general depression of trade?—Yes, very generally, trade in what we call the hills, that is in the colliery districts, has not been so good these last few years, in the ironworks and tinworks especially.

58,698. Then with regard to rates, how do they stand?—The poor rates do you mean?

Rates.

58,699. I mean the aggregate of all the rates; you say in your proof that they are higher than they were 50 years ago, but that they have not increased during the last 20 years?—Of course I cannot remember 50 years ago, but my father has told me when he commenced farming upon the farm I was born on about 51 years ago, and when he came there then about 1*s.* in the £ generally cleared all the rates that were required in that parish, I should think they did somewhere in the 60's, I can hardly define what year, get as high as 4*s.* in the £. Since that, they have been down to 2*s.* 3*d.* and 2*s.* 6*d.*, and I think there is probably a tendency now by which they would be likely to increase for the reasons I have stated in my proof.

58,700. Between 1860 and the present time they have gone down from 4*s.* to 2*s.* 3*d.*?—From about 4*s.* or something like that to 2*s.* 6*d.* you may say, I think.

58,701. And at that rate they have been stationary for some time?—Yes, there has not been very much variation; some years they may be 3*d.* less, and in another year they may be 3*d.* more.

58,702. Did not the district gain from the subventions in 1889?—Yes, of course they gained in that to a certain extent, as possibly the rates would have been higher.

58,703. But the expenses have increased otherwise?—Yes, the county councils of course would have had to increase their rate, whereas the subventions enabled them to carry out many of these improvements without increasing the county rate.

58,704. I see there has been a very large increase in the rateable value of buildings in your union?—Yes.

58,705. And also in railways?—Newport is a very growing town—in my memory the population has doubled.

Assessment o rates.

58,706. The assessment on buildings has increased from 117,000*l.* to 282,000*l.*, has it not?—That is so.

58,707. And on railways from 46,000*l.* to 81,000*l.*, so that the rateable value of the union has enormously increased?—Yes, the rateable value now is over half a million, but farmers do not benefit anything at all by that. Although Newport has so immensely increased in valuation, when you come to dissect the accounts and take the number of your paupers and lunatics, you will see that they do not contribute their fair share towards their support, in fact their rates do not cover their support, and the balance is made up from the outlying parishes.

58,708. Then you consider the rates of the agricultural districts are rather increased by the demands from Newport?—That is so, although it is an excellent market for them, but in the way of rates, I think they rather suffer from having a very large growing town in the centre of them, and being combined with the town in one union.

58,709. Has the union a very large agricultural district attached to it?—Yes, it has 39 parishes in addition.

58,710. Some of those are rather remote from the town, I suppose?—Some of them are quite 10 miles from the town.

58,711. You say generally the district has gained from this increase of the town?—It has, of course, required a very much larger amount of agricultural produce.

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58,712. I suppose there is a very large amount of land within reach of Newport, which has kept up its full value, perhaps increased its value, in consequence of the growth of the town?—Yes.

58,713. I mean the agricultural value has increased?—Very close to the town it, of course, has maintained its value. Some of these parishes are mining and colliery districts, but those only comprise about three, I think, out of the 39.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,714. What have you to say with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—I say that I think this requires considerable amendment, and that it is not generally adopted in our county. At the time of its passing, Lord Tredegar was the only landlowner who adopted it; all the others, I think, without exception, contracted themselves out of its provisions. Of course, there may be some other landlords, but just in the immediate district where I live that is only one who comes to my memory now who did adopt it. He accepted it, but the others contracted out. Since then, I think, tenants have not availed themselves of it very much.

58,715. Do you mean the original Act?—Yes, the original Act.

58,716. What has happened under the amended Act of 1883?—That has not been availed of very much. We find it is rather too cumbrous to work. Tenants find they would do better very often by adopting the old principle, which is no doubt a wrong principle of simply letting the farm down a little in the way of cropping, and going out and making no claim.

58,717. And receiving nothing?—And receiving nothing, whereas those who have come under its provisions, I think, have not been very satisfied with it. I have had a little experience of it myself.

Claims and counter-claims.

58,718. Would that be on account of the expense of the thing?—Yes, the expense, and then you are sometimes possibly disappointed at the way in which the valuations come out. I know of a case which occurred recently where they failed to come to terms, and the two valuers were appointed, and an arbitrator had to be appointed by the Board of Agriculture. The difficulty was this, that the tenant had sent in his claim within the proper time—I may say that our tenancies begin and expire on the 2nd of February—but there was no counterclaim made within 14 days after that. The tenant, therefore, thought there would be no counterclaim. But when the arbitrator came to go into this matter about a fortnight or three weeks ago he took into account the whole of the counterclaim of the landlord, and the consequence was that the farmer got very much worse off than he otherwise would; indeed, I think the valuers have practically agreed to give him about 266*l.*, and as there were several other items left for the arbitrator he came out with 160*l.*, I think, or something like that.

58,719. That appears to have been in consequence of the landlord being able to sustain his connterclaim?—The difficulty I would say is this, that as a general rule of course some large valuer is appointed in case of arbitrations of this sort who is usually a gentleman in the employ of landlords, or who gets his living by landlords.

58,720. Appointed by the Board of Agriculture?—Uusually so. That may have its influence.

58,721. From the facts you have mentioned I rather gathered from you that the tenant there expected that the time had passed when any counterclaim could be made?—That is so.

58,722. And that he would get the full value of his claims, and that there would be no reduction in respect of a counterclaim?—That is so.

58,723. Unfortunately he was misled upon that point, and the time had not expired, the counterclaim was made, and consequently there was a considerable reduction upon what he expected to get?—Yes.

58,724. That does not touch the merits of the case. It might be that this counterclaim was a perfectly *bonâ fide* one, and justifiable, and all that the case absolutely shows is that the tenant was disappointed in this respect, that he did not get what he expected, namely, the full valuation without deduction for a counterclaim?—Yes, but what I was going to say was this: that the clause of the Act says that any counterclaim shall be delivered, or may be delivered, within 14 days afterwards; but it appears from what I can gather that the arbitrator in this case held that there being an off-going crop of wheat—that being the custom of our country on the arable land—which has now been harvested, or will be harvested, therefore the landlord had a right to go beyond the original time fixed.

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58,725. You understand what I am saying now—that does not after all touch the merits of the case whether the claim ought to have been made earlier or later; it does not affect the real substantial merits, namely, whether after all the tenant was compensated for what he had a right to expect, and whether the landlord on his part was also entitled to some counterclaim?—I am coming to that. What I wish to draw out of this is nothing as regards either of these gentlemen, of course—neither the farmer, nor the landlord, nor the valuers themselves—but that in any alteration of the Agricultural Holdings Act the tenancy should be made to cease on a given day, and that in regard to all these matters of off-going crops, and that sort of thing, it should simply be made compulsory for the landlord to pay for the value of the seed and labour expended without any future thing. I mean without dragging it into another year, when the tenant is possibly 100 miles away in another county, and has now to come back if no one will take his crop of wheat, and do the very best he can with it. It would be well if there was one time of the year, either Candlemas, Lady Day, or Michaelmas, I do not know that it matters very much which on which a tenancy should cease, and when the time came round that the tenant should give up all absolutely, whatever it was, and be paid for going out. I think this is one of the lessons that it teaches.

58,726. Do you think there could be a simplification of procedure?—I think there could.

Valuations.

58,727. Do you think that it is necessary in all these cases that there should be three persons employed practically, that is, a valuer on behalf of each party, and then an umpire or an arbitrator between them?—I think it is practically bound to come to that, but I think it would be distinctly an advantage that the arbitrator, whoever he may be, should be a resident in the county where the case arises, so that he may be conversant with the various customs, which are so different. I may say that in the county of Monmouth the Glamorganshire custom, which has been cited, I think, by several persons, prevails on the west bank of the River Usk, which goes through the middle of the county, whereas on the east bank of the Usk there is a very different custom altogether prevailing; that difference is in the same county.

58,728. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You referred to some valuers being engaged who were employed by the landlord, I think you said. Did you really mean that?—Of course, the landlord appointed a valuer, and so did the tenant, but the landlord's valuer refused to appoint an arbitrator before they commenced the valuation, which is the usual course to pursue. Then they went on and tried to meet in agreement on the various items they had to go through, and they failed on some, and on others they agreed.

58,729. I think you stated that the large valuers are usually those appointed by the landowners, and in their employ?—No.

58,730. That is what you said, I think?—Not in their employ.

58,731. I thought at the time you did not mean it?—What I say is this, that all those large valuers are, as a rule, the agents for several estates.

58,732. (*Mr. Clay.*) Therefore they might rather be biassed?—I only put it in this way; if I received the whole of my income from one particular class of people, how would it come out?

[The shorthand writer read the following answer:—

"The difficulty I would say is this: that as a general rule, of course, some large valuer is appointed in case of arbitrations of this sort who is usually a gentleman in the employ of landlords, or who gets his living by landlords."] (*See* question 58,719).

(*Witness.*) That substantially would be the case; in a modified degree, of course; I do not say he gets his living wholly by it, but principally by it.

58,733. (*Chairman.*) Then you do not wish to make any alteration in that except with the explanation you have just made?—The explanation that he principally draws his income from one class of the population.

58,734. Then do you think the arbitrator should be appointed by the county council, or by some local body who may or may not be independent?—By the

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county council, or the county court judge, or any local unbiassed person, and that he should be someone in the neighbourhood who would be conversant with the customs of the particular county.

Restrictions on cultivation.

58,735. Do you think that there should be any relief in respect of restrictions as to the method of cultivation or sale of produce?—I think there should.

58,736. Are these restrictions generally maintained in the district?—In some places they are; in some they are not. Lord Tredegar, who is one of the most generous landowners you could possibly have, and who adopted the Act, makes no restriction that I am aware of. In other estates in the neighbourhood they still stick to these restrictive clauses that were in force, I suppose, any number of years ago, 50 or 100 years ago. I do not think that the tenant should be restricted in the cultivation or in the sale of the produce of his land whilst he remains the tenant. If he should have given notice to his landlord, or if the landlord has given notice to him, then in the last year of his tenancy I think there may possibly be some arrangement by which the whole of the produce should not be sold off. I am aware that it is a very great inconvenience to an incoming tenant to enter upon a holding, finding no hay, straw, or roots possibly there for his convenience, and that he has to cart it from some distance. That I do not think is by any means right, for one person to expect from another. I should like to see freedom, as far as possible, between the landlord and the tenant. I do not wish the landlords' rights to be infringed upon more than is possible, in order to bring farming matters up to date. It is not reasonable, I think, to farm now under the same conditions that were imposed 50 years ago.

The law of distress.

58,737. Then with regard to the law of distraint, do you think that should be abolished?—I have said so in my proof, and I think it certainly should be abolished. If I may be permitted to refer to a remark that was made by one of the witnesses before, who said that he would disagree with that to a certain extent. I would like to state that I do not think it would arise that landlords would demand their rents in advance. They might possibly require some surety, and I think that any change in the law might be put in this way, that it should affect the tenants, entering upon holdings after the passing of the Act, and should not possibly apply to those who are already in existence; it might alter their arrangements in some way if that was brought down upon everyone. I should not like to do any hardship to a sitting tenant, and I am aware that some of them would possibly have very much better terms now by agreements from their landlords, than the amended Agricultural Holdings Act could possibly give them.

Railway rates.

58,738. Do you agree with what the last two witnesses have said about the railway rates—you heard them I think?—Yes. I agree that we are served by the same system of railway, the Great Western, and I take it that that railway, in common with all others where they have a monopoly, do not too readily come down. They raised the rates some three years ago, I think, by an amended schedule, and they afterwards came down from that, but still I believe that there is no article that I am aware of, that is carried in the way of farmers' produce, but what there is an increase of 5 per cent., and in some cases more than that.

Restrictions on cultivation.

58,739. (*Lord Rendel.*) With reference to the older form of agreement of which you have spoken, containing restrictive clauses; are those restrictive clauses and covenants strictly enforced?—They are strictly enforced on some estates in our county, whereas on others, which perhaps makes it a greater hardship to the first class of tenants, they are not. You find one farm with these restrictive clauses in operation, and perhaps on the next one, belonging to a different owner, they are not in force.

58,740. Then there is no certainty as to the operation of this form of agreement. It depends rather on the disposition of the owner for the time being?—That is so to an extent.

58,741. Are many of the owners their own agents?—Not many.

58,742. Then to that extent it depends a great deal on the practice of the estate, and of the agents of the estate?—That is so.

58,743. And your wish is that as far as possible these agreements should be what you would consider modernised and brought up to date?—That is my idea; that they should be brought up to the time we now live in.

58,744. And that in the interest, not of one class or another, but in the interest of agriculture?—I believe that it would be in the interest of agriculture, certainly, and I do think that possibly the landlord may have to give way on something that he would, perhaps, have set store by, but I believe the outcome of it would be this, that tenants would be free, to a certain extent, and they would be more satisfied than they are at the present time.

58,745. (*Mr. Everett.*) You consider that on the whole, all the farmers are satisfied in your neighbourhood, in Monmouth?—Fairly so.

Wages.

58,746. In regard to the labourers whose wages you say are from 16*s.* to 18*s.* a week, do they receive extra on that in harvest time?—No; generally only what I have indicated in my proof. They are usually given a dinner every day, and possibly an extra allowance of beer or cider for the time that harvest continues, that would be probably from the middle of June to September, possibly.

58,747. But they do not receive extra money payment for the harvest?—Not the regular labourers upon the farm.

58,748. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Not if they work overtime?—No.

Vacant farms.

58,749. (*Mr. Everett.*) But they get one good meal a day, and extra beer or cider?—They get one good meal a day, and possibly another in the evening in the shape of tea or something of that kind. Of course those, you will note, who have to attend on Sundays, would get their breakfast and dinner, or something equivalent to that.

58,750. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You said just now that there were two farms unlet in your district. For what reason are those two farms unlet?—The tenant applied for a reduction, and he failed to get it.

58,751. And——?—He gave notice.

58,752. And the landlord cannot get the old rent?—No; they are unlet.

58,753. And they are unlet, because the landlord will not submit to a reduction of the old rent?—I expect that would be about it; but as far as I know, there has been but one applicant for one of the farms, I think.

Reduction of rent.

58,754. About how much have rents been reduced?—The reductions have only taken place, as I think I stated just now, by way of abatements. Where farms have had to be relet, there has, of course, been a greater reduction as a general rule; that is away from towns.

58,755. The reduction is given to the new tenant, and not to the sitting tenant?—That is the usual experience there, I think.

58,756. When a farm is newly let, how much has the rent gone down per cent.?—It varies a very great deal. If it was one of these farms upon the moorland or pasture land, possibly there would be very little reduction, but if it was a farm containing much arable land there would be a considerable reduction, I should say possibly 25 per cent. or 30.

Landlord's and tenants' incomes.

58,757. How much do you think the tenants' incomes have diminished in the last 15 years?—I am afraid in a great many cases they have vanished.

58,758. Which do you think is most hardly hit as regards the per-centage of income lost, the landlord or the tenant?—I should say the tenant.

58,759. The tenant is losing more in proportion to his capital than the landlord?—Yes.

58,760. And that would be recouped to him if he could get the farms at a less rent?—Somewhat.

58,761. Partially recouped?—Yes.

Assessment to rates.

58,762. But the great competition for farms tends to keep up the rents?—That is so.

58,763. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In your brief you say that in your opinion "land is unfairly assessed by taking the "rent or annual value as the basis of assessment;" what should you take as the basis of assessment if you do not take the rent or annual value?—I am only following out the argument—which I do not want to enter into—which was introduced by one or two of the other witnesses, namely, that a person in trade may earn an income of 200*l.* or 300*l.* a year, and only be assessed at about 40*l.*, for example's sake, whereas the farmer may be assessed at 300*l.*, and not get perhaps 100*l.* a year income, and in the farmer's case the Income Tax Commissioners take, for the purpose of taxing him

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under Schedule B., half the amount of his rent as being what they consider would be his income.

58,764. Then you mean that you think it should be made by taking a proportion of the rent or annual value, not the whole of it, I suppose—taking, say, a fourth?—Certainly not the whole of it.

58,765. But you would take the annual value as the basis in some way or other; you would not go and take the capital value, or anything of that kind?—No.

58,766. You simply mean that you would have a system of differential rating by which land should be rated at a lower rate?—No, I am not a great believer in differential rating. If the Income Tax Commissioners consider, in the case of a man whose rent is 400*l*. a year, that his income is 200*l*.—that might be somewhat of a fair basis, or you might say three quarters.

58,767. That is taking it on the basis of the rent, is it not, only they say they would take it at half the rent?—They would take it at half the rent and tithe.

58,768. But in some way it would have to depend upon the rent?—It would depend upon the rent to a certain extent.

58,769. Has the system of valuation changed much of late years in your district?—What valuation?

58,770. Has it improved, do you consider, or do you think it has remained unchanged?—In the agricultural portion of the union?

58,771. Do you now assess a farm on practically the same principles that you assessed it on 30 or 40 years ago?—No, they are changed from time to time; if the overseers of a parish are aware of any change, naturally they make out a supplemental valuation list and alter it.

58,772. Do you think that the rateable value of a farm at the present time on the valuation list bears the same proportion to the rental as it did 20 or 30 years ago, or has there been any change?—I think the assessment of farms was upon the gross value of the rent with the usual deduction, to arrive at the rateable value; and the same system is in vogue now.

58,773. You have not introduced any difference?—We have not introduced any difference; if there had been I was sure to know it in our district.

58,774. That is just what I wanted to know; we have it from some witnesses that the system has changed, and that it is a more accurate system of assessment now than it used to be; others have given us different evidence; but in your union, you say, no change has taken place?—The basis there has been the actual rent, as far as I know, for 20 years, and the same system is in vogue. Possibly, previous to that, it may have been any value that the local people, that is, the overseers, or a parish meeting might arrive at in assessing the parish. That was not, certainly, to be desired, because I know some instances where they put themselves down very low.

58,775. During the last 20 years you think there has been no change in it?—I think, generally, that system has prevailed throughout the whole of the 39 or 38 agricultural parishes in our union during that time.

Rates.

58,776. I understand that 50 years ago your rates were 1*s*. in the £?—About that.

58,777. But in the sixties they went up to 4*s*. in the £?—Something like that.

58,778. Can you tell us at all what was the cause of that rise?—You see I would not be then more than 13 or 14 years of age, and I could not very well tell you what were the reasons, but I remember they were standing at that. I imagine, somewhere in the sixties, the Highway Act was passed, and when that came into operation that increased the expenditure considerably, and then—I believe I am right—the Union Chargeability Act, by which the common fund came into force, also, no doubt, had a tendency to raise the rates in rural districts.

58,779. Was there any exceptional distress in your district?—No.

58,780. No distress of trade, or anything of that kind?—I think not.

58,781. Your union is one in which the agricultural land would gain very greatly if it was rated on a differential system, say, at one-fourth of its value, because the rateable value of the land forms a very small proportion of the rateable value of the whole union?—Not a small proportion.

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58,782. It is 79,000*l*. I think out of half a million?—That is the land itself?

58,783. The land itself?—Yes it would gain in that respect.

58,784. Can you say how much of that land in your union is occupation land?—I should think the greater part of it.

58,785. That is the reason it has kept up in value?—The reason it has kept up in value is that farmers increase in numbers and farms do not.

Tenants' capital.

58,786. You do not think there has been any deterioration in the farming, you say, where tenants have sufficient capital?—Very little indeed. I find the man who has plenty of capital or sufficient capital is, as a rule, an energetic man who is willing to avail himself of all modern improvements in the shape of machinery or manures or feeding-stuffs; and he puts as much as he can of it into the land.

58,787. Have the majority of the farmers in your union got sufficient capital, and are they able to farm in that way?—It is a very hard thing for me to say.

Quality of cultivation.

58,788. Have you noticed any deterioration in the farming in the union as a whole?—I have certainly noticed that there must be a deterioration in the capital.

58,789. Is the land in the union farmed as well as it used to be?—Very nearly so, I think.

58,790. Then it would appear that there has not been a very great deficiency of capital?—It is hard to trace. Unless you drive along throughout the various parts of the rural districts of the union, it is almost impossible for one man to say how much the land has deteriorated; and he would not even then by a casual driving along be able to determine possibly, unless he had done that periodically during the last 10 or 15 years, how much it had gone back.

58,791. But in the parishes with which you are acquainted—and I suppose you are familiarly acquainted with a certain number of them?—Yes.

58,792. Do you consider that the cultivation has deteriorated there?—Not where there is sufficient capital.

58,793. Has it deteriorated apart from that?—I think I say in my proof that where there is not sufficient capital it has deteriorated.

58,794. You said it was a very difficult thing to say whether there was sufficient capital or not; if it has deteriorated where there is not sufficient capital, the question whether the land has deteriorated or not will decide the question whether there is sufficient capital. Cannot you say in the particular parishes that you know whether the land has deteriorated in cultivation or not?—I could not say that of particular parishes, because there would be only perhaps one or two farmers in the parish who would be in that position; but where there is a want of capital there certainly must be a deterioration to some extent.

58,795. That is quite clear, but speaking of the land that you know in your district, and I suppose you know a considerable amount of it, speaking of it as a whole, is it worse cultivated or not than it used to be?—I say in my proof that of the two it certainly must be the worst.

Allotments Act.

58,796. I do not think that is any answer. Then you say that little or nothing has been done in the rural part of the county under the Allotments Act of 1887; why is that? Is there no demand for allotments or has it been supplied from other causes?—I have been on the allotments committee of the county council since its formation and we have not had a single application up to the present.

58,797. (*Chairman.*) Not for the small holdings under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Nor for the small holdings either. I am chairman of the parish council in my parish, and we have had some applications for allotments now because I think it is brought nearer home to the people. Before, the county council were a body a long distance off, and you know what that means with the rural population; they do not care to approach a body which they do not know. The parish councillors are, as a rule, men whom they do know. We have found that there have been several applications throughout the county for allotments. It is a difficult

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question. I do not know whether that comes under the scope of this inquiry, how they are to be provided, but I think it would be rather an expensive process to get them unless we can get the land voluntarily.

58,798. (*Mr. Dalton.*) There is a demand for allotments?—There is a demand for allotments in certain cases.

Small holdings.

58,799. Is there any demand for small holdings?—That is not brought within the scope of the parish councils, I think; it is only allotments.

58,800. Do you think there is any demand or any desire for the provision of small holdings?—I certainly think it would be desirable when a large farm, say, became vacant, if it could be split up into small holdings. I know there is the difficulty of providing the number of residences upon four holdings instead of one, and the necessary farm buildings, but possibly a State loan at a very low rate of interest may get over that difficulty. As I pointed out before, there are more farmers than there are farms, and they are tempted to go and apply for a farm which is far beyond their capital, because there is not a farm within the scope of their capital within reach of them.

Position of farmers.

58,801. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think from the evidence that you have given that you have no doubt at all events that the tenant farmer in your county has not been making the income that he should have done from farming?—I have no doubt of that.

58,802. Is he gradually getting poorer?—The great majority of them are.

Reduction of rents.

58,803. You agree with other witnesses, I understand, in thinking that these temporary reductions are not at all suitable to the times?—Yes; I think that there should be a permanent reduction arrived at: how it is to be arrived at is another matter, but I think that is what should be done.

58,804. Regarding the temporary reductions, both the landlord and the tenant have to pay rates upon the full rent in the case of temporary reductions have they not?—I think there ought to be some reduction in that respect; at the same time I cannot but point out that any reduction arrived at by rating, or by any other of these smaller and side means, as I would call them, would be but a sop in the dish to the great amount that the farmer is losing by the difference in price between the gross value of the produce of a farm, say, between 1870 and 1878, and the gross value of the produce of the same farm in the present year, or last year, or the year before. That difference would probably be greater than the rent itself.

The Agricultural Holdings Act. Valuers

58,805. You have been questioned considerably upon the Agricultural Holdings Act especially with reference to the referees; and you seem to say—and this we have ample English evidence to back up—that the referees are mostly men composed of what you would call surveyors or land agents, or men who naturally draw their living, and gain their positions through the landlords; that is what you mean, I think?—I think that has only been where they have applied to the Board of Agriculture to appoint them. As a general rule when an outgoing tenant and a landlord have to come to a valuation they appoint, each of them local men, and if they go on in the usual course before they enter upon a valuation, they appoint an umpire, who is usually a local man. Therefore the case you put does not arise, and then it is very quickly settled. I am only alluding to where they cannot agree to appoint an umpire at the time, and have to apply to some other authority to do it for them.

58,806. I thought you said the arbitrators are mostly landlords' men?—I think if you refer back, you will see I was stating a particular case where they had to appeal to the Board of Agriculture to appoint a valuer.

58,807. But if he was a man connected with the landlords which you have in the county would he not be very apt in dealing with the counter-claims to be rather favourable towards the landlord?—Possibly so. I think it would be better to have a local man who knew the local customs of the county or of the particular district in which the valuation took place.

58,808. The question has been often raised here whether there should be this one man, called an official referee, to settle the difference between landlord and tenant under the Agricultural Holdings Act—or one or two of these men—it depends upon the size of the counties—suggested by the county council or the county court judge to the Board of Agriculture, and then for the Board of Agriculture, as in the case of the Drainage Commissioners, to name him to be the man set apart for that business. Would you agree that such a procedure would lessen the expense?—No, I do not agree with that, because I think the same difficulty would again arise, and that it would be according to the strength or the influence of the parties as to the particular one man, or two men, who would be appointed for a county; there would be then the permanent disability of his being perhaps a man favourable to the landlords, or, on the other hand, of his being thought favourable to the tenants—I am only putting it as being thought favourable for one or the other—because he would remain in office for any given time. It think it is better arrived at now by each person appointing his own particular valuer, and then for them to appoint an arbitrator before they enter upon the valuation. If it was left to one single person, an official referee as you indicate, then the farmer possibly would want someone to advise him on his side, and the landlord would be on the other side, and so there would be three persons engaged after all said and done. I do not think the expense would be diminished in any way, and I do not think the working would be quite so good.

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58,809. In the present position each one would have an arbitrator?—Yes.

58,810. And then these two men would have to appoint an oversman, or a referee?—Yes.

58,811. Would it not be as well if you had one appointed the same as the Drainage Commissioners, and that he should be suggested by the county council?—I think not, because if it was found that this one person who was appointed for this valuation was in any way biassed, either in favour of the landlord or of the tenant, it is possible he would not be engaged upon another arbitration; there would be a means found of his being worked out of existence.

58,812. The general opinion amongst the witnesses has been that they would rather have an official referee in order to save expense, and that one man should be employed instead of three?—I do not think there would be much saving of expense; that is my opinion. I feel satisfied that it would not work out well for the reason I have indicated, that the one would be a fixed official, whereas the other is compelled from the very nature of things to act fair and straight as valuer, because if he did not, if he had a leaning always one way, he would probably not be a man fixed upon again.

58,813. Would a man that was fixed in a position not begin to learn the different rules for arriving at a valuation of these things time after time better than one man appointed as you say, who may not have another chance for 12 months or two years?—I have generally found that there are sufficient men of that class in a county who are well up in all the customs and valuations, and all the questions that are likely to arise in an agricultural valuation.

Allotments.

58,814. You said the arbitrators, in that case you quoted, were landlords' men?—I say that the Board of Agriculture, or whatever authority here in London you appoint, would not possibly know the local valuers at all; they would only be some of the very large valuers that would become at all known to them, and whom they would appoint.

58,815. What I am advocating is that I do not want London men, I want these official referees taken from the county they live in?—Yes, I am with you there entirely; I think that they should be taken out of the county.

58,816. Do you object to their being set apart—one man taken for each county—to settle for the whole?—No; but it is my opinion that it would not be so well.

58,817. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) About allotments; you say you think a demand will arise for allotments; will that be, do you think, from the agricultural labourer, or from the small tradespeople, bootmakers, or tailors, and that sort of people in the outskirts or in the towns?—I do not think it will very much arise from agricultural labourers. I may say that the parish of Magor, with the parish council with which I am connected, has the Great Western Railway running through it. That company consequently keeps a staff of men there as railway men for repairing the line, packers and others; these men, of course, are in receipt of fairly good wages, rather better than agricultural wages, and they have a half-day on every Saturday. Those are the men who are likely to apply, and as far as I find, they are

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the men who have applied for allotments. Of course, there are one or two applications from other classes; one for instance, was a young fellow who was a mason, and I think there was also one who was a blacksmith.

58,818. But the agricultural labourer, pure and simple, you do not think would ask for them?—We have had no applications from the agricultural labourer, pure and simple.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,819. (*Mr. Clay.*) Do you consider that the Agricultural Holdings Act, if properly amended, would give greater security, and bring more capital to the land?—It would have to be very considerably amended.

58,820. Yes, but I say if it was properly amended?—I do not know that it would bring more capital. I think what would probably be seen would be that it would satisfy those who are engaged in farming more than it does at present, and would be possibly a means of preventing their capital being so much diminished as it has been of late years. I want to see it amended in that way so that there will be not quite such a drain upon their capital, and that they may have a little more security, and that there may be more certainty of their being paid for any improvements they may make.

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58,821. Would the natural consequence not follow that a man would invest more capital in land if he knew he was to get paid for anything that was left unexhausted?—As I have pointed out there are quite sufficient applicants for land, only the farms are not available according to their capital. There are plenty of young fellows who have been brought up to farming who have not the capital to take a large farm; and there is not a sufficient number of small farms with a residence for them to enter upon.

58,822. Is it not a mistake then in farmers to take more land than they have capital for?—I say it is a mistake, and a very great one. I would like to say that I hope this Commission will find some remedy; you will notice that I do not attempt to foreshadow a remedy, but I hope the Commission will find some remedy for this very fearful depression.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. W. Davies.

Mr. William Davies called and examined.

Mr. W. Davies.

58,823. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I understand that you are a tenant farmer in the parish of Llanfair, in the county of Denbigh?—I am.

58,824. You are a county councillor for the district? Yes.

58,825. The Chairman of the School Board?—I am.

58,826. And you also have valued in many cases of change of tenantry?—I have.

58,827. How long have you lived upon your farm?—23 years on that farm, and I have been 33 years on the same estate.

58,828. Your farm consists of 200 acres of arable and pasture land?—Yes.

58,829. And 300 acres of enclosed sheepwalk?—That is so.

58,830. Just let me understand what an enclosed sheepwalk is; has that wire round it?—It is wire fenced all round.

Mountain land.

58,831. So that your sheep will not go beyond it?—Yes; some of the enclosed mountain land has been cultivated, but it is not cultivated now.

58,832. When was it cultivated?—I cultivated some of it about 20 years ago.

58,833. Since when has it gone out of cultivation?—We have not ploughed it for the last 15 years, at least.

58,834. What has been the cause of that?—It would not pay for the expense. It was a little distance from the house, and the land reclaimed from the mountain after a time goes worse a good deal. It would not pay for the extra expense upon it.

58,835. Did you let it go out of cultivation because the soil had deteriorated, or on account of the prices of the produce falling?—It got too expensive to do any good with it and to pay for the working. It would not pay for the working and it was in a bad state. We could not get it up to the mark; it had been carried off for years before I came.

58,836. Then it was not owing to the prices?—It was owing to the prices, because they were too low.

58,837. Just let us get that right. I asked you whether you gave up cultivating it because the soil had deteriorated, or whether you gave it up because the prices of the produce which it grew had fallen off?—It was both.

Rent.

58,838. Are you paying the same rent now for your farm as you did when you took it 23 years ago?—No, I had a reduction 17*l.* 10*s.* at one time.

58,839. Upon the whole farm?—Yes, it was a reduction, not an abatement.

58,840. Has that continued?—Yes.

58,841. Have you had remissions besides?—I had one 10 per cent. at one time in an exceptionally bad year.

58,842. But that was only once?—Only once.

58,843. Will you tell us the amount of rent you pay?—300*l.*

58,844. That is for the 200 acres of arable and pasture land, and the 300 acres of sheepwalk?—Yes, for all.

58,845. In your district is there very great difference in the land, is there upland and lowland?—Yes, there is a good deal of difference.

58,846. What would you say would be the difference in the price per acre?—I pay 30*s.* per acre for the bottom land; the other is worth very little, say half-a-crown an acre or little more—not 5*s.*

58,847. Are the farms generally a mixture of both upland and lowland?—No; these mountain passes belong to some farms, not to every farm; there are only a few farms that have them.

Size of farms.

58,848. About what size are the farms round about you, what is their acreage?—Most of them are from 40 to 120 acres.

58,849. 120 acres would be considered a large farm would it not?—Yes.

58,850. Yours is a very large farm then with 200 acres and the upland?—There are in the parish perhaps seven or eight farms of 150 acres or more on an average.

58,851. Are there any vacant?—No, I do not know of any now.

Demand for farms.

58,852. If one comes in hand to the landlord are there plenty of applications for it?—Yes, plenty of applications.

58,853. Who from, chiefly?—From neighbours, and some from distant parts.

58,854. People who are accustomed to agriculture?—Yes, from people accustomed to agriculture at present.

58,855. There is no difficulty in letting them?—No, they are obliged to reduce the rents, but they are all let.

Reduction of rents.

58,856. Still they are obliged to reduce the rents?—Yes.

58,857. Are the farmers who have been on their holdings for some years paying a higher rent than the new men who have come in lately?—I should rather think so, because they are obliged to reduce when a new comer comes.

58,858. Does the landlord put up the buildings, and do the improvements on your farms?—Yes, all on my farm.

System of farming.

58,859. What is your general method of farming; do you grow corn and rear cattle, or what?—I grow corn, but I do not grow now nearly what I did when I came there. When I came to the farm there were above 100 acres in stubbles badly drilled. I do not plough now. I have only 60 acres under cultivation between roots and corn, and all the rest is in grazing land.

58,860. Laid down to permanent pasture?—Not to permanent pasture; my land will not hold it long enough. I grase it as long as the grass land will keep, say four years; I am obliged to plough it in something like four years generally.

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58,861. Do you rear calves?—No, I buy no stock; I have given up rearing. I have been rearing, but I have lost my wife, and one thing and another, and I have given up rearing.

58,862. Can you tell us which you think pays the best, to rear calves or to buy in?—It depends a great deal. Some years you can do very well. The year before last they were very good. In a dry year you could buy them very well and they paid well. but this year they would be very much worse because they were higher at the buying time, and we had to buy them very much dearer than the price we could get for them when they are got according to their weight.

Sale of cattle by live-weight.

58,863. Did you ever buy any cattle by weight?—No, but I have had some of mine weighed to prove them, I never sold any by weight.

58,864. Would you like to see that system introduced?—I believe it would be a good thing.

58,865. Especially for the farmer?—Yes, for one thing—the butchers are very much against it.

Prices of corn.

58,866. About prices; when you first came to the farm, what sort of prices did you get for your wheat?—For the first seven years it was 48*s*. per quarter for the wheat, and I had to sell it last year for 23*s*.

58,867. When you first came you used to get 48*s*. per quarter, and last year you sold it for 23*s*.?—Yes.

58,868. What did you get for your barley?—Barley also averaged about 40*s*. per quarter the first year, and since the duty has been taken off malt it has come down to 22*s*.

58,869. Can you sell it at that now, or have you a difficulty in selling it?—There is a difficulty in selling it at that. I used it last year mostly for cattle, and I used all my wheat for cattle.

58,870. As regards your oats, what did you get when you first came per quarter for them?—24*s*. per quarter.

58,871. And now?—15*s*. is the top price.

58,872. When you first came to the farm, what did you get for beef?—It used to be 7½*d*. or 8*d*. a lb.

58,873. And now?—Hardly 6*d*. Last month I think I had a little more than 6*d*. at the last fair for the few I sold.

58,874. You attribute that, I believe, to the excessive competition you encounter with meat that comes from abroad?—Yes.

Prices of cattle.

58,875. Can you tell us what you bought store cattle at this year?—When I bought the first 32 they cost me 8*l*. 10*s*. on an average.

58,876. If they were weighed what would they come to per lb.?—According to those that I weighed they cost me something like 36*s*. per cwt., and when we sell them the price generally is from 28*s*. to 30*s*. for the fat ones, so that the buying is against us very much.

58,877. According to that you would lose pretty nearly 2*d*. a lb. upon them?—That is it very nearly.

58,878. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the breed of cattle?—Crossed shorthorns.

58,879. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Does not that statement of yours rather prove that people ought to breed their cattle and rear them instead of buying in?—I do not think you can do that altogether; I believe you cannot rear and feed them.

58,880. Does that apply to sheep in the same degree, or not so much?—There is not so much difference in the sheep.

58,881. You do better with sheep than with anything else, do you?—There is not so much difference in them as in the other, but a dry year tells a good deal on them.

Wages.

58,882. Now tell us about the wages you paid when you first came into your farm; what did you pay the labourers?—In 1869 I paid 6*s*. per week and the man's keep; in 1871, 5*s*. and his keep; in 1872, 7*s*. 6*d*. and his keep; in 1873, 9*s*. and his keep; and 9*s*. and his keep ever since.

58,883. Can you tell me why it jumps so very much in the one year from 1871 to 1872?—1872 was a very good year, you will remember; it was the beginning of the good times after a bad time.

58,884. If they paid for their own keep, I see they had 13*s*. a week in 1869?—Yes.

58,885. And 15*s*. a week in 1872, and that they get 16*s*. a week now?—Yes.

58,886. Do you think that you could get the same work that you used to do out of the labourers?—No, I do not.

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58,887. Not so good, or not so much?—Not so much. I think it would take now four men to do the work of three then.

58,888. Is labour scarce with you?—Not very scarce; it is rather at times.

58,889. In your neighbourhood has the agricultural population diminished; are there near you any workmen's cottages untenanted?—There are six within a mile of my own door untenanted now.

58,890. What is the reason of that?—There are collieries about 10 miles from me, and some go to the collieries and some to the towns—to Liverpool and so on; a good many go away.

Quality of cultivation.

58,891. How is the cultivation of land carried on?—It is very inferior to what it was then, very inferior.

58,892. You think it is?—I know it is.

58,893. Are there fewer servants kept?—Less, by more than half. In my proof I have quoted the case of two farms close by; one which did keep four now only keeps two, and the other which did keep six or seven, counting sons and hired men, now only keeps two.

Small farmers.

58,894. Are there any small holdings near you of which the occupier is the landlord; I mean about 50 acres?—Where they are the owners of the land do you mean?

58,895. Yes?—There are a few, not many.

58,896. Do they farm better or to greater advantage than those who hire the land?—Worse, I believe, of the two. They bought it when land was dear.

Reduction of rents.

58,897. I see you say in your proof that on the estate under which you rent, Colonel West's estate, the rent has been reduced from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent.?—I know of a farm where he reduced it 40 per cent. and I know of several of 30 per cent. and thereabouts.

58,898. But your own is only 17½ per cent.?—I had a reduction of rent of 17½ per cent.

58,899. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What were the farms that had the greatest reduction—were they arable farms?—They were large farms.

58,900. Were they arable or pasture?—A mixture.

58,901. Did arable or pasture predominate?—I cannot say very much. There is much of the land that has been left down for grass, it has been put down in a very bad way and then it does not grow at all. Then land in our district will not grow well for more than three or four years at the furthest, and we are obliged to plough it. A good many leave it and do not plough it, and then it grows very little.

58,902. Would you call that arable land?—Yes.

58,903. Are the farms where you have said rents have gone down 30 to 40 per cent. mostly arable or mostly pasture?—They are a mixture, half and half, I should say, as near as possible.

Land tumbled down to grass.

58,904. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You have told us that the cultivation of the farms has deteriorated, is there much land which has tumbled down into grazing and has not been properly laid down?—Yes, left for grazing.

58,905. Without being properly prepared?—Without permanent seed being put down.

58,906. And the consequence is that it does not carry half the stock it used to?—That is so.

58,907. Have others followed your example and not bred cattle?—There are a few.

Cattle-breeding.

58,908. Do they breed horses still in your part?—Yes, but not in a large way. I have two or three mares breeding every year.

58,909. But the cattle breeding has deteriorated?—Yes, the breeding of cattle has very much.

58,910. And the quality of them?—Yes.

58,911. What do you attribute that to?—Because people do not buy fair-bred bulls and cross them properly, and they do not buy new blood at all.

58,912. Used they to do so in better times?—Yes, they used to do so. I knew the vale well long ago, and I know they are very much poorer than they were 15 and 20 years ago.

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58,913. Is there any dairying done in your district?—Very little; there is no cheese-making, but there is a deal of butter-making.

Butter-making.

58,914. What can you get for butter now?—It was 8*d.* some time ago; I think it is about 11*d.* now.

58,915. You do not make butter yourself now, do you?—I only keep two or three cows for our own use.

58,916. Has any attempt been made to make butter at any factory near you?—No, none.

58,917. What would you say to that?—I do not know I am sure. Some of these dairy schools have been going about.

58,918. Have they done any good?—I do not think they have; nobody has taken any advantage of them to carry on in that way.

58,919. They have not?—No, they have not.

58,920. A few individuals may have profited?—There are a few, perhaps.

Rates.

58,921. As to your rates on the land, have they increased?—Yes, they have increased; they are 2*s.* 11*d.* in the £ in our parish now.

58,922. What were they when you first took the farm; do you remember?—I could not say exactly, but I know they were a good deal less.

58,923. Would you like to see any change in the manner of rating?—I think it is not fair to put all the rates on the land. I think there are other parties who ought to pay some of them—people who are making money better than the farmers; but all the rates are put on the land.

58,924. How would you get at those people?—I would get at them with the income tax, I suppose.

58,925. Would you rate them on their income to help the land?—They ought to do something of that kind.

Foreign imports.

58,926. What do you think is another chief cause of the agricultural depression?—I believe it is the importing of beef, mutton, corn, and everything that we can grow that comes from America, and then we are done with.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,927. Have you anything to say upon the Agricultural Holdings Act?—No, but I think it ought to be made compulsory.

58,928. It is compulsory?—More so then, I should think.

58,929. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You mean more thorough?—What I mean is this way: that the tenant farmer ought to be paid for every unexhausted improvement that he does on the farm.

58,930. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you valued as a valuer under it?—I do not know of a case where it has been tried in our district anywhere.

58,931. You do not know of a case where it has been tried in your neighbourhood?—Not anywhere near.

Reduction of rents.

58,932. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is about the average reduction of rent in your district which has taken place within the last few years?—I cannot say exactly; it is somewhere from 10 per cent. to 40 per cent.

58,933. And there is no land unoccupied, I think you said?—I do not know of any.

Demand for farms.

58,934. When land is to let, are there plenty of tenants?—Yes, plenty.

58,935. Have you the same competition described by another witness from Wales of pensioners and men who have made money in other businesses coming in, but who are not *bonâ fide* farmers?—Years ago a great many came when the time was good and took farms; then after a time they said it would not pay and gave it up. They are all gone, I believe, every one of them.

58,936. And there are none coming in at this time?—I do not know of any coming at this present time.

58,937 Not of the class described by the first witness this morning, whom you heard?—Which class was that?

Large and small farmers.

58,938. Dock pensioners, I think he mentioned?—I do not know of any of those; there is nothing of that [illegible] it.

58,939. Who are doing best, as a rule, small or large farmers?—Against bad times do you mean?

58,940. Now, at this time?—I think the small ones are doing better than the large ones; they stand the bad times better.

58,941. How is it that the tenants are able to live in these bad times?—Indeed I do not know; it is very hard to live unless you have capital.

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Reduced labour.

58,942. Is it by decreasing their labour expenses, and working themselves?—By decreasing their labour expenses more than anything else.

58,943. And working themselves and their families?—Yes; and living poorer than they used to do too. A great many have taken to keeping less workmen, and then, of course, that tells on the land again.

58,944. They are reducing their labour expenditure?—Yes, more than anything else.

58,945. Are they adopting machinery?—Not in a large way, but they have more machines.

Cattle-breeding.

58,946. You say you have given up rearing calves?—Yes.

58,947. Why was that?—As I have said, I have lost my wife for one thing; and then I had not the people to go on with it. They paid me very well when I was doing it.

58,948. Do you think it was a better system than buying them in?—It is not everybody who has the capital to buy them, and then they are obliged to rear them. It requires a lot of capital to buy.

58,949. Then what have you to say as to the dairy?—The dairy pays, I believe, as well as anything.

Reduction of rents.

58,950. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have the 10 to 40 per cent. reductions been given permanently, or merely as abatements?—Permanently.

58,951. You say that when an old tenant tenders to leave, the new tenant gets greater reductions and more done for his land?—I think that is often the case.

58,952. Would it not be wise for the landlord, or the agent, to keep the old tenant on, and to give him the reduction?—It would be right I should say, but it is the other case most often.

Depression in Denbighshire.

58,953. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand there has been considerable depression in your district?—Yes, a great depression.

58,954. And it has lasted now for how many years?—About 15 to 20 years; from 1882, I believe, or thereabouts.

Low prices.

58,955. You attribute it in the main to the fall that has occurred in the prices of some articles of agricultural produce?—I do.

58,956. Both landlords and tenants have been injuriously affected by that?—Yes, very.

58,957. I see you say in your brief that the chief cause of all the trouble and misery, is allowing the foreigner to bring into our markets all his produce without even paying rates or taxes?—Yes, they ought to be made to pay something.

58,958. Have you anything to suggest to the Commission that would improve the present state of things?—No, I do not think I can suggest anything.

58,959. Do you regard it as hopeless?—No, not as hopeless. I hope better times will come, but I cannot see which is the right way to bring them.

58,960. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You leave it to this Commission?—We hope for it to do something.

Rates.

58,961. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have nothing to propose to the Commission which might, in your opinion, aid to bring about better times?—No. As I said, everybody ought to have to pay something of the rates.

58,962. You would like to see some relief of local taxation?—Yes, that is what I say.

58,963. That you think you have a fair claim to?—Yes, I believe so.

58,964. You contend, I suppose, that land pays an unfair proportion of taxation at the present time, as compared with other descriptions of property?—Yes, I believe so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

58,965. You mentioned just now the Agricultural Holdings Act, have you any suggestion to make for amendment in that Act?—No, I have not. I only want that any reasonable improvements that the farmer does he ought to be compensated for.

58,966. Under the Act at present you do not think he is sufficiently compensated?—I know he is compensated but somehow nobody seems to take advantage of it.

58,967. How do you hold your farm?—I am under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

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58,968. Is that usually the case in your district?—Yes, I believe it is. There are some that have contracted out.

58,969. When a man leaves a farm under the Agricultural Holdings Act in your district, do you complain that he does not get sufficient compensation?—Sometimes, but generally if there is a fairly good tenant the landlord allows him to choose the next tenant and make his bargain with that tenant and if the farm is in good fettle of course the new tenant has to give him so much for the goodwill. That used to be the case, but I am afraid as the times are worse there is not so much of that as there used to be.

58,970. But apart from the goodwill does the tenant get any compensation from the landlord?—I do not know of any having it.

58,971. I think you said you did not know a case where it has ever been tried?—No, I never have.

58,972. What does that mean—that compensation has never been asked?—Nobody brought a case on under the Agricultural Holdings Act to my knowledge in my district.

58,973. They have never gone to the landlord and said, now I am going to leave and I have got so much compensation as I think I can fairly claim—that has never been tried?—Not so far as I know. I know of one farm where the old tenant is going off and where my own landlord asked me if I would go there and value what would be fair for that, for not ploughing certain fields so that the land should be in better fettle for the next tenant. I went there. There were three big fields, and he was allowed to pay 2*l.* an acre for not ploughing them.

58,974. What was it, grass?—Yes.

58,975. He was allowed that for not breaking it up?—For leaving it in grass for the incoming tenant. That is the very farm where they had the 40 per cent. reduction.

58,976. Under the terms of his agreement or under the terms on which he held the farm, would the tenant have been able to plough up that grass if he had liked?—Yes.

58,977. Was it old grass or was it seeds?—It had been in grass for a few years, but he had plenty of other grass land according to the agreement, and he had the right to plough those fields.

58,978. He was bound by his agreement to keep a certain number of fields in grass?—Yes, and he had plenty beyond that.

58,979. He had some beyond that which had been laid down for several years?—Yes.

58,980. And it was an advantage to the landlord to keep it?—Yes, and he agreed to pay 2*l.* an acre for its not being ploughed.

58,981. Is that the only compensation under the Act that you are aware of?—That is the only one that I have had anything to do with or that I know of there.

58,982. (*Mr. Lambert.*) That was not under the Act, was it?—No, it was only a matter of good-will between the landlord and the off-going tenant.

58,983. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you any reason to suppose that if the tenants took advantage of the existing Acts they might not find that these Acts give them all the compensation that they think they are entitled to?—I am sure that if there was anything to be had that off-going tenant would take advantage of it; but I am sure that he saw he had no ground for it.

58,984. As far as you know, it has never been the custom to make use of the Act?—No, not to my knowledge.

Arrangement between out-going and incoming tenants.

58,985. Is that because they prefer the old practice of making an arrangement with the incoming tenant?—Yes, I believe so.

58,986. Could you describe that arrangement? Supposing, for instance, you were to leave your farm, or that you had left it, we will say, some years ago, what would have been your course of procedure? Would you go to the landlord first and say you were going to give up?—Yes, and he allows you to deal with the in-coming tenant, and he agrees to pay so much for the wheat and for the grass, and he buys the straw and buys whatever there is to sell, unless you are going to make a sale. Very often he would have to give you so much for the good-will. I have seen that done in many cases.

58,987. You go to a tenant who wants to take the farm in your place?—Yes.

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58,988. And then you make a bargain with him I understand?—That is right.

58,989. You say to him, "Now I am going to leave "the farm, and if you will give so much I will sell my "goodwill to you"?—That is the way.

58,990. How do you get the right to sell the goodwill; you have to make an arrangement with the landlord, do you not?—The landlord allows you. You go to the landlord first, and he allows you to do it.

58,991. The landlords allows you to make your own bargain with the incoming tenant?—That is the way.

58,992. Is that practice universal in your district or common?—It is general, I believe.

58,993. That is the way in which you get compensation?—Yes.

58,994. Has that been found, generally speaking, to be satisfactory?—It used to be always.

58,995. In good times?—Yes, in good times. Nobody thought of anything else.

58,996. Now that bad times have come you find that the incoming tenant is not willing to give so large a sum for the goodwill?—Now, very often, when a tenant leaves, his farm is in a very poor condition, and he has no chance of asking for anything.

58,997. In fact there is no goodwill to sell?—That is the case now.

58,998. That is because the tenant in bad times has suffered so much that he is unable to leave his farm in a good condition?—He does not leave it until he is compelled to leave it, and then it is in a very bad condition.

58,999. Not worth anybody's taking?—That is right.

Rent.

59,000. Now I want to go back again for a moment to the good times; your arrangement with the tenant at the present time would depend entirely upon what rent the landlord might choose to charge in the future?—Yes.

59,001. Did you make, under your practice, an arrangement with the landlord as to what rent was going to be charged or did you leave that entirely to him?—That would be an agreed thing between you and the landlord for it to go for the same rent again. That is what used to be.

59,002. Then you went to the landlord and you arranged with him that the rent was not to be materially changed, and then you were allowed to make your own bargain with the man who was coming in?—Just so.

59,003. Suppose the landlord had thought that owing to any great increase of prices, or anything of that sort, he was entitled to a somewhat higher rent; how would that have affected the position?—It would only affect it as the incoming tenant would not be so willing to give so much for the goodwill to the off-going tenant.

59,004. Then, as a matter of fact, the efficacy of this practice would depend very much upon how far the landlord might choose not to increase the rent?—Yes, very much so.

59,005. Are you aware of any cases which have occurred in past days when the landlord chose to increase the rent?—I know of rents increased on farms.

59,006. What happened then?—They had to make the best bargain they could.

59,007. You do not advocate any legislation, I understand, which would interfere with his fixing the rents?—No, I do not. If the farmer is not fit to deal with his landlord he is not fit to carry on a farm. I think it is better to be open in that way; in my opinion.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,008. But, however, you would like to see some alteration apparently in the present Agricultural Holdings Act, which would give full compensation?—Full compensation for every unexhausted improvement to an off-going tenant.

59,009. If that were done that would be quite satisfactory?—In my opinion.

59,010. Do you think you represent the opinion of farmers in your district?—Most of them, I believe.

59,011. You are well acquainted with them?—Yes, very well.

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59,012. Have you been in the district many years?—I have been in the district 33 years.

59,013. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Do you represent any association?—No, I do not.

59,014. No body of farmers have sent you here to speak for them?—No, not at all.

Arrangement between outgoing and incoming tenants.

59,015. Under that arrangement that you talked about just now, of the outgoing tenant making a bargain with the incoming tenant, supposing the incoming tenant did not choose to pay the outgoing tenant anything, what then?—He would have to go without it.

59,016. Is it, or is it not, a satisfactory arrangement; that is, if the incoming tenant did not choose to pay the outgoing tenant compensation, the outgoing tenant then could claim none?—He could go to his landlord; there is nothing else for it. If he was under the Agricultural Holdings Act he could go to his landlord.

59,017. It is not a satisfactory arrangement that the out-going tenant should not have a right to compensation for all the improvements he makes?—Yes, if there were improvements, but if there were no improvements he would not get any compensation.

59,018. But he should get compensation for any improvements he made?—Yes, I quite agree with that.

Reduction of rents.

59,019. Have all farmers had a reduction of say, 10 per cent. in their rents?—No, there are many that have not had any.

59,020. There are many?—Yes.

59,021. How many, what proportion would you say?—I could not say, but I know there are many.

59,022. Is there a good competition for farms?—Yes.

Size of farms.

59,023. What is the average size of a farm in your district?—In my district—say in our parish—there are only four or five large farms, and then there are something like 50 to 100, or 40 to 100.

59,024. Small farms?—Yes.

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59,025. What size would the small farms be?—There are a great many that are something like 30 to 40, or 45 acres.

Average rents.

59,026. How much would they be let for per acre?—The small ones are higher per acre than the others in comparison.

59,027. How much would you say; give a rough estimate?—Something like 1*l.* an acre.

59,028. Supposing there were a dozen farms to be let of 40 acres, say, at 1*l.* an acre rent, how many applicants would you get for them?—I know of a farm of that sort close to me, which was vacant about two years ago, they said there were 14 after it.

59,029. 14 after it?—Yes. I think that farm was a little over 1*l.* an acre; but 1*l.* an acre is about the general figure.

59,030. Would that be mostly arable, or mostly pasture?—Mixed.

The fixing of rent.

59,031. There is a great competition to get into farms?—Yes, there is more competition for farms of that size than of any other.

59,032. How are the rents fixed?—Between the agent and the tenant.

59,033. Is it by written offers?—No, they go and agree, and sign an agreement afterwards.

59,034. I mean in fixing the rent do the farmers send in the amount that they will give?—No, they go to the agent, and they bargain between them, he says what he will want, and then they take it or not.

59,035. How would the agent choose between 14 men applying for a farm?—He chooses his man, he takes them according to character.

59,036. He fixes the rent himself?—He says beforehand what the rent is. It was the old rent in this case, it was not altering the rent on that farm at all.

59,037. So he said "This is the old rent, and if you do not like to give me that you will not have the farm"?—That is it, and then he chooses the best man.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

One Hundred and Eighth Day.

Thursday, 15th August 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR

Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., *Assistant Secretary.*

Mr. A. Darcy. — 15 Aug. 1895.

Mr. ALFRED DARBY called and examined.

Mr. A. Darby. — 15 Aug. 1895.

59,038. (*Chairman.*) You are a land agent in the county of Essex, and one of the advisers of the Board of Agriculture?—I am.

59,039. And in that capacity you were asked on our behalf, to report upon the extent of land out of cultivation?—I was. (*See Appendix C.*)

59,040. Or land which had fallen back into such a condition as to be considered of no value?—Quite so.

59,041. The report you have sent us takes a better view of the position of things than we had from our sub-commissioner, Mr. Pringle?—Yes.

Uncultivated land in Essex.

59,042. And the figures which you have given at the end of your report, namely, that there are 5,800 acres of and which have not been cultivated within the last 5 or 10 years, and since left to the unaided efforts of nature, and of little or no value, seems to be rather small, having regard to the reports we have received of Essex, and therefore we thought you would give a little further explanation about them?—I should be very pleased to do so. As far as I can see, this map of Mr. Pringle's ought to have been painted in a different colour; in my opinion it is rather too dark. At least the report made by me is taken from what I consider a very reliable source, and it does not quite agree with his report.

59,043. It occurred to me that there might be some explanation of the difference, and, perhaps, that you have not included in your totals a good deal of land which forms part of the farms which are let, although parts of

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those farms may have fallen back into this bad condition?—I think this may be so, to a small extent. I have not, of course, ascertained from every occupier of lands whether he has any land entirely uncultivated, but I do not think this would add considerably to my figures.

59,044. Did you in your returns include the whole of the farms which are in that condition, or did you take into account land which is part of the farms—where the farm is let, and where part of the farm has fallen into this bad condition?—Partly. I mention that in the report; that there are fields in certain holdings that are not cultivated, but still the farm pays the rent; and under those circumstances I considered that the farm was yielding a profit.

59,045. Then we are to take it that your figures only apply to whole farms which have gone out of cultivation?—Yes.

59,046. That is a very important distinction? I went over a good deal of the ground that Mr. Pringle went over and found that there was not much of it where the farms were unlet; the great bulk of the land was let, although some of it at very low prices, and great portions of those farms were in the condition described by Mr. Pringle as having fallen back into grass, and being of a very worthless character?—Not entirely worthless; it was something for cattle to run over.

59,047. If let by itself it would be of little or no value; but letting it as a whole farm you get from the whole farm some rent?—Yes, but that has occurred in my opinion in many cases where the farmer thought "Well, I shall get this land cheap enough and I will "not cultivate it;" I know cases where that has happened.

59,048. But still those parts of this farm which have fallen back into that very bad state is the case not of whole farms, but where the land itself has become worthless? — That has occurred simply because the occupier has not put sufficient energy or capital into it to make it available; otherwise, it could be made to work now, in my opinion, in many cases.

59,049. Have you yourself personally seen this very worst part of Essex referred to by Mr. Pringle?—I have.

59,050. I presume that you will agree that many farms, a large portion of them, one half, or one third, or perhaps more, have fallen back into this bad state?—Unquestionably.

59,051. And where it would cost 7*l.* or 8*l.* per acre to put it into this good condition?—Very possibly.

59,052. Do you think that many of those farms are let at very low rentals?—Yes.

Possibility of improving Essex land.

59,053. You believe that the land could be made available?—I am decidedly of that opinion.

59,054. Would it pay to cultivate it, to lay it down into grass, or do something with it?—It depends very much upon the party taking it; we have farmers in and near Chelmsford that have made land pay, and do make it pay now.

59,055. But is that good land?—Yes.

59,056. In good condition?—It ought to be. I know a case that occurred a short time since; there was a meeting called on a Friday to ascertain what could be done to benefit agriculture, and a gentleman, with whom I had business in Chelmsford, a practical farmer, a man who knows his business, and who knows how to buy and sell, and how to manage a farm to make a profit, said: "It is a funny thing that there should be a "meeting going on below to ascertain what could be "done to benefit agriculture, and I have been unwise "enough to buy a farm at 35*l.* an acre." That is a very short time since. I said: "It looks as if you "could make it pay if no one else can." He admitted that he could make it pay, and would have gone further than 35*l.* an acre for it; and that was a farm within two miles of Chelmsford.

59,057. Was that land in good condition when he bought it?—Some of it. I cannot say that it was all in good condition.

59,058. It was not in that deplorable condition of some farms that Mr. Pringle describes?—No.

59,059. Though it may be considered not in first rate condition, it has not been allowed to go into a thoroughly bad condition?—No.

59,060. (*Mr. Channing.*) Was it an arable or dairy farm?—Pretty much pasture.

59,061. (*Chairman.*) Was it old pasture?—Yes.

59,062. And within a short distance of the town?—Two and a half miles from the town. I notice that Mr. Pringle speaks of a gentleman who has 12 farms on his lands to let. I should imagine that is Mr. [ ], a very wealthy man and a rather peculiar man; he would not let those farms if he had the opportunity. I offered myself to take a tenant to him, and he said: "What is the use of tenants; they cannot pay their "rents. I have a lot of money owing to me, what is "the use of growing corn." At one time he had four years of corn on his premises, and at the time they were carted there were six quarters per acre, and he allowed them to stand and be destroyed.

59,063. That is a landlord on a particular estate?—He is the landlord of 12 farms.

59,064. But where you see a whole district described by Mr. Pringle, one can hardly explain it by such an explanation as you have given with regard to a specific eccentric landlord?—Well, another case is that of a man who farms his own land; I was over it myself within six weeks, and I said "Mr. [ ], you have "eight quarters per acre of barley" (and this is close to the gentleman I have been speaking of) and he said —"I admit there will be seven." He farms his own land and does it well, and it yields a profit.

59,065. And seems to pay?—Yes, with seven quarters to the acre. A good deal depends upon the weather; and if this weather continues it would make 4*s.* to 5*s.* a quarter difference in the barley. Now that is in the same neighbourhood; that farm is properly managed; and the 12 farms that I have spoken of are managed in a very different manner; I have no hesitation in saying so.

59,066. Have these farms fallen back into this bad state?—He does not let them go back into a very bad state, but he is one of those characters who would try to make agriculture appear as bad as it possibly can be made.

59,067. I certainly saw myself a great many farms in that district in which large portions had fallen back into the most miserable condition of twitch and couch that could possibly be conceived, and the farms themselves were let at a very low rental. (*See* Appendix J.) In your opinion could those farms be turned to advantage by men with sufficient capital?—I am not quite certain that they could under the present circumstances be made to pay, but they could be done better by than they are now, in my opinion.

Explanation of derelict state of Essex land.

59,068. I presume you would say that they ought not to be allowed to get into that state?—Certainly not. It is a matter of a man having a will of his own. Another gentleman I knew had some land in that district adjoining the land that I am speaking of [Mr. and Mr.], and he could have let the land. A good farmer that I know well offered him 10*s.* an acre for this land, but the gentleman referred to said: "I "will not let it; I will let it grow what it will produce," and he put a man in there simply to overlook some cattle which were turned on to the farm. I maintain that if that had been let at 10*s.* an acre, it would have been better off than it is now, and it would be in cultivation, whereas now it is laid down to grass.

59,069. I think it is quite possible that many cases may be explained in that way?—I feel certain that they could.

59,070. You think they are in a bad state?—They are, some of them, whims, mere whims.

59,071. Sometimes it arises from the mortgagees taking possession, and being unwilling to let, because it would be less than the interest on their money. Is not that so?—Yes.

59,072. And that land has fallen back into so bad a state that it has become of little value?—Quite so.

59,073. Your observation would be that that land ought not to be allowed to go into that state?—Yes, and need not have been. The very man I spoke of just now was passing by the land with myself, and said, "Well, "this need not have been; this is good land, and if "kept going and kept in cultivation, it would have "been worth more than it ever will be now, because it "has been allowed to go into this state."

59,074. (*Mr. Everett.*) Would this man, whom you suppose would have cultivated it well, have lost money by the operation?—Certainly not. He was a business

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man, and understood his business. Farmers will now have to understand their business, the same as the grocer, or draper, or anybody else; but up to very recently a very great deal of land has been farmed by people who know little about it at all.

59,075. (*Chairman.*) Do you think it is possible in somes of those cases where the land is largely arable land and suitable for growing corn, especially where the land is very heavy, and mainly suitable for that, that the tenants did not alter the cultivation entirely, and they gradually got into difficulties, and the land got into a worse state, and so forth?—No doubt.

59,076. And then it got into this bad condition?—Yes.

59,077. If they had sooner extended their rotation, and gone in more for cattle, they could have saved the position?—Certainly. There was a gentleman in a parish not far from Chelmsford, who had very little, if any, pasture—I do not think more than one field of pasture—and he used to work that land to carry as much cattle, and sheep in particular, as some other farmers round about who had grass land.

59,078. Is that heavy land?—Rather; some of it was heavy.

59,079. Not some of this stiff clay that Mr. Pringle reports upon; not as bad as that, was it?—Not quite so bad as that. Some of it would be.

59,080. (*Mr. Everett.*) Arable land does carry more cattle than pasture land generally, does it not?—It depends a good deal about how it is managed.

59,081. If it is managed on the four-course shift, for instance?—It will not do to do that entirely, but it is a very good principle, although an old-fashioned style—the four-course shift. But the difficulty with heavy land is that if they cannot fold sheep in winter they might do it in summer, and save carting manure, and at a less cost, and if they feed the sheep they might make a profit and do well when they know how to manage it.

Applications for farms.

59,082. (*Chairman.*) You say you had personally many applications for farms, but you are pleased to state that you have none on your list to let, and the applications for holdings of from 50 to 30 acres are very numerous?—That is so.

59,083. You go on to say: "Which tends to show "that if land could be divided into this size occupation, "and an eight or ten-roomed house erected thereon, "an estate would produce a much higher rent than it "does in many instances where let in larger holdings." Does that apply only to the district round Chelmsford?—No, I think that it applies to the county generally. I have continually applications for that sized holding near a railway station, or within a driving distance of a railway station, say, within 4 or 5 miles.

59,084. Even in the bad parts of Essex you have applications for farms then?—I have.

Average rents.

59,085. What will the land let at on the average in your district?—That varies a great deal. It varies from 2*l.* to 5*s.* an acre.

59,086. But where it is arable land that has been kept in fair condition, and not allowed to get into the very worst state, what would the rental be?—15*s.* to 1*l.* an acre.

59,087. If it were stiff land in bad condition it goes down still lower, does it not?—Yes, to 5*s.*

59,088. And you could let lands of that size and condition up to 50 acres in a bad state?—I believe we could, lots of them.

Sub-division of land.

59,089. Many of those farms might be divided with advantage, you think?—I am of opinion that they could, if the expenditure were gone to of erecting an eight-roomed house on each holding.

59,090. Of course it involves erecting a house?—Yes, and a few buildings.

59,091. That is, of course, an expensive operation?—Yes, it is a question of 400*l.* or 500*l.*

59,092. Supposing a farm has got into that bad condition, that it would only let at 5*s.* to 10*s.* an acre, would it not be worth while dividing it and erecting houses to cost 300*l.* or 400*l.*?—That is the question.

59,093. That seems to me the question that is worth considering?—It is a matter that would require a considerable amount of calculation and consideration.

59,094. Have you known it done?—I have not.

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59,095. (*Mr. Little.*) That would mean 1*l.* an acre extra rent?—And you could get it. As a rule a farm of 50 acres makes more in proportion than a farm of 300 acres. Farms of 300 or 400 acres they will not look at, but if a 50 or 35 acre farm is for sale there are plenty of applicants, and you cannot sell a larger one to such advantage as the smaller one.

Demand for small farms.

59,096. (*Chairman.*) We had evidence of a gentleman selling properties, especially in this district, in this part of Essex, that there was a ready sale for land of that size?—There is no doubt about it.

59,097. (*Mr. Everett.*) At what sort of a price per acre?—That would depend upon the land, the situation, and so on.

59,098. (*Chairman.*) Mr. Rutter gave evidence on that point that he had effected many sales on land from 50 to 100 acres? (*See* Vol. III. of Evidence, page 31.)—I can quite believe this.

59,099. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was the land at a distance from any town?—Yes. A few weeks ago, nine miles from Chelmsford, in the parish of Woodham Ferris, a farm was sold of 35 or 36 acres, and it made 430*l.*

59,100. (*Chairman.*) Was there a house upon it?—Yes, but in a bad state.

59,101. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How much was the house worth upon the farm?—The house and buildings (which were very bad) would be worth about 100*l.*

System of farming on small lands.

59,102. (*Chairman.*) About those who take those farms of 30 or 50 acres; how do they make their profits?—They keep a little poultry, a few pigs, and do the best they can with a couple of cows, and that sort of thing, and perhaps fat a calf or two.

59,103. But they live wholly by the land?—Yes, if they work themselves, the wife and their family.

59,104. And in many cases the persons are making a livelihood with nothing else but the 30 to 50 acres?—Yes; it seems to me after the style of the old-fashioned farmers, where they used to work and occupy a small farm, with their wife and children all helping. That is how it appears to me it pays, if they understand the management of land. But I think in a great many of those places that are marked black on Mr. Pringle's map they might not have been so. I was coming up this morning with [ ]'s steward, and I was saying, "Now, what about agriculture?" and he says, "Goodness knows; it cannot be worse. I have four "farms to let at Michaelmas, and I have not had an "application for one." I said, "Do you preserve the "game on them," and he said, "Yes, strictly, on each "of them." I said, "Would not some of those tenants "remain if that was not the case," and he said, "Well, [ ] is going at Michaelmas, and he "would have stayed had it not been for the game." There are four farms wanting tenants. Why? Because they know they could not live with the game preserved.

Demand for large farms.

59,105. You speak of the applicants for farms of 30 to 50 acres. Can you sell larger farms?—In certain districts you could.

59,106. Not in worse districts?—No; people would not go. They would not go into that neighbourhood and look at them.

59,107. But in Chelmsford could you let them?—Yes, any ordinary sized farm, certainly.

59,108. Up to what acreage?—If they are free from those restrictions.

59,109. Free from restrictions, do you say?—Yes, and game.

59,110. And if the landlord does not preserve game on any scale, could they be let?—I believe they could be let.

59,111. At what kind of rent would it be if the land is in good fair condition?—1*l.* to 30*s.* an acre, according to the district and the quality of the land.

59,112. Has there been much land laid down to grass in your district?—Yes, a good deal.

Land laid down to grass.

59,113. Does it carry good grass?—Some does and some does not; some will not carry it more than three years, and then they find it advantageous to plough it up and grow a good crop of corn.

59,114. Has much been done in the way of temporary grass and extending of rotation and then having three years of grass?—I do not think that there has, but it could be done to advantage.

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59,115. There are two very distinct questions with reference to this land marked black on Mr. Pringle's plan. First, how it got into that state, and secondly, when in that state, what can be done with it?—That is rather a difficult question.

Future of derelict lands.

59,116. You say a great deal of it need not have got into that state?—I contend so.

59,117. With regard to what can be done with it, you do not think it hopeless?—I do not think it hopeless.

59,118. Even under the present conditions?—But it will have to be brought round. It is not for me to suggest how it can be brought round, but it will have to be by people who know how to farm to advantage, because I find that men who know their business can hold their own now.

59,119. But still you say that large farmers will not look into that country at present?—No, they would not take it when they have got anything near more worth their while.

Caidge Farm, Southminster.

59,120. I want to know what the prospects in your view are?—Well, of course, it is very difficult to suggest what is best to do with a poor farm out of cultivation; but I notice Mr. Pringle mentions the Caidge Farm at Southminster. Now, I think that is a farm which you might take to answer the difficulty that you are mentioning.

59,121. It is close to Southminster?—Yes.

59,122. I went there?—Well, that farm was one of the best farms, when I was a young man, that could be farmed in that district, but it was allowed seven or eight years ago to run wild. I have seen whole fields as high as this table with docks and thistles. Mr. [ ] has bought the land, and has cultivated it. Many people were under the impression that it would not pay to cultivate it, and that it would never be brought into cultivation, but it is a fact that it is being done now.

59,123. When I was there he had not begun to do it, except on a very small scale, and I was told that he used it for cattle to run over it, and that he bought and sold cattle, and that he found it convenient to let cattle run over it between times of buying and selling, but not with a view of feeding them or making profit in that way, merely till they were ready to send away?—He farms a lot of land on other places; he holds two farms in my agency at ———; he brings the cattle off the Islands in the winter time and lays them on this land that he holds under me, and I have no doubt that he does so with the Caidge Farm.

59,124. I do not think I saw any trace of cultivation in the true sense on that farm?—If you did not, it was in early days. It will not be in that state long.

59,125. He has only recently bought it?—Yes.

59,126. There are cases like that with men of capital and enterprise who would be able to do so?—I mention that.

59,127. It is rather prophetic—it is not an accomplished fact?—I do not think that is very far in the distance, because that is a fact actually occurring. The farm was sold at a low price, and would not have been sold otherwise.

59,128. (*Mr. Clay.*) What was the farm sold for?—7*l.* an acre.

59,129. (*Mr. Little.*) Twenty years ago what would it have been worth?—From 25*l.* to 30*l.* an acre. At the time that Mr. [ ] lived there, it could not have been bought at that price, not less than 25*l.* to 30*l.* an acre.

59,130. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was there any tithe upon it?—Yes, 5*s.* an acre.

59,131. And was there a land tax?—Probably a land tax.

59,132. Was it a heavy land tax?—I should imagine it would be; I do not know. If you gentlemen would buy up the tithe we could get on.

59,133. (*Mr. Clay.*) Who is going to pay?—Some of you gentlemen in London who do not pay anything might contribute towards it.

59,134. (*Chairman.*) Is that Caidge's Farm you are speaking of?—Yes.

59,135. These are notes of my own: "The adjoining "farm, Caidge's Farm (*see Question* 59,177), of about "400 acres, is in a still worse condition, if possible. "The whole of it has fallen back into twitch. A "tenant has been found to pay 100*l.* a year for it, "including tithe. On both those farms the scrub "is beginning to grow upon the abandoned fields. "These farms went out of cultivation 10 years ago. "For some miles the land on both sides of the road "appeared to be little better than these, and we did not "see a cultivated field, and this in what 20 years ago was "a fine wheat-growing district" (*see* Appendix J.)?—That is so to a very great extent, there is no doubt. But of course there is foreign competition, that is how we can account for it. I do not know how long they are going to send wheat at the same price as now. I do not think it can last. I was told a short time ago, three weeks since, by an American, that there is a less quantity of beef from America than there has been, and they did not find it pay them, and they would not continue to do so until there was a rise in the price of beef; and it affected our market as far down as Chelmsford. This man's contention is that the consumption will be greater in America, and that it will not pay them to send cattle here at the price that they have been doing it, and they are not people to go on with a loss. There has been a rise of something like 50 to 60 per cent. in leather alone during the war between China and Japan, and the short-coming of hides from America was accounted for in a great measure by their not killing so large a quantity of cattle.

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Foreign imports.

59,136. These prices are the matter of the future, and we cannot tell what may happen. The question for our immediate consideration is what can be done with this land in Essex at present prices?—Still, there is the difficulty, and I do not know how to solve it; you gentlemen will have to solve it. I do not envy you at all in your endeavour to try and find out the remedy for agriculture, for my firm opinion is that a good deal of it rests with themselves—the men who occupy and the men who can be found to occupy the farms.

59,137. (*Mr. Clay.*) Have you been following the rise of wheat lately in America?—There has been a rise, I know.

59,138. Have you been following that trade?—No.

Demand for farms.

59,139. (*Chairman.*) At all events your experience is that for land in good condition that has not been allowed to fall back into this state, and where the farm is of a moderate price, there is a demand at the present moment?—Yes.

59,140. And you can find tenants for them?—Yes, as that report shows. Of one parish in particular, within 6 miles of Chelmsford, you will find that I make a statement "that no farms are unlet; more wanted."

59,141. And in that district what is the proportion between arable and pasture land?—For the most part it is arable.

59,142. (*Mr. Clay.*) I was going to ask a question regarding that farm sold at 7*l.* per acre. It is sold on the basis of 20 years' purchase at 7*l.* per acre?—Yes.

59,143. What tithe is there upon that farm?—I think it was 5*s.*

59,144. If you take 5*s.* off 7*s.* it will leave very little rent?—That is why I say buy up the tithe.

Loans to farmers.

59,145. Would you lend money to a farmer and put him upon that land on his own security?—I have long since found it is impracticable to lend money on personal security.

59,146. But you say they get good tenants. Would they pay their way?—I should not call him a good tenant without he had money.

59,147. Could you lend him money?—No; if he had not any money to take the farm he should not be there. He might not take so much care of my money as he does of his own.

59,148. Most of these tenants with 50 or 60-acre farms have very little capital, have they not?—A great many of them have not, but they have capital in the way of labour.

59,149. If you lent them money would not they have the advantage of knowing how to work the farm; would you risk lending them money?—I should not be disposed from my experience to do so.

Rent.

59,150. Regarding the tenant with 60 or 70 acres on a farm, paying a rent for it, what rent do you say that farm would give—15*s.* an acre? Would the generally heavy lands pay if they had a good man on the farm?—I think they could.

59,151. Could not you say what 50 or 70 acres would bring per acre on heavy clay lands or wheat lands?

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Mr. A. Darby. —I do not think it would be safe to calculate upon more than 7*s.* 6*d.* or 8*s.* per acre.

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59,152. And if you divide some of those farms, and put houses upon them, and bring water to them, how much would the outlay be?—400*l.* or 500*l.*

59,153. That would be 10*s.* an acre?—That would make it. I simply gave you the land, and afterwards the houses; the houses ought to be put on the land—the cost of the houses.

59,154. Is it not your experience that it takes more to put up the houses and byres and bring water to it than what the rent of the land would be?—It depends so much upon circumstances. We are finding drinking water almost everywhere now in Essex from some source or other, to some of the most remote parts that have never had it before, so that I do not think that would apply now. I do not think you hardly need take into consideration the questions of water supply, because they are supplying Woodham, that never had good water before, 4 miles from it, and running it down by gravitation in pipes.

Sub-division of farms.

59,155. But if you had a 400-acres farm and you had to make it into four different farms with house and accommodation for steading and making roads, and other expenses, would it pay any landlord to enter into that business?—In my opinion it would in many places, but, of course, it is a matter of calculation, and it is a thing that one requires to know to what particular district you refer.

59,156. You are talking about Essex all through. Take an average of 400 acres, would it pay any landlord to divide it into four different farms and buildings, and steadings, to go into that as a business—would you risk the money yourself?—It would depend entirely on circumstances, and the probabilities are that I might entertain it.

59,157. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Where the tithe is heavy would you do that?—I do not think I should. I am entirely against tithe in its present state. I think that is a matter which concerns agriculture more than is thought or spoken of. I contend that the tithe might be adjusted in a very much better way than it is. I think I ought to pay something to redeem the tithe, because it is levied upon land that cannot afford it. At one time there was no other course but to take it from the land, now that time has gone. I do not occupy much land, why should not I pay part to relieve the country of that burden which it is very hard to bear. Many people say "You will benefit the landlord." I say "No, because if you benefit the landlord, you benefit the tenant at the same time." I am convinced that many of the farms with the buildings that are now spoken of as going into dilapidation, are in the hands of landlords who have been hit as hard as the tenants, and in my opinion it would be a good thing to give the landlord relief, and he could retail it to some of his tenants. Lots of buildings I know would be in a very much better condition than they are now. There is no heart in the landlords to improve them.

Small farms.

59,158. *Mr. Whitehead.*) What class of persons would they be that would take those small farms—natives or strangers?—For the most part, natives.

59,159. What class of people take those small farms?—Working bailiffs, and men who thoroughly understand how to cultivate a little land that they could fairly manage themselves.

59,160. Would there be a good supply of such?—I think so. If we have a 50-acre farm, there are more applications for that farm than if it were a larger size.

59,161. You remember the time, not very far back, when small farms were changed into large farms, and large buildings were put up?—Yes.

59,162. How long is that ago, 25 to 30 years?—Yes.

59,163. Might not the same revolution take place again?—History repeats itself.

59,164. Land would be hardly able to bear such expense so rapidly?—It depends upon where the expenses are levied. I think there is room for expenses to be lightened. I do not see how we can reduce the rating on land, it has to go on other property.

Uncultivated land in Essex. Mr. Pringle's map.

59,165. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I do not quite understand what you said with regard to that map of Mr. Hunter Pringle's. Do you consider that land is marked on it that ought not to be marked on it?—I am of opinion that it is marked on parts that ought not to be marked.

59,166. I understood that you had taken only whole farms that have gone out of cultivation, and he has taken individual fields that have gone out of cultivation?—That is accounted for by my instructions being where farms are wholly out of cultivation, and yielding no profit. *Mr. A. Darby.* 15 Aug. 1895.

59,167. (*Chairman.*) I think you understood the instructions of the Commission as desiring to know to what extent the whole farms were that had fallen into bad condition?—Yes.

59,168. Whereas what the Commission desired to know was, how much land had fallen back into this bad condition, whether parts of farms, or whole farms?—I believe those fields are mentioned that form part of the holding.

59,169. You do just advert to that, but it is not clear. At all events what we desired to know was not whether those were whole farms or not, but what extent of land in the county had fallen back into a state where it was not worth anything?—I am afraid I rather misunderstood that.

59,170. Would it be possible, without a very large amount of labour, to ascertain what amount of land, irrespective of whether whole farms or not, have gone back into this bad state and is rather worthless?—It would be rather going over the whole ground again, for this reason, that one farm might have two fields and they really did not cultivate them, but they allowed sheep to run over them; and under those circumstances I contend that that is not altogether valueless.

59,171. We want to know what is the extent of land that has not been cultivated within the last 8 or 10 years, and has since been left to the unaided efforts of nature and of little or no value?—That is what I have done, but it is not included so minutely as you seem to have expected. I take it that if a man occupied one farm and there was one field neglected I should not think that that was entirely out of cultivation, because the whole farm was yielding a profit, and this field was with it.

59,172. It is not a question of a field, but a question of large parts of farms; and what I saw in the district was that although there are very few farms not let at all—very few, if any—yet there were 15,000 or 20,000 acres that had become valueless?—I cannot agree with you under these circumstances, because they are not entirely valueless while they are yielding a profit for anything to run over.

59,173. I will not say absolutely valueless, because one would be worth 1*s.* an acre as attached to the farm, but of very little value indeed?—Quite so.

59,174. (*Mr. Little.*) Of no value to the owner?—Yes, of value to that amount.

59,175. Supposing it were somewhat of less value than the tithe rentcharge, that would not be profitable land?—No; but I have some in a similar position; I get 10*s.* an acre from the land and I have 5*s.* an acre to pay for tithe.

59,176. (*Chairman.*) There were cases where I saw farms let at 50*l.* and 100*l.* for the whole farm, of which 200 or 300 acres were worth little or nothing; what the man paid for was some other portion of the farm; but he turned his cattle over to these 200 or 300 acres without expecting to get any feed on them?—But still it was part of the land.

59,177. I got into some confusion with Caidge's farm, mixing it up with the other one. Caidge's farm must have been sold, and it was tenanted at 100*l.*?—That is what I could not understand when you were asking me about it.

59,178. It may have been sold since I was there; what I was mixing up was another farm near Canewdon?—Yes, I know it.

59,179. I have on my notes: "Near to Canewdon there "was a farm of 1,000 acres, formerly considered a good "farm, rented at 30*s.* an acre. It passed out of culti- "vation 10 years ago; it recently was bought for 5*l.* "an acre by a man who deals largely in cattle and "sheep, and who turns them out here for a time between "buying and selling." That was the case I was thinking of?—Yes.

59,180. "He does not cultivate any of the farm, and "employs no labourers upon it. A field of old pasture "looks well. The remainder of the land is in a de- "plorable condition" (*see* Appendix J.)?—That is precisely the same as the Caidge Farm at Southminster, only it has met with a purchaser, and the other near Canewdon has not.

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59,181. This has been bought. and at 5*l.* an acre, but, apparently, he was not doing anything with it?—Well, as the time comes, when we get better prices and less foreign competition, the farm will be as it has been.

Tithe.

59,182. You consider that the tithe and the land tax also are burdens upon the farm?—Tithe more particularly. The land tax is a matter entirely separate from a charge that has been paid by the tenant. The land tax has generally fallen upon the landlord.

59,183. But the tithe you consider to be still a serious burden?—It is indeed.

59,184. Have you known any cases where relief has been obtained under the Tithe Act where the tithe has assumed a large proportion of the rent—where it is two-thirds of the rent?—Yes, "Giboracks" is 6*s.* an acre tithe, and let at 1*s.* an acre for shooting purposes as a rabbit warren.

59,185. Have you known of many cases where relief has been obtained under the Act?—I have not.

59,186. Has the Act been a failure?—I cannot say that.

59,187. In that respect has it—you know it was intended to give relief?—Yes.

59,188. And you do not know of cases where there was relief given, although you know of cases where the tithe almost eats up the whole rent?—Lots of cases.

Mr. Pringle's map.

59,189. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If I may go back to my question about the map of Mr. Pringle's—you are not prepared to say that on the principle on which he drew it out, which appears to be the principle that the Commission desired, namely, that parts of farms out of cultivation should be shown, that he has marked anything black that ought not to be black?—I am not prepared to say that, but I would like to know whether he included commons that had never been cultivated.

59,190. Do you know whether it includes commons?—I want to know that. If this includes commons, for instance, Galleywood, which is within 2½ miles of Chelmsford, that has never been cultivated in the memory of man.

59,191. You cannot point out land that has been marked black on that map that ought not to be black?—That would be too much of a liberty to take with Mr. Pringle's map.

59,192. Then that map for the present stands. It has not been shown to have been wrong?—No, I cannot say that it has been shown to have been wrong, but I say that if it includes common lands that are not, and never have been, in cultivation, it is misleading.

59,193. We do not know that it does?—I have heard that it does.

Witness's report.

59,194. As to these figures that you give in the summary—you give two columns, "Land which has not been "cultivated within the last 5 or 10 years, and since "left to the unaided efforts of Nature, and of little or "no value," and the other is: "Land entirely un-"occupied or uncultivated" (*see* Appendix C.). Are the figures in the first column inclusive or exclusive of the figures of the second?—Exclusive.

59,195. Then they have got both to be added together?—We say that it forms little more than a one-hundreth part of the land of the county, and there on that map it appears to me that it is very much in excess of that.

59,196. You say that tenants can be found for many of these bad farms. Are they substantial tenants? Are they tenants who can be relied upon to pay their rents?—Not in the present state.

Tithe.

59,197. Does not that account for a great deal? If those farms are let, the owner has to pay the tithe whether he gets the rent or not?—Quite so.

59,198. And, therefore, he would be unwilling to let a farm that is in a bad condition to a tenant who is not substantial, because he will have to pay the tithe in that case; and if he does not let the farm, he would not have to pay the tithe?—Pardon me—he would have to.

59,199. He would not have to pay the tithe if it goes out of cultivation?—It is chargeable.

59,200. But there is no personal remedy, but only for any stock that may be on the farm?—It could be recovered in the county court.

59,201. Not as a debt?—Certainly.

59,202. Has that happened?—I have understood it to be a fact.

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59,203. I do not understand that the tithe owner can recover, when the land is not cultivated or occupied. With regard to this large amount of land that has gone out of cultivation, is tithe paid upon it?—I should imagine so. I should have to pay the tithe if I could not let the farms.

59,204. Is it not the case that a landlord has to pay the tithe in the county court if the land is not occupied?—It may be so.

59,205. If so, that would make a very great difference in taking a tenant or not. You will not take a tenant who may not pay his rent although he offers a good rent, because your doing so may let you in for the payment of the tithe?—That is one strong reason why the tithe should be dealt with.

59,206. Do you not consider that a very large part of this land that is marked black, and has gone out of cultivation, would not have gone out of cultivation if there had been no tithe upon it? Do you not think that the tithe has had a great effect in sending it out of cultivation?—Unquestionably more than half of it would not have gone out of cultivation but for the tithe.

59,207. Is that still likely more to operate and send it out of cultivation?—It will not tend to keep it in cultivation.

59,208. And that is one great explanation in Essex why the land has gone out of cultivation. Is that so?—It is in a great measure.

59,209. (*Chairman.*) I do not quite see how you work it out in practice. Supposing the tithe in an extreme case is 5*s.*?—It is not extreme—it is 6*s.* sometimes.

59,210. Let us take the extreme case of 6*s.* per acre, then?—That is about it.

59,211. So long as it lets for something above that the landlord would get something?—Quite so.

59,212. Well, now, why is it that that should be an absolute hindrance to the letting of the land—that there is this tithe of 6*s.* an acre?—The landlord would be able to do more for the tenant in the way of buildings, draining, and improving the land.

Land tax.

59,213. That is one explanation, but that would equally apply to the land tax?—Yes, the land tax is not so heavy an item.

59,214. In many of those parts of Essex the land tax is 4*s.* an acre?—That is a very heavy tax, of course, but I never heard of such a sum.

59,215. Not 4*s.* in the acre, but 4*s.* in the pound, which is another thing?—I never heard of it.

59,216. Where it is 4*s.* in the pound?—No.

59,217. It does not average that, but there are a great many places where—in consequence of the reduction of the value of the land, the land tax is 4*s.* in the £?—If this is so, of course, it is a very serious drawback. But the land tax has never played such an important part, because it has not been paid really by the tenant in the ordinary way—it has been an extraordinary case where the tenant has paid.

59,218. And the land tax has not been so serious a matter, and has not operated in the same way as the tithe, you think?—Certainly not.

59,219. The first objection to the tithe, where the land has become of low value, is, that the landlord has been prevented from doing anything to the land?—Yes.

Effect of tithe and land tax on Essex land.

59,220. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The next objection is this, that the landlord, if he cannot get a substantial tenant, has no security that the rent which he will receive will cover the tithe. Say that he agrees to let for 10*s.* an acre, which will cover the tithe and the land tax, and leave a small margin, he has no security that he will get his rent; and if instead of getting 10*s.*, he gets 5*s.*, and has to pay 6*s.* tithe, and 2*s.* land tax, he is out of pocket?—Doubtless there are many such cases, *i.e.*, where owners let at a loss.

59,221. Is not that a very strong reason for letting the land go out of cultivation, unless he gets a substantial tenant for it?—It certainly would cut that way.

59,222. He would be out of pocket by cultivating it. He would be in a worse position than by leaving it to itself?—Supposing that tithe is chargeable.

59,223. You said that you thought a great quantity of these lands that had gone out of cultivation could be profitably cultivated again, but what I want to know is this: can they be properly cultivated so as to pay the tithe and the land tax and the rates, and to pay a profit to the farmer and a rent to the owner?—Certainly not, under the present circumstances.

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59,224. When you say that they could be profitably cultivated, you mean when all those burdens are done away with?—Certainly.

Mr. Pringle's map.

59,225. I thought you were of opinion that Mr. Hunter Pringle had taken too dark a view, because these places had gone out of cultivation, but you seem to think that they could be brought back into cultivation only if all these burdens or a considerable portion of them were done away with?—Yes, but I am of opinion that in Mr. Hunter Pringle's report he has drawn rather too dark a picture. It is not only my opinion but I think you will find responsible and important farmers in our neighbourhood who are of the same opinion.

59,226. (*Chairman.*) Could you recommend to us the name of some good farmer to state his views?—Yes, I could. (*See* page 417.)

59,227. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You do not see any prospects unless the law is changed with regard to the land tax and the other burdens, of this land coming back into cultivation?—Not at present; not until prices are altered and until competition is less; I do not think it could come back excepting under peculiar circumstances.

59,228. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) A good number of farmers have left their farms, and some are leaving because of the damage done by game?—That is so.

Game.

59,229. Is there much damage done by game in Essex?—In this particular district where we are those four farms are to let, and it is occasioned owing to their being overrun with game that no tenants can be found for them.

59,230. Is the game preserved by the landlord or is it let to shooting tenants?—It is kept by the landlord.

59,231. Are the tenants compensated for any damage done?—It is very difficult to compensate them, but there may be something for rabbits—nothing important.

59,232. (*Mr. Everett.*) Are you an Essex man?—Yes.

59,233. Have you lived all your life in the county?—Yes.

Wheat growing in Essex.

59,234. And you have had some experience of agricultural land in different parts of the county through many years, I suppose?—Yes, I have farmed myself in the palmy days when we made 70*s.* per quarter for wheat, and I grew six quarters per acre; that is the last I did, and I sold it on my own account at that price.

59,235. You remember all this land that has gone out of cultivation that was once in good cultivation?—Yes.

59,236. Producing fair crops?—Yes.

59,237. Going back some 25 years ago, was it not supposed that Essex was a well cultivated country?—Certainly; one of the best counties for corn growing.

59,238. It had a great reputation for Essex wheat?—Yes.

Explanation of derelict state of Essex land.

59,239. And yet I understood you to say that this land going out of cultivation is largely due to want of skill on the part of the farmers?—Some who did not know their business. There has been a weeding out of farmers who have been improvident—men that have attended to anything else but their business. But I contend now that if a farmer knows his business and attends to it as other people do he can live now.

59,240. Are not your county papers full of advertisements of farms to let?—Yes; but I have given three instances where farms are to let, but people will not take the trouble to apply for them, because they know the surroundings; they know that it would not pay them to take it, and men that are practical men, and men who could do their business if not hampered in the way I have spoken of, would take them.

59,241. The reason is that no one with money and common sense is willing to embark his capital in them? Certainly. It was only this morning that I was told that one of the tenants would remain if it was not for the game, but the landlord prefers the pleasure of the game to letting his farm to advantage to a good tenant.

59,242. Do not you imagine that is quite an exceptional case?—I do not think so. I know another gentleman, who is referred to in this report, close by, that complains bitterly of having several farms on his hands; but it is simply and solely owing to the game.

59,243. Is not most of this land that has gone out of cultivation very heavy land?—Yes.

59,244. That is not game land?—Not at all, but I am speaking of land close to Chelmsford. Certainly there would not be a good deal of game on heavy land; although this "Giberacks" is being farmed now for rabbits, and hired only for shooting and cultivating the growth of rabbits. In Woodham Ferris I was over a farm there a very short time since where about 280 acres was wired in, and the tenant has hired that farm with a view to making a profit by keeping rabbits. *Mr. A. Darby.* 15 Aug. 1895.

59,245. Is that light land?—No, very heavy land.

59,246. Where do the rabbits make their holes in this heavy land?—In the banks; those banks are dry enough, and in close proximity to woods; there are four woods.

59,247. You say that you think the cry of agricultural depression has been made too much of?—Yes, I do. I have given you an instance of this. It is a notable fact that farmers always had the privilege of grumbling. When wheat was paying 60*s.* and 70*s.* per quarter there were some who found cause for grumbling, and there will probably always be some who will do so under any circumstances.

59,248. Is it credible that farms by the score are hawked in the market and cannot find tenants, even if there was a living to be made out of them?—I do not find that farms are to be let by the score.

59,249. You have not an Essex county paper with you, but unless they are very unlike Suffolk papers, which contain scores and scores of farms, they will have many farms to let?—Well, as far as Essex is concerned I really must still adhere to the fact that I consider the thing has been rather overdone in the way of complaint of depression. I know it is very bad. I admit that it is very bad; but it is not quite so bad as they make it.

59,250. Have not hundreds of farmers who have been making a living upon farms been ruined?—Yes. It has been in a great measure their own fault.

59,251. You would not like to say that in Essex?—I should have no hesitation in saying that, because I have known dozens of men that have lived well and attended Chelmsford and other markets in the course of the week when they need not have attended one; they have dined well and enjoyed themselves, and gone home comfortable. Well, that is not farming; that is spending money.

Value of freehold land.

59,252. The value of the freehold of the land of Essex has declined more than one half what it was 25 years ago?—I think it has.

59,253. And a good deal of it to one tenth?—I should imagine that that would be so. Why should not it go back again? History repeats itself.

59,254. I say if the property of the whole county has gone down to half, and in many cases gone down nine-tenths, is not that an extreme depression?—Yes, I admit that, but I do not see why, in the course of time, as soon as we get a short supply from abroad (for they cannot afford to send it at the prices they are now getting, and they will not do it) this should not be changed.

Shooting tenants.

59,255. (*Chairman.*) Do the landowners about you let their shootings much?—Yes; it depends upon what quantity of game there is upon the farm; a farm of 200 acres, would make 10*l.* or 12*l.* a year.

59,256. Does that become an important item to the landowners?—Yes; there is no difficulty about a 200 acre farm. Of course that varies, because the shooting on some would not be worth so much as on others.

59,257. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Are there farms out of cultivation which would let to a shooting tenant?—I do not know; there have been hired two farms to cultivate rabbits, and the gentleman who is farming those farms I have mentioned showed me a return of a friend of his who had made a profit on the occupation that he was in possession of, of something over 200*l.* a year, besides the pleasure of shooting.

Sale of uncultivated land.

59,258. (*Chairman.*) I suppose you would say that in this district visited by Mr. Pringle, the sooner it is put out of the hands of the present owners and bought by others the better?—I do not know that; the sooner it can be let the better.

59,259. Would it not be a great thing that it should be sold to advantage, such as these two farms Canewdon and Caidges farms?—There has been an advantage in these two cases, and I do not know why others should not follow.

59,260. Being sold at a low price it would be an inducement to people with capital to go in?—Another instance, a farm in Dengie Hundred was let many years

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ago to a respectable farmer; the father of the present race bought it for from 7*l.* to 10*l.* an acre, and it went up to 30*l.*, and it has gone back again to the old price.

Tithe.

59,261. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to tithe you seem to tell us that tithe can be recovered as a debt in the county court. I have here the Tithe Act of 1891: "Nothing in this Act shall impose or shall constitute "any personal liability upon any occupier or owner of "lands for the payment of any tithe rent charged;" therefore it can only be recovered from the land itself, not from the man?—The landlords pay tithe now, but if they go out of culivation—I am not quite up in that Act—but I know that originally the tithe-owner would take possession of the land and farm it.

59,262. (*Mr. Dalton.*) That is his remedy, the entering into possession himself?—Yes.

59,263. But as a matter of fact, if he does not, they are left uncultivated, and the tithe owner does not try to cultivate it, and nobody else does?—Yes, that is so.

59,264. (*Mr. Everett.*) He can recover two years' tithe, and whoever enters into that land, immediately he puts stock upon it, they can seize it for the tithe?—He must recover from the court.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. E. Turnbull.

Mr. Robert E. Turnbull called and examined.

59,265. (*Chairman.*) You are a land agent of Shrewsbury, and you were formerly head agent for the Naworth Castle Estate, Cumberland, the Morpeth Estate, Northumberland, and the Castle Howard Estate, Yorkshire?—Yes, that is so.

Statistics.

59,266. And you have compiled various statistics with regard to agriculture on behalf of the Farmers' Club?—Yes, the London Farmers' Club.

59,267. And you desire to put them in on behalf of the club?—Yes.

59,268. The statistics will speak for themselves and will be published as they are; have you anything to add to them?—There are some slight additions to the printed matter.

59,269. Yes, I have taken the last copy which contains some additions. Have you anything to speak of independently of those statistics?—I think they speak for themselves. I shall be very glad to answer any questions in respect to them.

Annual food supply requirements.

59,270. They are so very full that they seem to me to answer themselves. I suggest that we put them in the appendix (*see* Appendix A XX.)?—I have a note here that I have made which is not in that paper: "With an average production of food in the United "Kingdom, available for household use of about 3*l.* "an acre, an additional area of about 775,000 acres "annually of land of the same productive power would "be required to supply food for the increased popula- "tion, or equal to a large English estate every week, "or a county every year." (*See* Appendix A XX, Table 18 E.)

59,271. How many acres is that?—775,000 acres every year, equal to a large English estate every week, or a county every year. I merely mention that to show how dependent the country has been, and probably always will be, on producers over the water.

59,272. Then in 20 years that would necessitate 14 millions of acres for the supply of the increased population. If every year 775,000 acres would be required to feed the people, in 20 years it would be 14 millions, would it not?—It would be 15,500,000 acres. The home supply in 1874–75 was a little over 75 per cent. according to my estimates, and in 1892–93 it was about 58½ per cent.

59,273. (*Mr. Little.*) These statistics were prepared for a paper that was read at the Farmers' Club about two years ago, was it not?—It was in May 1893. Since then I have revised the estimates, the live-stock returns for 1893 having been published after my paper was prepared for the London Farmers' Club.

59,274. And they were submitted to a committee of the Farmers' Club, to whom you explained the system which you had adopted in arriving at the results?—That was so.

59,275. You have made the most careful calculations from agricultural returns, and from other estimates which have been published at different times by Sir Henry Meysey Thompson and Major Craigie, and others, I think?—I compared their estimates with my own.

59,276. I did not say you took their estimates exactly, but you went on the same principle?—Not on the same principle. Sir Henry Meysey Thompson's statistics contain some very serious mistakes.

59,277. I am not saying that you adopted the same basis, but you endeavoured to estimate the annual production of meat from a given number of cattle, sheep and pigs?—I made use of the statistics of the Agricultural Department, which are prepared by Major Craigie.

59,278. Perhaps you will just give us the general result of your comparison of 1874 with 1894, the total difference?—The two years 1874–75 and 1892–93?

Farm revenue.

59,279. How much do you make out that the annual income from agriculture had decreased?—Shall I give it per acre? (*See* Appendix A XX., Table 5.)

59,280. Take it altogether, the amount of the money per acre?—I estimate that the reduction in gross revenue, comparing the year 1874–75 with the year 1892–93, is about 82 millions, which equals 30⅝ per cent.

59,281. How much per acre is that on the cultivated land?—I make the average in 1874–75, 5*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.*, and in 1892–93, 3*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.*

59,282. Nearly 2*l.* an acre?—The decrease is 1*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* per acre.

59,283. The revenue from agriculture, then, has been reduced in 20 years on your calculation by about 36*s.* per acre?—That is so; that was up to 1892–93, and it has been further reduced since then.

59,284. That is equal to the full rental value of the land?—More.

59,285. And if you had to make the calculation now on the same basis the difference would be considerably more, I suppose?—If we were to compare last year with 1874–75 the difference would be greater than in 1892–93. The year 1874–75 was a time of great prosperity. The profits were very large at that time. I do not wish to say that there has been a loss to the tenant farmer by the amount of the difference.

59,286. But a loss somewhere?—There has been a loss.

59,287. More than equal to the whole rental value?—I do not say that.

59,288. You estimate that the gross farm revenue has been reduced by a sum equal to 1*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* per acre in the United Kingdom?—That is so.

Farming capital.

59,289. Which sum is a sum considerably in excess of the average rent. Then you have made estimates of the loss of farmers' capital or depreciation in the amount of farmers' capital?—Yes, I have.

59,290. What do you consider that depreciation has been?—What capital were you speaking of?

59,291. The capital employed in the occupation and farming of land?—My estimate is that in 1874 the capital employed was 440,550,000*l.* and in 1892 330,575,000*l.* (*See* Appendix A XX., Table 1.)

59,292. What would that be per acre on the cultivated land?—It would be 9*l.* 6*s.* 9*d.* in 1874 and 6*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* in 1892. I should like to remark that I do not estimate that 9*l.* 6*s.* 9*d.* was owned by the farmers in 1874, nor that 6*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* was owned by farmers in 1892. I think that was the amount of capital employed by farmers.

59,293. It was the property of somebody employed in farming?—Employed on the land by farmers, partly owned, partly borrowed.

59,294. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) That does not include the capital of the land occupied by woods?—No, the woods are left out of the question. This estimate is confined to about 48,000,000 acres. Land under crops, grass land, and bare fallow.

59,295. There is about 3,000,000 acres of land of the country occupied by woods; that is not included in this figure?—That is so.

59,296. (*Mr. Little.*) You also have made an estimate of the landlord's capital?—I have.

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Mr. R. E. Turnbull.
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Gross value of land.

59,297. What do you make the reduction there?—Judging by my own experience I think that agricultural land was worth 28 years' purchase about 1874 and 1875, and now it is worth about 25 years purchase. I think that the rent and tithe together average as a rule about one-fourth of the gross revenue; that would make the rent and tithe in 1874-75 nearly 67,000,000*l.*, and if that is capitalised at 28 years purchase that would come to 1,874,000,000*l.* The rent and tithe in 1892-93 on the same basis would come to 46,437,500*l.*; and that capitalised at 25 years' purchase would come to 1,160,000,000*l.*, showing a reduction of 714,000,000*l.*, or equal to 38 per cent. Many people are of opinion that land was making 30 years purchase in 1875.

59,298. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Purchase of the rental is that?—30 years' purchase of one-fourth of the gross revenue; that is, 30 years' purchase of the rent and tithe.

59,299. (*Mr. Little.*) Many people would say that 25 years' purchase at the present time was in excess of the value of land?—Yes, they might; but that is the opinion that I have formed.

59,300. Of course?—It is not worth more than 20 years purchase on many estates; but then there are others where it is worth 30.

59,301. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Do you take into account all that land which is perhaps available for building in the neighbourhood of the metropolis or great cities and which bears a special value on that account?—No, I have made my estimate purely on an agricultural basis.

59,302. That land when it is sold is actually used for agriculture, but it commands a certain capital value in excess of what it would command as an agricultural estate, because it is in the vicinity of a great town or in the vicinity of the metropolis?—That is so, and that extra value is not included in the figures I have given.

59,303. That is not included?—No.

59,304. (*Mr. Little.*) This would be a small proportion of the 47 or 48 million acres?—Yes, it is only the land immediately round the towns.

59,305. That is not a large proportion of the land in the country?—I do not think it is.

59,306. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Not of the capital value of the land?—The amount is large, but the land available for building purposes is not a large proportion of the land.

59,307. Not a large proportion of the acreage?—No.

59,308. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Would it not be a large proportion of the acreage if you take a place like the metropolis?—The land within 40 miles' distance (in many directions at least) is affected in value by its neighbourhood to the metropolis?—Some of the lowest priced land in England is land near the metropolis.

59,309. (*Mr. Little.*) You can buy land within 40 miles of London at 10*l.* an acre, can you not?—Plenty of land near London I would not have at a gift to farm it.

59,310. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But still, other land is affected in value by its nearness to London, even although it be 40 miles off?—Yes, the land near the towns that is adapted for building purposes is, no doubt, worth more than its agricultural value, but what I have dealt with is the agricultural value.

59,311. (*Mr. Little.*) You have dealt with that land which is given in the agricultural returns as land under crops, bare fallow and grass?—Yes.

59,312. These calculations are based entirely upon statistics as to agriculture, and they refer to land employed in agriculture, is it not so?—May I point out that I have given in my brief the rental value of the United Kingdom for 1874-5 as 66,929,500*l.* Yesterday afternoon I came across a work of Sir Jame's Caird's, in which he gives the rental value of the United Kingdom for 1875 from official documents. He says in his book "the gross value of land assessed to the income "tax in 1875 was 66,911,000*l.*" I think that supports very substantially the figures that I have given.

59,313. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But that land to which Sir James Caird refers included acreage under woods?—He speaks of the agricultural value.

59,314. But the figure he gave I believe was the figure from the income tax assessments under Schedule B., which include the woods as well as agricultural land properly speaking?—Not Schedule B., I think.

59,315. (*Mr. Dalton,*) Do you take the total acreage of the United Kingdom or do you take the whole acreage under cultivation?—I only deal with the acreage under cultivation; I exclude woods altogether.

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59,316. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) You are not including woods?—No.

59,317. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Nor land covered with water and so forth; that is not included?—That is not taken into consideration. It is only taken into consideration in this respect, that I include in the valuation of live stock all the stock grazed on waste and unenclosed lands, and therefore the income shown from live stock really ought to be partly credited to the waste and unenclosed lands instead of wholly to the agricultural land.

59,318. What is exactly the acreage you have taken? I mean to say, on what principle have you taken it—lands under cultivation, is that it?—Yes. I put it at about 48 millions. It varies a little; sometimes it is a little more, sometimes less, but generally it is about 48 million acres.

59,319. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) As you say the live stock is grazed partly upon the waste land as well as upon the cultivated land?—Yes, that is so.

59,320. And that applies especially to Scotland and, I think, to Wales?—Yes. I had no means of ascertaining to what extent that was the case, and therefore I thought it best to keep my figures entirely to the 48 million acres of land under cultivation, as given in the Agricultural Returns, although I have pointed out that part of the revenue shown from that 48 million acres really belongs to land outside it.

59,321. Then there is also a question, I believe, as to the extent to which the 48 millions of cultivated land are really cultivated, because in some parts of the country land which is merely enclosed is included as cultivated?—Yes.

59,322. (*Mr. Dalton.*) That would include hill land, I suppose?—A great deal of hill land would be excluded, even if it were partly pasture.

59,323. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) In Scotland, especially, it is particularly difficult to draw the line?—It is; there is a very large number of sheep on the hills.

Value of dairy produce.

59,324. (*Mr. Little.*) You have given some figures showing the reduction in the value of different items of agricultural produce, and you estimate that dairy produce is decreased in its gross value 10 per cent. in the period you have selected?—I made the value of the home supply of dairy produce for the year 1874-5 36,533,500*l.*, and for the year 1892-3, that being one year, 32,579,500*l.*, showing a reduction of 3,964,000*l.* (*See* Appendix A XX., Tables 6 and 9 B.)

59,325. The reduction is actually 10⅛ per cent. by your calculation?—Yes.

59,326. (*Chairman.*) What data have you for saying that the dairy produce has decreased 10 per cent. in value?—I have taken the prices and estimated the production.

59,327. (*Mr. Little.*) In order to get at the prices you take a certain number of dairy cattle; you estimate the milk which they produce, the value of that milk, the butter, whey, cheese, and so on, and put a price down to each of those items?—That is so. I divide the cattle into three classes, and I estimate that in an average year the one class, which comprises cows and heifers in calf or in milk on the 4th June that are kept over the year, give an average of 40 cwt. Then there is another class—cows and heifers in calf or in milk on the 4th June that are fattened during the year; they are only in milk on the average, I should think, about two-fifths of a year, and they are taken as averaging 16 cwt. Then there is a third class—heifers that calve in the spring. These I have taken at 8 cwt.; they are in milk about two months before the June census.

59,328. From a given number of dairy cattle you estimate an average production of so much new milk, so much sweet skim milk, so much butter, so much cheese, &c.; you assign a price to those articles, and so calculate the total value of the produce; you have done that for two periods, and you arrive at the conclusion whether one accepts the figures or not, that there is a reduction in the gross value of 3,964,000*l.* or 10⅛ per cent.?—Yes. (*See* Appendix A XXII.)

59,329. (*Chairman.*) That is value and quality combined?—Yes. May I point out that the reduction as between the two years arises partly from the falling price and partly from the bad seasons.

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59,330. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) You say that the year 1892–3 was a bad season, and that the gross produce was 7½ per cent. less in quantity than it would otherwise have been?—That is so. It was very cold and wet in the north, and it was a drought in the south.

59,331. So that the figure for 1892–3 is perhaps hardly an average figure, but rather less than the average?—It is less than the average by about 7½ per cent. (*See* Appendix A XX., Table 9 B.)

59,332. (*Mr. Little.*) And you admitted earlier in your examination that 1874–5 was a year of great prosperity. It is not a contrast between an average of a certain period, but it is a contrast between a good and a bad time, I imagine, that you are putting?—That is so.

59,333. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Might I ask you this question at this stage, because it has rather confused me: you give the figures as to dairy produce in one of your papers in cwts.; was there some reason for giving the quantities in cwts., not in gallons, as we usually expect?—I found it more convenient.

59,334. What is the relation between cwts. and gallons?—There are about 11 gallons in a cwt., there are rather more than 10 lbs. in a gallon of milk.

59,335. If we multiply your cwts. by 11 we should get the figure in gallons, which would compare with any other figure we have been accustomed to use in these studies?—Yes. I have taken one cwt. as representing 11 gallons.

59,336. Have you compared your figures of the quantities of dairy produce with those of Mr. Rew?—Yes.

59,337. Your figure of 6*s.* 6*d.* per cwt. would come out as between 6*d.* and 7*d.* a gallon, or something like that, would it not?—It is about 7*d.* a gallon or a little more.

Value of wool.

59,338. (*Mr. Little.*) Then, to pass on, you have in wool a decrease of 53 per cent. in gross value?—The decrease is 5,727,800*l.*, which is equal to 53 per cent.

Value of potatoes.

59,339. In potatoes you have a decrease of 35 per cent. in gross value?—Yes.

59,340. (*Chairman.*) Where do you get your prices of potatoes from?—I obtained the prices received by men who were largely engaged in potato growing in different parts of the country. I could give you the prices returned by Mr. Thomas Jaques, of Blacktoft, Howden; also by Mr. William Hutchinson, of Gunley near Selby. The returns given to me by Mr. Jaques and Mr. Hutchinson I obtained through Major Staveley. (*See* Appendix A XX., Table 10 A.)

59,341. You have not got the prices from any official source?—No, I got them from the growers themselves. I consider that the best, the most reliable, source.

59,342. Have you got a table showing the prices year by year?—Yes, every year from 1870.

59,343. Let me look at it?—(*Handing in note book.*) There is one other grower, a Scotchman, whose return I brought with me, but I cannot lay my hand on his figures at the moment.

59,344. These returns show the most extraordinary differences between two authorities for the same year?—That is so, and there is a very great difference according to the nature of the soil.

59,345. I see one man gives for the year 1871, 50*s.*, and the other 88*s.*; for 1872 one gives 94*s.*, and the other 160*s.*; for 1873 the one gives 150*s.*, and the other 100*s.* It seems to me that you cannot form any accurate data from two such returns differing so extraordinarily one from the other?—My calculations are not drawn from two returns. I merely gave those as illustrations of the kind of returns that I obtained.

59,346. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Potatoes are very difficult to estimate, are they not?—They are exceedingly; they differ so much in quality and in value in different parts of the country.

59,347. I just happen to have been looking at the statistics of exports of potatoes from Jersey, where I have been, and I find that three or four months ago the export of potatoes began at 40*l.* per ton and concluded at 2*l.* 5*s.* per ton?—Yes; early grown potatoes would fetch a high price.

59,348. So you may get any price you like for potatoes in that way?—That is so. In Scotland they vary greatly, according to the soil they are grown in.

59,349. I think the average in the case I spoke of came to about 8*l.* per ton, but you had these extraordinary extremes?—Yes, you would get them.

59,350. (*Mr. Little.*) Can you tell us whether that decrease in the value of the potato crop in your estimate is a decrease arising from a smaller area or from a lower price?—I think the decrease was due partly to a great fall in price, and partly to a bad yield, in that particular year, 1892–3.

59,351. As I understand, your estimate is not based alone upon these two statements of Mr. Jaques and Mr. Hutchinson?—No; I was asked the question as to what the prices were in those years, and these are the only two lists that I have that I am able here to put before you.

Value of grain sold.

59,352. Then to pass on, you have an estimated reduction of 57 per cent. in the value of grain sold?—That is so. I have details showing how that is arrived at. (*See* Appendix A XX., Tables 7 and 10.)

59,353. That is produced by a great decrease in acreage and a great decrease in price?—Partly by one and partly by the other. In acreage, comparing 1892 with 1874, there was a reduction of 2,036,133 acres, that is equal to about $17\frac{9}{10}$ per cent.

59,354. That is printed in your brief as if it were pounds, but it would be acres?—Yes, acres. The decrease in wheat has been 40 per cent. and in barley $11\frac{3}{4}$; beans and peas $42\frac{1}{10}$; then there has been a slight increase in oats of $3\frac{6}{10}$ per cent., and in rye an increase of about 9 per cent., but the net decrease is, as I have stated, 2,036,133 acres.

Value of straw.

59,355. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have you got any figures as to the straw?—I have.

59,356. This is the estimated value of the grain sold, I think?—I have given the straw as well; it is on pages 4 and 6 of the tables I have put in.

59,357. Has there been an increase or a decrease in the value of the straw?—I think I have given the prices in my tables.

59,358. (*Mr. Little.*) Straw is put at the same price, 40*s.*, I believe, in both cases?—Yes.

59,359. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has it not gone up in value?—I do not think so, except in years of great scarcity, like the drought of 1893.

Home, foreign, and colonial supply of food

59,360. (*Mr. Little.*) Now going on to the home, foreign, and colonial supply of food, you have made an estimate of the quantity and value of these per head of the population?—Yes, I have. (*See* Appendix A XX., Table 25.)

59,361. You estimate that the consumption has been reduced by 35*s.* 6*d.* per head?—I presume you are referring to the two combined, the home produce and the foreign and colonial.

59,362. To the home, foreign, and colonial supply which you give here?—The home, foreign, and colonial supply in 1874–5 I made to be 8*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* per head of population, and in 1892–3, 6*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* The reduction is 35*s.* 2*d.* per head.

59,363. It is printed in your brief as 8*l.* 4*s.* 9*d.* and 6*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*?—There is a slight difference. I took the figures out again because in my printed estimates I had included hops, and I thought as I had included hops and had not taken malting barley, it would be better to take out the hops altogether, as both are used for the same purpose. That accounts for the slight difference.

Estimated consumption of meat.

59,364. Then you have also made an estimate of the number of lbs. of meat consumed by each individual of the population?—I have. (*See* Appendix A XX., Tables 17 B and 19.)

59,365. Does that show a considerable increase in the quantity?—A very large increase; it was about 104 lbs. per head in 1874.

59,366. It is given in your paper as $104\frac{3}{5}$ in the earlier period, and $116\frac{1}{5}$ in the later period; that is that each individual consumes nearly a stone more meat in the year now than he did 20 years ago?—About $12\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. more.

59,367. That is upon a calculation of the total supply of foreign and home stock. May I ask if you have assumed that the stock produce as much meat per head now as formerly—that they weigh as much when killed?—In many breeds I think there is a reduction per head; for instance, shorthorns are not kept to the same age, and the public demand is for smaller joints.

59,368. You have considered that point in your estimates?—Yes, I have.

59,369. I do not want to go into the details; but you have not lost sight of that?—No.

59,370. Then you have a note as to the import and exports of merchandise, and you say there is a close

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connexion apparently traceable between the volume of trade and the value of live stock; will you explain that?—I notice that in those years when there has been a large import and export trade, the value of the live stock of the United Kingdom has been comparatively high; and as soon as the trade of the country goes down, as evidenced by a falling off in imports and exports, there is also a falling off in the value of the live stock of the Kingdom. I do not say in the same proportion.

Import and export of merchandise.

Year.	Imports and Exports of Merchandise.	Value of Stock in the United Kingdom.
	£	£
1887 - - - -	643,490,500	190,000,000
1890 - - -	748,944,000	250,000,000
1893 - - -	681,826,500	185,000,000

59,371. You mean when there is a boom in trade everything participates?—That is it; when the men are well paid you find they buy English meat freely.

59,372. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) I do not dispute what you say, but do you give any figures prior to 1887 to bear upon that point?—I have no figures by me here of an earlier date. I have only the figures from 1887 to 1893.

59,373. But not before?—Not before that.

59,374. Do you know of any document or opinion before that in which the same view is taken?—Yes, I can recollect perfectly well from 1870 to 1874, which were years which Mr. Disraeli (as he then was), spoke of as being years in which trade was growing by leaps and bounds——

59,375. (*Mr. Little.*) It was Mr. Gladstone, I think?—Was it? There were very large foreign loans, many of them to countries, I believe, that were not worthy of them, but at any rate the money was expended in this country and there was a very large rise in the value of stock; in fact, it is seen in my valuation for 1874.

59,376. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) So that although you only give figures from 1887, yet you believe that the facts previous to that bear out what you say?—I do. I have traced it back for many years.

Effect of import duty on wheat.

59,377. (*Mr. Little.*) Then you have a note as to the probable effect of a heavy duty on wheat; what is your view of that?—The view I take about that is this: So far as I can gather there is something like 80 millions year due by foreign countries and the colonies to this country in interest and that must come in some form and, I think, it comes in a large measure in the shape of wheat; and if a heavy duty were put on wheat I think that people would pay their debts in something on which there was no duty such as cattle and other fat stock and meat.

59,378. Has there been any increase in the imports of live stock?—I think that would be the first effect.

59,379. You put it here as "exports"?—That is, exports from foreign countries, imports into this country.

59,380. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) So that an import duty on wheat might raise the price of home wheat, but it would depress the price of home cattle and stock?—I think so. I do not think there would be any advantage in the long run to either landowners or farmers.

59,381. How about imposing a duty upon everything?—I have not considered the question because I do not think it will ever be practicable.

Estate mortgages and State loans.

59,382. (*Mr. Little.*) You wish to make some remarks on the practice of mortgaging estates, I believe?—I think that a great many estates in this country have been brought into great financial straits through money having been borrowed largely, without sufficiently considering whether the income of the estate would meet it. So far as I can judge, even in good times, mortgaging estates was a most unprofitable business. (*See* Appendix A XX, Tables 23 and 26.)

59,383. Would you limit the power of owners, then, to mortgage?—No, I should not like to do that.

59,384. Then how would you deal with it?—I should like to see money advanced to landowners at the rate of interest that the State could afford to lend money at.

59,385. Would you advance money on mortgage for anything but improvements?—I should like to see the State advance the money to pay off the mortgages, and take the whole mortgage business into its hands.

59,386. If the estates are too much mortgaged, would not they be still more mortgaged if owners could obtain the money on easier terms?—I do not think so. I think that landowners have had such a lesson in the past that they would not borrow money in the future unless they saw their way to make it pay. *Mr. R. E. Turnbull.* 15 Aug. 1895.

59,387. Suppose you have to pay 4 per cent. for a mortgage, and you reckon that there is a clear 5 per cent. income, then you borrow up to the 4 per cent.; but if you have only to pay 3 per cent., do you not think that improvident people would borrow more?—Improvident men might.

59,388. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But do you think the State should lend on such a narrow margin as that?—I think the State might safely advance up to something like two-thirds of to-day's value.

59,389. Even with the falling rents?—I think we are not going to have much further fall; we may have some.

59,390. (*Mr. Little.*) But we have had a fall—as you show by your figures, an enormous fall in value; suppose two-thirds had been advanced on the old value, where would it be now?—The estates of this country would not have got into the position in which they are now if the money had been advanced at a reasonable rate. It is because the landowners have paid too much interest that many are now unable to keep up their estates.

59,391. Is not that purely hypothetical?—No.

59,392. (*Mr. Dalton.*) They are paying a lower rate of interest now, I suppose, than they have ever paid, are they not?—A great many men are now paying 3½ to 4 per cent.; and they cannot get more than 3 per cent. for the money they borrow.

59,393. Formerly they paid a considerably higher rate of interest on mortgages than that?—I never heard of interest being higher than 4 per cent.

59,394. 3½ or 4 per cent.?—4 per cent.

59,395. Not 20 years ago?—Not higher than 4 per cent., except in very small holdings; from 3½ to 4 per cent. has been the rate paid.

Tree planting.

59,396. (*Mr. Little.*) Have you had any experience in carrying out planting on estates?—I have, to some extent.

59,397. Is that a thing that you recommend at the present time?—I think the value of estates, both for farming purposes and for residential purposes, might be considerably increased at a moderate outlay by judicious planting. The farming benefit would arise from additional shelter to stock, and the residential advantages from the improved appearance of the estate from a landscape point of view, and also it would give a little more shelter for winged game.

59,398. Do you think it would pay generally?—Apart from any question of shelter, unless the soil is suitable for larch and ash, and unless the enclosures could be on a large scale, I do not think there would be much return.

59,399. Planting requires a large outlay of capital, which lies dormant for a long period, does it not?—Yes, that is so. I could give you the result of planting on the Netherby Estate. I do not consider that my own personal experience of planting is a reliable guide, because it has been done within such a recent period that you cannot tell yet what fruit will be borne. My father was an agent for 60 years, and he planted very largely, and he certainly proved that it was profitable, but the circumstances were perhaps somewhat exceptional. The land planted had very little agricultural value; they were steep hill-sides, and the soil was especially suitable for larch. The result was that within his time a large annual revenue was obtained from the woods, which showed a very good return on the capital invested, but there was no question of rent to come against it, because the land had practically no agricultural value; they were steep hill-sides.

59,400. There was compound interest on the first expenditure?—Yes, there was that. After taking all that into consideration my father considered that it left a very fair return, quite as much as, if not more than, from money invested in agricultural land.

59,401. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What rent would the profit have allowed, do you suppose, if it had been spread over the whole period?—I should say that the return in the case I speak of was fully 5 per cent.; it cost about 5*l.* an acre to plant, which would leave 5*s.* an acre for interest.

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On the Netherby Estate in Cumberland the enclosed woods and plantations occupy 2,800 acres. The estate forester, Mr. Baty, stated in a paper read at Edinburgh in 1884, that the annual receipts from the whole area under timber averaged 22*s.* 1*d.* per acre, and the expenses, exclusive of interest, 8*s.* 5*d.* per acre, leaving a clear net balance of 13*s.* 8*d.* per acre for rent and interest on capital invested in planting. The plantations cost on the average about 5*l.* per acre. They were largely planted in exposed situations and inferior soils of little value for farming purposes.

Cow-keeping by cottagers.

59,402. (*Mr. Little.*) I believe you wish to give us some evidence upon the subject of cow-keeping by cottagers?—Yes. By hiring out cows to labourers, and by providing the necessary land for the keep of the cows and shed accommodation on reasonable terms, landowners, without any pecuniary sacrifice, could add materially to the comfort of their poorer neighbours, and enable them to climb the ladder of thrift, and in time to become the owners of cows, and possibly, by middle age, the occupiers of small farms. The cottager has an unfailing market under his own roof (which is the nearest and best of all markets when there are children to provide for), for a considerable proportion of the produce of his cow; his wife and children can milk and feed the cow. The children of cottagers who keep cows, early learn to take an interest in live stock, which seldom or never leaves them, and they, undoubtedly, make the best cattle-men and dairy-maids. It is unquestionably a great advantage to farmers to occupy land in a district where cow-keeping by labourers has been established. They gain by the mental, physical, and moral improvement of the labourers who have enjoyed such facilities; by their increased capacity for labour; by the growing intelligence which the management of his cowland tends to develop; and by having boys and girls growing up on the estate in surroundings calculated to qualify them for service on stock farms. (*See* Appendix A XXIII.)

59,403. I believe that at one time you let out cows?—I did; I have had out as many as 100 in a year in various parts of Yorkshire.

59,404. Was the system successful?—It was.

59,405. To you as well as to them?—It was financially successful to myself and advantageous to the hirers.

59,406. Very beneficial to them?—Yes.

59,407. Was that in a grass country?—It was in a district of mixed farms; it was in the North and the East Ridings of Yorkshire.

59,408. You could not do it on purely arable land, could you, unless there were green lanes or something for grazing the cows?—It would depend on the kind of arable land. I do not think you could do it with advantage on the chalk hills. Cows are largely kept in Denmark for dairy purposes, and the land there is nearly all arable.

59,409. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Have you heard of a similar practice in Scotland, of old standing, of hiring out cows?—Yes, but this was on a different system to the Scotch system. In the Scotch system the farmer finds the keep for the cows, and gives a dairyman the use of them at a charge of 10*l.* or 12*l.* per head, but in the system which I introduced 19 years ago, the hirer took the cow when she was say, within a month of calving, and then he found the feed for it, and the labour, and he was entitled to the whole of the produce.

59,410. (*Mr. Little.*) How much land did he have to occupy?—It would depend on the quality of the land. If it was very good land, the very best land of all, perhaps two acres would keep a cow well, but on some land four acres would be required to do it.

59,411. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) What would he pay for the cow in a case of that kind?—I charged as a rule an amount equal to one-fourth of its cost, that is to say, the man paid 3*l.* for a cow costing 12*l.* But I think it could be done for a little less than that; cows now being cheaper, and consequently less liable to depreciation in value. I think the lowest rate at which a cow could now be profitably hired out would be one-fifth of its cost.

59,412. (*Mr. Little.*) You had the calf, I suppose?—No.

59,413. Did he have the calf?—The hirer got the calf.

59,414. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the case of the death of the cow what happened?—In the case of the death of the cow I had to suffer the loss of the cow, and the hirer the loss of the produce that would have been his had the cow lived. But I lost fewer cows that were hired out than I lost on my own farms.

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59,415. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) I suppose you could insure them?—I did not insure them, but I know the loss was considerably under 5 per cent.; I believe it was about 3½ per cent.

59,416. (*Mr. Little.*) Did they sell any of the produce or did they consume it all?—There was a man called Nelyms. He was a gamekeeper on the Naworth Castle Estate. The value of the heifer that he hired was 10*l.*, and the rate of hire was 2*l.* 10*s.* a year. Mr. Henry Evershed, the late editor of the "Field," went to see Nelyms, and he made an estimate as the result of his conversation as to the costs and profits in that case. He put the grass at 1*l.* 10*s.*, the hay at 2*l.* 10*s.*, the meal at 2*l.*, and the hire at 2*l.* 10*s.*, which left a profit with free labour of 4*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.* He came to the conclusion that the quantity of milk yielded in the year was 1,700 quarts valued at 1¾*d.* a quart, which came to 12*l.* 8*s.* The calf was sold for 1*l.* 10*s.* Then he deducted 17*s.* 6*d.* for milk given to the calf, and that left a nett profit of 4*l.* 10*s.* 6*d.*, as I have said. This cow was hired to Nelyms by Lady Carlisle. (*See* Appendix A XXIII.)

59,417. Have you had any experience of hiring out sheep?—No, I have not; but I think it could be done. Now that farmers all over the country are so short of capital, I think it might be of great advantage. (*See* Appendix A XXI.)

Hiring out sheep.

59,418. Is it not done by dealers very largely?—Dealers do not hire out sheep, but they find the capital to buy them.

59,419. They send in the sheep?—Yes, to be kept for a few months.

59,420. Do you think it would be possible to hire out a breeding stock?—After going very carefully into the question, I have come to the conclusion that if an owner had 8 per cent. of the lambs for the use of the ewes, he would then get a nett profit on the transaction of about 5 per cent.; and that after taking all expenses into consideration, the only advantage the farmer would get would, I think, be the value of the manure; but that is a very important consideration, because unless a farm is well stocked it annually decreases in value, and in time there may be a very great loss to a landowner, whereas if the landowner could find the capital to stock the farm with breeding sheep, the condition of the farm would be kept up, the landowner would not lose any interest, and the tenant, if he did not make very much out of the sheep directly, would benefit indirectly in the improved crops arising from the manure of the sheep.

Produce rents.

59,421. That would be a produce rent if the landlord took a stated proportion of the lambs?—It would.

59,422. Are you in favour of produce rents?—I think that the time has come when the system of paying a fixed rent per acre ought to be done away with in many parts of the country. I think that rents should now be based on produce, because the capital of farmers is being so reduced that unless the expenses of the farm correspond pretty closely with the prices and the quantity, there will soon be a very large number of farmers in the Bankruptcy Court.

59,423. Would you give a definite proportion of the produce, or would you base the rent upon the price of the produce?—That is a question that I have considered very carefully. There should be, certainly, a definite proportion, but that proportion would have to vary according to the quality of the land. From very good land you could give a very much larger proportion than from inferior. There is some land such as that which was coloured black on the map I saw this morning, that I would not give anything for if I had to keep it under the plough.

59,424. But you would give a definite portion of the produce, and not a fixed amount at varying prices. Grain rents have generally been calculated upon prices?—If you take 2-horse land of good quality, qualified when well managed to yield on an average one ton of dressed grain per acre, two fifths of the arable land being in grain crops, the rent of such land should be, for all the land scheduled as arable, the value of half the dressed grain whatever the yield might be. That would work out as follows:—With the average value of dressed grain at 8*s.* per hundredweight, the rent

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per acre for all the arable land with a yield of one ton of grain per acre, (the grass land is not taken into consideration in this) would be 1*l.* 12*s.*; if grain were 7*s.* per hundredweight it would be 1*l.* 8*s.*; if 6*s.*, 1*l.* 4*s.*, and if 5*s.*, 1*l.* With a smaller average yield per acre than one ton, or with land requiring three horses instead of two to plough it, the proportion to the tenant would have to be larger. The grain should be thrashed as required for the live stock of the farm, or for the market; and the tenant should expend the proceeds of any straw sold in the purchase of feeding stuffs, lime, or bones. Under an arrangement of this kind a landlord would have a direct interest in every corn crop on his estate, and an indirect interest in the root and clover crops, because the more abundant they might be the better the succeeding corn crops would be likely to prove. The landlord would find it to his interest to co-operate with his tenants in any outlay which would be likely to result in any increase in the corn crops.

59,425. That does not seem, though, to be a definite portion of the product; that is an estimated amount which would not vary with the produce, is it not?—Yes, it would vary with the quantity of corn produced.

59,426. With the value of the produce?—Yes, and with the quantity.

59,427. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Does he pay his rent to his landlord in money or in produce?—Here I have taken land qualified to produce on the average one ton of dressed grain.

59,428. (*Mr. Little.*) You say "land calculated to "produced one ton of dressed grain;" but suppose it produces a ton and a quarter in one year, and three-quarters of a ton in another, is the rent to vary with the produce?—Yes; I have made a table showing what the variation would be.

59,429. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is he to pay it in kind or in money?—That would be a question of convenience.

59,430. (*Mr. Little.*) Your calculation is that it should be tendered in kind?—That is so.

59,431. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How would you ascertain the annual value of the land for the purposes of local rates or any other form of taxation, you could not tell what the value was until the end of the year?—You could not for any given year. We have to make a return for income tax now before we earn it.

59,432. Then the owner could not tell what the value of the land was, nor the mortgagee, nor anyone else?—Not till after harvest, for any particular year, but the average yield of the crops would be known and would be a useful guide.

59,433. (*Mr. Little.*) How do you provide for the rent of grass land?—The best cow-pastures under good management produce about two hundredweight of cheese per acre, and the best feeding pastures about two hundredweight of dressed meat per acre. I am referring to the best pastures in the Kingdom of their kind. At sixpence per pound the value of the produce in each case would be 5*l.* 12*s.* per acre. One fourth the value of the cheese, and one half the value of the meat produced would be a fair share of the produce for the use of the land.

59,434. But there you must take price, must you not, else how are you going to hand over a hundredweight of beef?—All cattle put into the pastures at May Day should be weighed, also any put in later. They should again be weighed when taken out for sale; 70 per cent. of the increase in weight would probably represent the quantity of meat produced; or it might be arranged for the landlord to have the value of a given proportion of any increase in live weight. If the landlord contributed towards the cost of cake fed to grazing stock, he would be amply repaid in the increased produce arising from its consumption, and he would therefore help without any financial sacrifice to keep up and improve the productive power of the land.

59,435. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But would it not bring about all the inconveniences which arose when tithe was paid in kind if a certain proportion of the produce had to be paid to the owner; would he not have every one of the inconveniences which made it necessary to commute the tithe?—It would be full of inconveniences; and I do not think the land question can be dealt with without putting up with them.

59,436. (*Mr. Little.*) I think you estimate rent at 25 per cent. of the gross produce, on an average?—I estimate that is what is being paid, but not what should be paid. I do not think that more than one-fifth should on the average be paid in rent and tithe for farms of average quality.

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59,437. So much the better for the argument. You are dealing only with one-fifth of the expenditure by this produce rent, but suppose other expenses increase is the tenant still to pay the same share of the produce?—No, he could not afford it; and if a man could not afford it he would say so to his landlord.

59,438. He would want a revision?—Yes, and there always will have to be a revision when circumstances arise to make it necessary. One thing is certain, the tenant farmers of England have not the money to cultivate their farms properly now, and that difficulty has to be met.

59,439. You are in favour of the produce rents worked out something in the manner that you have suggested?—I am, strongly.

59,440. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you think they would be popular?—No, I do not think they would, because it would give a good deal of trouble; that is to say, it would not be popular at first.

59,441. You think neither party would like it at first?—Not at first; they would neither like the trouble.

59,442. Is that not a very great difficulty in bringing it in?—It is.

Bad season.

59,443. (*Mr. Little.*) What other remedies have you to suggest for the depression?—The finest remedy of all would be better weather, if we could ensure that.

59,444. Better weather?—Yes. In 1892 we had it cold and wet in the north, and a drought in the south; then in 1893 we had a drought all over England; then in 1894 we had it wet and cold again, and in 1895 we have a drought again.

59,445. And then a deluge?—Yes. That has been enough to cripple farmers.

Produce rents.

59,446. I am afraid we cannot deal with the weather?—No, but this arrangement for produce rent would help to meet that difficulty to some extent.

59,447. It would affect 25 per cent. of the expenses?—Yes.

59,448. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If you had a produce rent should you allow the owner to specify what the nature of the cultivation should be, or would you require him to take a certain proportion of the produce, whatever it might be, whether he wanted it or not?—If it were a corn rent the owner could stipulate, of course, that there should be a given area under corn every year. For instance, if he had agreed upon two two-fifths of the area being under corn, and there were less than two-fifths, naturally his income would fall without justification.

59,449. He would have to lay down, I suppose, very definite rules as to the nature of the cultivation?—I do not think the owner ought to dictate to the tenant what the tenant is to grow, any further than that he should put a given portion of his farm under grain crops.

59,450. That is rather a severe restriction at the present time, is it not?—On an arable farm, unless two-fifths of it can be profitably cultivated in corn crops, it would be of very little value.

59,451. (*Mr. Little.*) How would you deal with a case such as this, which has occurred on many farms: a man sows corn and it does not come up; would you allow him to plough it up without going and consulting his landlord?—Certainly.

59,452. The landlord would lose all his rent on that land?—He would, unless provision were made for the contingency.

59,453. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The landlord would have all the inconvenience of having to sell his produce, and there would be two men who would have to go through the business of selling, and that would be a considerable expense?—Not necessarily. If the landlord had proper confidence in his tenant he would say, "When you are "disposing of your corn you will pay my share to my "credit at the county bank."

59,454. And you would only deal with the produce sold, or what would you do with the produce consumed on the farm?—I would not interfere with that; but it should be understood that in the case of a grain rent of that kind the whole of the dressed corn should be taken into account, whether it was consumed or whether it was sold. I have had some experience of letting a whole farm on produce terms.

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59,455. (*Mr. Little.*) Was it satisfactory to both parties?—I believe so.

59,456. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Could you tell us how it worked out?—A friend of mine wrote to me and said: "I saw "the tenant yesterday. He told me that he had dis- "tinctly improved his position, and that the arrange- "ment had been most satisfactory to him, and that he "had been enabled to take the farm at Ladyday last "entirely on his own account, and that he had lately "paid his first half-year's rent for it, due at Michaelmas "last, like any other tenant." In this particular case there was, I think, a little more than 100 acres of land naturally fertile, but it was strong clay land, and it was in very bad condition. This land was attached to what is now an adjoining farm, and I made the observation to the tenant who then occupied the whole, that I thought it would probably answer his purpose to give up the outlying portion, as it was quite evident from its foul condition that he was losing heavily by it, and he admitted that he was losing heavily. He said: "If you "will take it off my hands I will pay pretty well the "same rent for the rest; I am so sick of it."

59,457. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is it all arable?—Not quite. I should think about three-fourths of it was arable. I knew of a man who was well qualified to go on to such a place because he was a very skilful cultivator and a most perserving man, but he had not sufficient capital. So an arrangement was made by which the owner of this property supplied two-thirds of the capital, and the co-operative tenant was to supply the rest. It was arranged that two-thirds of the whole of the marketable produce of the farm should be the property of the tenant and one-third the property of the landowner. The tenant, who only had at the outside one-third of the capital necessary when he entered upon that occupation, at the end of five years, as you see by the evidence I have given you, was enabled to take the whole farm on his own account, and I can testify that in the meantime he had very greatly improved it in value.

59,458. (*Mr. Dalton.*) How about the landlord's side; what rent did he get?—The landlord received a third.

59,459. A third of what?—A third of the proceeds of stock and farm produce marketed, and I know that that third was sufficient to cover a fair rent on the land and pay a fair interest on the capital advanced by the landlord.

59,460. What rent would it pay on the land per acre?—I am not able to say precisely. The land was of very little value. In the state in which it was left you could not have let it at all in the usual terms of a definite rent per acre. I have not seen the accounts for the five years, so I cannot possibly say what rent was actually realised. I only know the fact that the landlord was well satisfied with the result of the arrangement.

59,461. The landlord provided two-thirds of the capital?—Yes.

59,462. And was repaid that?—He was repaid the whole amount advanced.

59,463. And he got interest on the money?—Yes, a fair interest.

59,464. And got a certain rent?—He got a rent varying with the produce. The landlord received a third each year of the value of stock and produce marketed.

59,465. Of the actual produce?—Yes, of the actual produce sold.

59,466. He was paid in the produce then?—The tenant had no taxes to pay, and he had no rent to pay. He came to the rent dinner, but he never had to trouble himself at all about rent day, because he was never obliged to sell anything to meet the rent day. He sold everything to the best advantage, and that is one reason why he did so well. There were no forced sales.

59,467. He handed over the produce to the landlord?—No, he did all the business.

59,468. The landlord let him sell when it suited him best?—Yes; he paid the money into the bank, and the bank divided the money into proportions according to the instructions given.

59,469. The landlord did not hurry him about the sale at all?—Never interfered with it in any way whatever.

59,470. But for a landlord who is expecting his rents on quarter day, and so forth, that, of course, would not be a convenient arrangement because he might have to wait a very long time?—It is an unfortunate thing that estates are so heavily mortgaged all over the country that when farmers require time they cannot always get it. I can give you an illustration of what I mean. After a long illness I surrendered my agency of Lord Carlisle's estates in 1891. I entered into negotiations for the agency of one of the largest estates in the kingdom, and I went down to see the solicitor in reference to it. I had a very long interview with him. He then got up and said, "Now, Mr. Turnbull, there is one point that I must put "very clearly before you. The rent must be in this office "intact to the day and the hour, for," he said, "there "are obligations to meet, and they must be met, and if "you are appointed to this agency it must be on the "distinct understanding beforehand that we are not "going to have any excuses about bad weather and the "necessity for returning rent, or anything else." I only mention that to show how terribly inconvenient it is when tenants farm on estates where the owners are in that position. That is the case with one of the largest landowners in the kingdom.

59,471. In that case a produce rent would have been out of the question, of course?—It would, unless that landowner had sold part of his estates and put himself in a better position.

Poultry keeping.

59,472. I see you have got in your brief some information about the expenses and profits of poultry. What is your experience in that respect, have you found it profitable?—I can give you the experience of a business man. Mr. Henry Hampton English, who owns the Knapwell Estate in Cambridgeshire, says of his experience for 35 years past at Peterborough and at Watlington, "My "man Smith kept exact accounts and found we always "had the eggs for nothing, taking market value for al "poultry killed as nearly as possible, and the cost of "our buying best tail corn, mostly barley," that was the outlay. "The stock was about 40 to 50 hens, and "we were raising about 100 chickens yearly, say 50 "couples at 5*s*., equal to 12*l*. 10*s*., which was really more "than we paid for the corn. For the last three or four "years we paid Jordan 21*l*. a year on the average for "the eggs and chickens." This is how that account works out: On the debit side there is corn, 12*l*. 10*s*. Then I have added for a grass run, 5*l*., because poultry cannot live on corn only——

59,473. (*Chairman.*) Have you any comparative list of the prices of poultry? Have the prices remained about the same?—I think the prices of poultry have not suffered to anything like the same extent as the prices of meat. I have given the value in one of my papers.

59,474. Have you got from any good source a comparative statement of prices?—I have, but not here.

59,475. What do you say the fall is, if there is any fall?—The fall is very slight.

59,476. Is there any fall, I have heard that there is no fall in the prices of poultry?—I think there is a fall as compared with the years of very active trade.

59,477. Take the years before 1871?—The prices are better than they were from 1850 to 1870.

59,478. Better than they were?—Yes. I know when I was a boy I could buy any number of good fowls at a 1*s*. each.

59,479. Generally speaking, the price has risen?—The same fowls would be worth 2*s*. now.

59,480. (*Mr. Dalton.*) And the cost of feeding them must be very much reduced?—The cost of feeding them is considerably reduced.

59,481. There is considerably more profit in keeping them than there used to be, I suppose?—There is. I think the value of poultry sold and consumed in farm households, is a very large item in the farm revenue.

Prices of hay and straw.

59,482. (*Chairman.*) Have you got any comparative prices for hay and straw?—Yes, I have given those in my paper. (*See* Appendix A., Tables 6, 7 and 10.)

59,483. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think that in the case of straw you took the same prices in the two years, did you not?—Yes, straw was very much the same value in 1874 and 1892?

59,484. (*Chairman.*) Are you sure that the price of straw has not gone up?—The price of straw went up very high in that year of drought, 1893; but I do not think the price is quite so high now as it was in 1874; if anything it is a shade less; but there is not very much difference between the present time and the seventies.

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59,485. What has happened to hay?—Hay was very high about 1875.

59,486. Comparing it with 1870 and the few years preceding that, for you must not take the very highest period?—There is not much change in the value.

59,487. Not much change?—Not if you leave out those exceptionally prosperous years.

59,488. (*Mr Dalton.*) Does not straw pretty steadily rise in value; there must be less of it every year as there is less of these grain crops?—There is plenty of it available.

59,489. (*Mr. Little.*) Is there not more brought to market in proportion?—Yes; if the whole of the straw had been sold at the time when there was a large acreage of corn, then naturally the price would have risen when there was a reduced area; but as a matter of fact, only something like a sixth, as far as I can make out, was sold in the good times, and, therefore, although there is a reduced area of land under corn there may still be a full supply of straw, or even a greater supply available for sale except in years of drought.

59,490. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Then you do not really think it has gone up at all, but I think the popular idea is that you have to pay a great deal more for your straw than you used to?—Yes, I know; but I do not think it is so.

59,491. Then as to consuming value you have got a note upon that I see; has the consuming value gone up or not?—The consuming value of straw has gone down since the year 1875.

59,492. To what extent, should you say?—The great mass of it, I suppose, is consumed still on the farm?—The great bulk of it is consumed on the farm.

59,493. Therefore, the consuming value must be a very important element for consideration?—That is so.

59,494. You say the great bulk is consumed on the farm, but that it has gone down in value?—Yes. May I give an illustration of my meaning? According to Sir John Lawes' experiments, a ton of oat straw will produce 124 lbs. live weight in cattle or sheep; a ton of wheat straw will produce 106 lbs.; and a ton of barley straw 97 lbs.; that is to say, Sir John Lawes added, when fed in judicious amount and with an admixture of other foods which experience shows to be beneficial, it may be estimated that one ton of the food so consumed will contribute approximately the amount of increase in live weight stated in cattle and sheep. If we take oats at 124 lbs., and we take the value of the live weight at 3*d.* per lb., that leaves 31*s.* per ton for the oat straw; but, of course, if the live weight were worth 4*d.* per lb., that would add 33 per cent. It is under favourable circumstances that a ton of oat straw, according to Sir John Lawes, is calculated to produce 124 lbs. live weight.

Prices of horses.

59,495. (*Chairman.*) Have you any information as to the price of horses?—I have. (*See* Appendix A XXV.)

59,496. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Then you have a note as to the expenses and profits of butchers; have the profits of butchers increased or diminished, do you suppose?—The profits of butchers during the last two years, I should say, have very greatly diminished. I can give you what I think, after very careful inquiry, was about the average in 1886. The gross profit on cattle in that year was 4*l.*; the expenses were 2*l.* 10*s.*; and the net profit, 1*l.* 10*s.*; the gross profit on sheep was 10*s.*; the expenses, 5*s.*; and the net profit, 5*s.*; the gross profit on pigs was 12*s.*; the expenses, 5*s.*; and the net profit, 7*s.* But this result leaves out of account loss by bad debts, and also interest on capital; that is to say, neither of those two factors were taken into consideration.

Cost of production.

59,497. You have given us a great deal of detail as to the fall in the value of the produce, but I do not think we have had any information as to the increase or decrease in the cost of obtaining that produce, have we?—I do not think I have given any evidence on that point.

59,498. If you had to fix produce rents, you would have to take those elements into consideration, I suppose?—So far as Norfolk is concerned, the result of an estimate that I made was that the arable land cost on the average 7*l.* 3*s.* 6*d.* an acre in 1874, as against 5*l.* 17*s.* 3*d.* in 1894, showing a reduction of 1*l.* 6*s.* 3*d.* per acre. (*See* Appendix A XXIV.)

Co-operative purchasing.

59,499. I think amongst your remedies you have co-operative purchasing; are you of opinion that that would be of any great value?—I think it would be of great value where farmers are in a position to pay cash, but unfortunately the proportion of such is not large at the present time. There is no doubt that the business of supplying farmers' requisites could be advantageously put into the hands of a large committee, because they could test the manures and the quality of the cakes, and institute a great many precautions which a farmer in his private capacity could hardly do.

Mr. R. E. Turnbull. 15 Aug. 1895.

Parcel post facilities.

59,500. Amongst your suggested legislative remedies, you have some proposal to make with respect to the parcel post, I think?—Yes.

59,501. What is that?—It would greatly facilitate direct trading between producers and consumers if small boxes of butter and eggs could be conveyed by parcels post for a charge of not exceeding one penny per pound for the produce conveyed.

59,502. What is the present price; has not the parcels post been a great benefit in that way already?—It is not practicable under the present arrangements, because you have to send so much to get the advantage of the low rate. If milk can be conveyed a hundred miles for a charge of one-tenth of a penny per pound, and can be afterwards distributed in small quantities at a cost of four-tenths of a penny per pound, the total cost of railway carriage and distribution being about a half-penny per pound, it must surely be possible for the post office to convey small parcels of butter, eggs, and other farm produce at a penny per pound.

59,503. A great deal of butter, I believe, does go by parcel post in that way; can you tell me what is the present charge for it?—I believe it would be about threepence for the first pound.

59,504. And how much for the second?—It falls, but I am not able to say how much; I know it has not been practicable to make use of it.

Local taxation.

59,505. Then you have some proposals with regard to local taxation, I think?—I think the question of rates and taxes is one which does not affect the farmer in the long run, but it is desirable for a farmer to live under a landowner who is not oppressed.

59,506. It does affect him, does it not, in some ways? To what extent do you think that he really takes the rates into account when he takes his farm? How does he find out what they are?—By inquiry.

59,507. Do you know anybody who really knows?—As a rule, they are something like 10 per cent.

59,508. He makes a rough calculation, or something of that kind, then?—What he does is this: he goes over the farm, and he says to himself, "This farm, if it can "be taken at a pound an acre, to cover rent and taxes, "will pay me, and the taxes are 2*s.*" Of course, if the landlord paid the rates and taxes, or the tenant paid them, it makes no difference, provided the tenant does not in any case pay more for the use of the land than the rent and the taxes together come to.

59,509. He makes a calculation that they are 2*s.*, but as a matter of fact they never turn out to be 2*s.*; they are generally a little more or a little less?—There are additions now and then, and those additions fall upon the occupying tenant.

59,510. Another case in which it falls upon him is this. When the landlord gives him a remission of rent, he still has to pay his rates as if he was paying the whole rent?—That was so.

59,511. It is so?—I believe that difficulty has been met to some extent.

59,512. Not where a temporary remission is given; when half the rent is given him back in that way, the rates will be charged on him just the same?—In order to be perfectly safe, you must arrange with your landowner to have your rent reduced, and not merely a return. If your rent is reduced, you can get the taxation reduced without trouble.

59,513. As a matter of fact, it very frequently happens that the other system prevails, and where that is the case, it is quite clear the rate falls upon the occupier, I think?—That is so.

59,514. You could not say that any man taking a farm takes accurately into account the amount of the rates, and what they are going to be?—Yes.

59,515. In the first place he could not ascertain it, I suppose?—Yes he could. It is one of the first questions I should ask if I were negotiating for a farm.

59,516. We have had a great many farmers here, and when we have asked them what the rates were, which they have actually paid, they have not been able to tell

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Mr. R. E. Turnbull.

15 Aug. 1895.

us?—I always ask the question what the outgoings have been for a series of years.

59,517. An agent would, I have no doubt; but what about the man taking the farm?—If I were going to take a farm myself, and I were writing for an account of it, I should say, let me know the average outgoings during the last five years.

59,518. No doubt, because you have had experience as an agent; but do you think the ordinary farmer, or the ordinary tenant of a house takes any such precautions?—No. I think that a farmer very frequently takes a farm at a time when he takes no precautions whatever. He is going to get married, and he wants a home, and there is a suitable farm vacant, and he will sign anything. He will say, I will sign anything the others sign. He wants to get settled, and he thinks, well, if I am hardly dealt with, there will be 20 more, 30 more, or 40 more in the same boat; it will not fall on me worse than it does on others.

59,519. That is exactly what I mean; that you would not say that the ordinary tenant in taking a farm, as a general rule, accurately takes into account the amount that he will have to pay for rates?—A thoroughly business man, if is mind bis perfectly free, will take all those points seriously into account; but if he is not a business man he will not consider them at all.

59,520. Other considerations will weigh with him more than that?—I have known cases where men have actually entered on farms and have never asked the rent, and never knew definitely what the rent was until the rent day.

59,521. If that is the case, and it appears that that is so in the great majority of cases——?—In England; not in Scotland.

59,522. Then how can you say that the rates fall upon the landlord?—Because they must ultimately come out of the land.

59,523. During the tenancy of this man who has taken a farm without knowing what the rates were, and has given a rent on other considerations altogether, and then is called upon to pay his rates and pays them, how in that case do the rates fall upon the landlord?—Time will teach him what his intelligence had not taught him before. When he has been in occupation of the farm he will find that he is paying too much, and in that case he will get it back in the shape of returned rent from his landlord.

59,524. If he gets it back in the shape of a return of rent he does not get a reduction of the rates; he still has to pay the rates?—If he has got a reduction of the rent he will get a reduction of the rates.

59,525. Only when it is a permanent reduction, not when it is a remission?—Not in the case of a temporary remission. He would require a greater remission from his landlord to cover everything.

Mr. R. E. Turnbull.

15 Aug. 1895.

Price of horses.

59,526. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In reference to the value of horses, in reply to the Chairman you put in a return comparing the average prices for horses sold in the years 1880 to 1895 inclusive, would you tell us whether the prices have increased or decreased?—There has not been very much fall in horses till quite lately. Lately the prices of horses have not corresponded with the prices of cattle and sheep.

59,527. I see that 36*l.* is the average price that you give for the year 1880, and 24*l.* is the average price for 1895; which is higher than in the two years previous, namely, 1893 and 1894?—Yes. Those figures represent the actual average prices obtained in one section of the country.

59,528. This table tends to prove that the value of horses has fallen. (*Mr. Everett.*) It has fallen a third by those figures?—I have not put the fall so high as that. I valued the horses of all ages in 1874 at an average of 25*l.* for the United Kingdom and at 20*l.* in 1892.

Produce rents.

59,529. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you think that what you have been advocating so strongly here to-day, namely, that rents should be paid on produce, is practically applicable to most parts of England, or, I would say, Great Britain?—I think it is practicable, but it would entail a vast amount of labour.

59,530. Take a large estate: is the tenant to send in his own valuation or a statement of what he has received; and if so, who is to check that?—The agent of the estate.

59,531. Would he not have to have a great number of clerks?—He would not have to do it by clerks; it would have to be left to the tenant to make a fair return——

59,532. It would be left to his honour?—The returns would have to be tested occasionally to see if they are accurate, and if the tenant did not make a fair return he would lose his character.

59,533. Would that not entail a great deal of expense and a great deal of time and trouble?—I do not think it would entail any expense at all if the landlord relied upon the tenant.

59,534. But the landlord cannot always rely upon every tenant?—If the tenant is not one the landlord can rely upon the landlord should not have that tenant at all. The man who is not worthy of confidence had better go.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned till to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

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One Hundred and Ninth Day.

Thursday, 31st October 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDING KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

Mr. OWEN PRICE called and examined.

Mr. O. Price. 31 Oct. 1895.

59,535. (*Chairman.*) You are a farmer and valuer in the county of Brecon, I believe?—Yes.

59,536. And you have been chairman of the Cray School Board since 1872, and chairman of the Maescar Parish Council, and secretary of the Devyrmock Agricultural Society for the past 30 years, and justice of the peace for the county of Brecon?—Yes.

59,537. You also own a considerable portion of land yourself?—1,200 acres.

Particulars of witness' farm.

59,538. You farm, altogether, 1,500 acres, 1,200 of your own, and you are a tenant of 300 acres more?—Yes, 300 acres more.

59,539. And you rent that from four different landlords?—Yes, I purchased a part of it some 10 years ago, and the rest I rent.

59,540. Is it mainly sheep farming?—Not entirely; I cultivate 40 or 50 acres of land altogether.

59,541. Is the rest a sheep run?—It is mostly sheep farming; I keep about 100 head of cattle.

59,542. Is some of it mountain land?—Yes.

59,543. How much of it?—8500 acres—the sheep walk—is never cultivated.

59,544. And the remainder is pasture?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

59,545. How has the depression been felt in your district; first, as regards the landlords?—The landlords, generally, have given an allowance of something like from 10 to 25 per cent., which must affect their income.

59,546. Have they given those reductions in all cases?—Not in all cases; but mostly the large landowners have done so; not the small landlords.

59,547. Do you make a distinction between pasture and arable farms?—Not to a great extent. Lord Tredegar has given an equal amount to all the tenants, and so have the others. I do not think there is any difference between the pasture and the arable in that respect.

59,548. You say it is mainly pasture, and not much arable?—Not to any appreciable extent.

59,549. It is only as an adjunct to the rest of the farm?—Simply to supply the young stock more than anything else.

59,550. The farms mainly depend upon the sale of sheep and cattle, do they not?—To a great extent.

Dairying.

59,551. Now, as to dairying, what do you say about that?—The dairying is a feature, especially above the town of Brecon where a good deal of dairying is carried on; but below the town it is not carried on to such an extent.

Reduction of rent.

59,552. When did these reductions of rent begin?—I think about eight years ago in some cases, and they have been going on, more or less, ever since. Lord Tredegar has allowed reductions, I think, for about eight years.

59,553. Are they permanent reductions?—Some are permanent reductions, but the great majority are allowances or abatements. Lord Tredegar has allowed reductions for eight years, and has just sent a circular to his tenants that he is going to allow them for another five years 20 per cent.

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59,554. But those are not exactly permanent reductions?—No.

59,555. Is that generally the case with the landlords?—I believe it is generally the case, that they are abatements, and not permanent reductions; but in some cases permanent reductions have been allowed.

59,556. Is there much distinction between the large and small tenants?—Not very much, I should say.

59,557. Do the small farmers get as much reduction as the large ones?—The same in their percentage, I think.

Occupying owners.

59,558. Now, as regards the occupying owners, what do you say?—The occupying owners, I believe, are in a better condition, with the exception of those that have borrowed money to pay for their farms. We have in Wales a large number of the class of farmers where the farms have been sold, and they have purchased the farms with borrowed money to a certain extent.

59,559. And those who bought in the years of prosperity, and gave large prices have had to borrow the money?—Yes, at high rates; and, consequently, they have to pay a higher rate than if the land were rented.

59,560. They do not find the mortgagees prepared to make concessions, I suppose?—No, they are not, and those are the worst class of farmers in our district.

59,561. What rate do they generally pay?—I think from 3½ to 4 per cent.; 4 per cent. in most cases.

59,562. Not more than that?—I do not know of many cases where they pay more than 4 per cent.; in some cases it may be a little less.

59,563. That is, men who have bought at high prices, and have paid for their own land by borrowed money, suffer more than other people?—I think they suffer most, especially those who had no money of their own, but were obliged to borrow nearly the whole amount.

Condition of tenant farmers.

59,564. Then we come to the tenant farmers; have the larger tenant farmers suffered more than the smaller ones?—Yes, very much more; the larger the tenants are, the more they suffer.

59,565. The smaller tenants work the farms themselves in the way of labour by their families I suppose?—Mostly so. The small farmers of 50*l.* or 60*l.* a year, or even up to 100*l.* a year, work their farms with the assistance of their children.

59,566. And the smaller farms are principally pasture farms?—Principally so; very little arable.

59,567. And the sheep and cattle are reared at less expense than on the larger farms, which are grain farms?—That is so.

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59,568. So that the smaller farmers do not feel the depression to the same extent as the larger ones?—No, they do not.

Wages.

59,569. Then we come to the agricultural labourers; what is their position; have their wages been maintained?—I think in every case; I do not think the wages are lower.

59,570. Compared with 15 years ago, are the wages the same?—They are much higher than they were 15 years ago.

59,571. How much have they risen?—From 20 to 30 per cent. above what they were 20 years ago.

59,572. What is the present rate of wages?—It varies very much; it runs from 14*s.* to 18*s.* per week for competent labourers.

59,573. What was it 20 years ago?—I believe it was 12*s.* or 13*s.* up to 14*s.*

59,574. When did the rise take place?—It has taken place gradually, almost every year; during the eighties principally, I think.

59,575. And there has been no falling back?—I do not believe there has been any falling back in the rise of agricultural labourers' wages; there may have been a little fall last year, in the wages of servants, boys engaged on the farm; they were more plentiful.

59,576. But not the able-bodied or full-aged labourers?—Not in the least; in fact, they have been migrating to the coal fields, and other centres of industry, so that it is difficult to get experienced men.

59,577. Do the collieries come into competition with the farmers, and draw the men away?—To a great extent in our county.

59,578. And the higher rate of wages is one of the difficulties that farmers feel in your district?—Yes. It has been one of the greatest difficulties for many years.

59,579. More than the fall in prices?—Quite as much, although the fall in prices has been considerable.

59,580. Has there been any economy in labour?—There are less labourers employed now than there were many years ago; because people are obliged to do with less labour. They get mowing machines and threshing machines; and they do economise to a certain extent in that respect.

Consolidation of farms.

59,581. That is how it is that there is a less number of labourers in Wales, because statistics show there has been a considerable reduction in the number of labourers?—Yes; but the consolidation of farms would contribute towards that. In very many cases two farms have been put together, and the same amount of labour almost does for the two farms as was employed on each one farm 20 or 30 years ago.

59,582. There was a consolidation of farms between 1871 and 1881, but not between 1881 and 1891?—Yes.

59,583. How do you account for the consolidation of farms between 1871 and 1881?—I do not believe there has been any lately.

59,584. The reduction was partly due to the consolidation of farms, and partly to the use of more mowing machines, and so forth?—Yes.

59,585. And in that way farmers have economised labour?—Yes; and another thing the cottages in our district have been allowed to fall down, and the people are obliged to go into the towns as they could not be accommodated in the district. It is very desirable that more cottages should be provided on the land.

Condition of labourers.

59,586. Having regard to the rise of the wages of labourers and the low price of food, it is evident that the labourers are now better off than they were; is that not so?—Yes, with the lower prices and the advantages of education they are much better off than they were 20 years ago.

59,587. Wages are higher by 20 or 30 per cent., and they get a great deal more for their money?—Yes.

59,588. And therefore they ought to be better off?—I believe they are.

Uncultivated land.

59,589. Has any land gone out of cultivation in your district?—No.

59,590. Are there any farms unlet?—No, I do not think there is a farm unlet in the county.

Competition for farms.

59,591. When a farm is vacant is there competition for it?—There is a large competition for small farms in every case. I know a small farm at present where there are a great number of applicants; and especially on large properties there is more competition.

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59,592. Is the small farm let at a higher rent than it was in the past?—No, I do not say that.

59,593. Or is it let at the same rent?—I do not think there has been any increase in the rent. I do not know of any landlords who have asked for an increase of rent.

59,594. Is it let at the same rent as it was to the tenant who has gone?—Much the same rent, but the smaller farms are let dearer; that is, at a higher rent per acre. The small farms command a higher rent than the large farms.

59,595. They are more expensive to the landowner because he has to maintain more buildings, I suppose?—They are more expensive, there is not so much building on a small farm, but still you require a certain amount of building, which is more expensive.

59,596. And there are a greater number of applicants for those small farms?—Yes.

59,597. How many applicants would you say?—I know a case of a small farm where there were nine applicants, but it was let in the course of the week; and there would have been more if it had been generally known. I have known of small farms where more applicants have tendered.

59,598. On the larger farms what is the case there?—The applicants are not so numerous. With large farms they possibly may have two or three.

59,599. It is possible to let them, I suppose, but there is not the keen competition for the larger farms as for the smaller ones?—Quite so. It is much more difficult to find a tenant for a large farm, because small tenants can take a small farm when they cannot take a large one.

Tenants' capital.

59,600. Have the smaller tenants generally sufficient capital to work them?—As a rule they have. I think the landlords try to select those whom they think have most capital.

59,601. There is no difficulty in finding tenants with capital?—I do not believe there is any difficulty But I know tenants that are applying that have not sufficient capital.

59,602. But there are those who have got capital?—As a rule the agents are very particular in seeing that they have capital.

59,603. What amount of capital is required for a small farm?—I should say about 500*l.* for each 100*l.* of rent.

59,604. That is 5*l.* for every 1*l.* of rental?—Yes, that would be moderate. I think a tenant could pull along very well if he had that amount.

Size of farms.

59,605. What is your definition of a small farm?—100 to 120 acres.

59,606. Are there many farms of 50 acres?—There are some smaller, but not a great many. There is a great number running from 50 to 100 acres.

59,607. When you get above 120 acres you call it a large farm?—It is considered so in Wales.

59,608. What do they run up to?—In some cases we have farms in our county of 500*l.* and 600*l.* rental, but a great number are about 200*l.* or 300*l.*

Tenants' capital.

59,609. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Would it not be a small amount of capital if a man went into a farm with 1,000*l.* at 200*l.* rent?—I admit that it is small.

59,610. Would not he have a difficulty in the matter unless he went to the manure merchant and others for credit?—I admit that it is desirable to have more, but I know farmers who have done well who have had 500*l.* or 600*l.*

59,611. With 100*l.* a year rent?—Yes.

Changes of tenancy.

59,612. (*Chairman.*) Have there been many changes of tenancies in your district?—I do not think there has been a greater number of changes owing to the depression; of course there is a certain amount of change continually.

59,613. Has the system of farming been at all altered, or is it about the same?—I do not believe there has been any alteration in the system of farming; the only alteration is, that there has been less labour employed, and consequently the land is not quite as well managed as it used to be many years ago.

59,614. I understood the consolidation has not gone on during the last ten years?—Not so much.

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Mr. O. Price. 31 Oct. 1895.

Sub-division of farms.

59,615. Has there been any breaking up of large farms into small ones?—Not very much; there has been some small quantity for allotments but not to any great extent.

59,616. The difficulty has been the fall of prices, I suppose?—That is the principal difficulty.

59,617. Have you got the prices of stock for the last few years?—No, I have no schedule.

Prices of stock.

59,618. What should you consider that the prices of stock have fallen?—I believe they are now selling at 25 to 30 per cent. less than they were some ten years ago. There was a greater fall two years ago, but last year the prices got up a bit; now again they are considerably back.

59,619. Two years ago they fell on account of the drought in England, I suppose?—I believe that had a great deal to do with it.

59,620. And the drought this year?—And the drought this year—it has had a lot to do with the cattle trade, but not so much with the sheep trade. Sheep have sold pretty well this year, but cattle are down fully 15 per cent. to what they were.

59,621. What is the position of sheep, have they gone up again lately?—They have not gone up, but they maintain last year's prices.

59,622. Were last year's prices better than the previous year's?—Yes, by 5*s.* per head.

Price of wool.

59,623. Has the wool gone up quite lately?—No, the wool has not altered much; the price of wool has been about the same for the last two years.

59,624. Has wool gone down since 1871 about two thirds?—Yes, I sold my wool in 1871 for 2*s.* per lb. and this year for 7½*d.*

59,625. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Did you sell washed wool at 7½*d.*?—Yes, there is a little improvement, but farmers in my neighbourhood do not get more than 7½*d.* Some wool was sold last week for 7*d.*

59,626. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What kind of wool?—Mountain wool.

Bad seasons.

59,627. (*Chairman.*) Did your district suffer in 1893 from the drought?—There were good crops, but very late, the hay crops especially.

59,628. And again this year has it suffered?—The hay crop is very light, nearly one half what it was last year.

59,629. Would you say that the difficulties of farmers have been created somewhat by the bad seasons?—They have, but I think that is transitory and will pass away, and will not have a lasting effect.

59,630. But still looking at their present position they have suffered somewhat from that?—Evidently.

59,631. (*Mr. Everett.*) Was not 1894 a very fine season?—It was very much better.

59,632. It was about an average season?—Yes.

59,633. (*Chairman.*) But in 1893 there was a very serious drought?—More so than this year.

59,634. And there was consequently less demand for cattle in England?—No doubt that had some effect because we depend to a certain extent upon England for the sale of our surplus stock.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,635. Do you consider that the Agricultural Holdings Act should be amended?—I believe it should.

59,636. And that some of the improvements which are entered in the First and Second Schedule should be removed into the Third Schedule?—Yes.

Laying down permanent pasture.

59,637. What improvements should you say should be dealt with in that way?—The laying down land to permanent pasture.

59,638. You think that that should be removed into the Third Schedule?—Yes.

59,639. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Is not the laying down to permanent pasture a very expensive process in your part of the country?—We should be obliged to get the land into fine tilth; it would not be very expensive provided that the land was in a high state of farming. Of course you would have to get some fine grasses, and those would cost you more than the seed generally sown; you would require more permanent seed grass, and there would be a little expense in that, but not very much.

Compensation for improvements.

59,640. (*Chairman.*) What are the other improvements that should be dealt with in the same way?—Making improved water-courses.

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59,641. What else?—Making fences. Under the present Act they are not allowed for fences, if the tenant leaves without the leave of the landlord, I believe it is one of the most important things on a farm to have a good fence; in fact fencing is always allowed under a mutual agreement—a mutual valuation, whereas under the Act there is nothing allowed for fencing. I have been valuing and allowing for fences half-a-dozen times this year, and the landlords never grumbled at paying for it.

Drainage.

59,642. What other improvements should you say should be dealt with?—The reclaiming of waste land and drainage.

59,643. Do you not think that the landlord should have the opportunity of draining his land if he thinks fit, because he might wish to drain it on a system together with other farms?—I quite agree that there should be an understanding between landlord and tenant, but I do not think that any tenant would spend money upon land that was not for the ultimate benefit of the farm.

59,644. In the case of drainage the landlord might want to carry it out on a system, and the Second Schedule only requires that the landlord should be informed of the intention of the tenant?—I quite agree with that, but still there are encumbered landlords and infants, and different things of that sort, and it would be difficult to carry out.

59,645. In the Second Schedule, if the landlord refuses to do it, the tenant may do it?—That is very fair, but in very many cases the tenants are ignorant of the provisions of the Act, and do not take advantage of it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,646. You say in your proof that "practically the "Act is a dead letter at present, and a valuation under "a mutual agreement is much better for the tenant "than a valuation under the Act," that is, that the valuation is generally made between the incoming and the outgoing tenants and not between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—As a rule it is so, and the Act is never applied; they very much prefer the mutual agreement.

Procedure.

59,647. The procedure between the outgoing tenant and the incoming tenant is very much similar to that provided in the Act, but each party appoints a referee, and the referees appoint an umpire?—Yes, in some cases it is left to one man to arrange between the parties.

59,648. Do you think that the Act might be simplified on the application of either party, for one party only to arbitrate?—Yes. I think there should be a public arbitrator appointed in each county by the Board of Agriculture to value and determine the amount to be paid to tenants when leaving their farms, in all cases where the landlord and tenant cannot agree between themselves, and tabulated schedules of all the improvements effected and paid for on those farms should be filed and preserved for future reference, should the same be required.

Freedom of cropping.

59,649. There should be greater freedom of cropping, and fewer restrictions, you think?—Yes. Actually so far as our county is concerned, even if something of that kind is mentioned in the agreement, it is very seldom enforced unless the landlord and tenant fail to agree on leaving. So long as they pay their rents they are very seldom interfered with.

59,650. What kind of provision would you make?—I do not think the agreement should stipulate that there should be a certain system of cropping. I think each tenant should be allowed to have his own system provided that he does not injure the land.

59,651. You say there should be no restrictions of any kind; should he be allowed to plough up old pasture, for instance?—No, I should not say that; I do not believe that any man would do so.

59,652. Unless he left the farm. If he intended to leave he might do it?—There should be provisions against that when tenants are leaving, but not otherwise.

59,653. You think there ought to be provisions which should have that effect, if the tenant intended to leave?—Most decidedly.

59,654. (*Mr. Channing.*) If the tenant is stopping, would you allow him to break up permanent pasture?—I do not believe any tenant would do so.

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59,655. Would you object to any restriction?—No, I do not see any harm in it, because it would not be doing any favour to the tenant.

59,656. (*Mr. Everett.*) There is such a thing as spite and anger, and the tenants might do it out of wilfulness?—Yes, on leaving their farms; I think that the landlord should be protected, and even against deterioration, if the tenant leaves the farm.

State loans.

59,657. (*Chairman.*) Then you consider that there should be loans from the State for the purpose of enabling the tenants to buy their holdings?—Yes, I think there ought to be State loans granted to encumbered occupying owners.

59,658. And also to land owners for the purpose of improving their farm buildings?—Yes.

59,659. And their drainage?—Yes. I know of several cases now where owners are unable to keep the buildings in repair, or do anything on the farms, on account of pecuniary difficulties.

Rates.

59,660. Then with regard to rates; have the assessments on the farms been reduced or not?—Where permanent reductions have been granted, they have been reduced, but not where abatements have been made in our county.

59,661. In that case where abatements were made by Lord Tredegar for five years certain, have the assessments been reduced?—No, the assessment committee has refused that.

59,662. Even where the reduction has been for so long as five years?—They have refused, because they think that those tenants have been benefited in two ways. It has been before the committees, and they have refused so far. But the matter has to be considered again in a fortnight, with the Brecon committee; it was to have come on last Friday, and it was deferred for another fortnight.

59,663. I should have said, myself, that when the landlord reduces the rent for five years certain, that would be evidence that the value of the land has fallen, and that the duty of the committee would be to reduce it proportionally?—Yes. So far the committee has refused, although Lord Tredegar has allowed an abatement for eight years; but several of the tenants have appealed lately in the matter, and it has been deferred for a fortnight, as I said before. I am a member of the committee myself, and I know several of the members of the committee are favourable to it, and others are opposed to it.

59,664. They have been rather long in deciding the appeal in this matter, which has been going on for eight years?—They refused when Lord Tredegar granted an abatement five years ago; and now, his lordship has allowed it for five years more, and the matter has been mooted again in that form.

59,665. It seems to me that they ought to have appealed five years ago?—They did appeal, and the decision went against them.

59,666. They appealed to the assessment committee—but they did not go further, namely, to the quarter sessions?—No.

59,667. As I rather gather now they are appealing from the assessment committee?—No, it is the assessment committee to whom they have appealed so far; but if the assessment committee decides against them, it might be carried forward.

Reductions of rent.

59,668. (*Mr. Channing.*) What is the actual amount that Lord Tredegar has allowed?—Lord Tredegar granted 15 per cent. for five years, and I think he has granted 20 per cent. for the last two years; and he says, by circular, that he intends to give 20 per cent. for another five years.

59,669. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is that 20 per cent. in addition to the 15 per cent.?—No, 20 per cent. altogether.

59,670. That represents the whole of the decreased value of his lordship's estate?—Yes.

59,671. A large number of small landlords have not reduced their rents at all, you say?—A great number have not reduced them.

59,672. Then the tenants get no benefit at all?—No.

59,673. And they are rented and rated up to their old level?—Something like 10 to 25 per cent. has been allowed by nearly all the large landowners.

59,674. How much land belongs to the large landowners, and how much to the small ones?—I cannot say.

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Local rates.

59,675. (*Chairman.*) You think that farmers are entitled to subvention in aid of rates?—Yes. There has been an increase in the rates of late. I have a rough copy of what the rates have been for several years.

59,676. Will you say what they have been?—In 1872 the poor rate, highway rate, sanitary rate, county rate, and the school board rate in Cray parish where I live was 2*s.* 3*d.* in the £ a year; that is the total of those five rates. In an adjoining parish, in Trainglas, where I pay rates, 2*s.* 2*d.*, but I should say there is no school board in the parish. In 1873 in both parishes they were equal, namely, 2*s.* 2*d.* a year. In 1885 in the school board parish they were 2*s.* 5*d.*, and in the other parish 2*s.* 3*d.* In 1887 in the school board parish 2*s.* 3*d.*, in the other parish 2*s.* 1*d.* In 1891 in the school board parish they were 2*s.* 7*d.*, in the other parish 2*s.* 2*d.*

59,677. Apparently, in the parish where there is no school board the rate has been maintained all through, and there has been no variation?—Very nearly so; but you will see there has been a little increase. In the last two years it is much the same.

59,678. It was the same in 1872 and 1873?—Very much the same.

59,679. In the school board parish it was in 1887 the same as 1872; and since 1872 it has risen 4*d.*?—You will find, further on, it has come down; it varies. In 1892 the school board parish was 2*s.* 4*d.*, and the other parish was 2*s.*; in 1893 the school board parish was 2*s.*, and the other parish was 2*s.*, exactly the same in the two parishes. In 1894 the school board parish was 2*s.* 5*d.*, and in the same year the other parish was 2*s.* 4*d.*; and in the present year the school board parish was 2*s.* 7*d.*, and the other parish 2*s.* 5*d.*

59,680. How much in the school board parish has the school board rate been?—It has varied from 2*d.* to 3*d.* per year; it has never exceeded 3*d.*, and it has never been under 2*d.*

59,681. (*Lord Rendel.*) Excepting one year it would exactly account for the difference between the two parishes?—Very nearly so.

59,682. (*Chairman.*) It does not seem that there has been a serious increase; there has been some increase in 1894 and 1895; but in 1893 the rate was lower in the school board parish than ever it was before?—Yes; in fact, I believe, the county council rate was about 1½*d.* lower than the previous year, and I think that accounted for it to some extent.

59,683. It would seem that taking the average of the two parishes over a period of years, that apart from the school board rate, the rates have been slightly over 2*s.*?—Slightly, until these last two years, but there has been a little addition.

59,684. If the tenants had been able to get a reduction of their assessments due to those abatements of rent, they would have been very much better off?—No doubt those tenants would have been better off, but the other tenants would be rather the other way.

59,685. Those who have not got abatements might have a slight increase of rating?—Yes.

Co-operation.

59,686. I believe you think there ought to be more co-operation in the manufacture and distribution of agricultural productions?—I think it would be very much better if it was so, but it is very difficult to get farmers to co-operate.

59,687. Is there much butter produced in the district, or not?—There is a great deal of butter produced in the upper parts of the county, but much less than there was some years ago.

59,688. Why is that the case?—Because the price of butter has very much decreased this year.

59,689. And they sell the milk instead, I suppose?—There is no milk-selling in our district, but they generally allow the calves to run with the cows, and they breed stock.

59,690. There has been no co-operation among the farmers to produce butter?—Nothing of any kind in our county.

Technical education.

59,691. You think that the young farmers should be better educated?—I think there ought to be a better system of education.

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59,692. Do you think that there ought to be more precautions in the management of farmyard manures for the purpose of preventing waste?—I think there is a lot of waste in farmyard manure at present; the rain, the sun, and other elements take away the best properties of the manure.

Farmyard manures.

Co-operation for distribution of produce.

59,693. (*Mr. Elton.*) Are you well off for railway communication in your part?—As far as we are concerned in our parish we have got a station within two miles almost of every house; but in some parishes it is different.

59,694. There would be a possibility, I suppose, if the farmers wished it, of combining to have their provisions distributed?—Yes.

59,695. Would there be a jealousy of co-operation as far as regards that sort of thing?—No, I do not think there would be a great amount; but still, on the whole, it is rather difficult to get them to co-operate. I know, as a fact, we have been joining to get large quantities of artificial manure at low rates, and it is divided at the station. That works very well, and I have no doubt it would be possible to do the other.

59,696. I only meant about your neighbourhood; of course in other neighbourhoods they find no difficulty in co-operating about the butter-making?—Well, I have not any experience in that respect, but I hear in some places they have not been able to succeed so well.

59,697. I am asking about your neighbourhood. Is not the low price of butter caused by your not having co-operation in the making of the butter?—I have no doubt that that is so.

59,698. The fact is that uniform butter fetches more than the butter that is sold by the individual farmer?—It would be a great advantage to have a uniform make of butter.

Systems of farming.

59,699. There are very few dairy farms in your county, I think?—Not to any great extent. They simply grow corn.

59,700. There are not many of them, did you say?—There is a certain amount of grain produced on nearly all farms. There are some highland farms who have not any grain at all.

Freedom of cropping.

59,701. You do not find those disagreeable cropping covenants a vital difficulty because you have very few arable farms?—Not to any great extent.

59,702. I do not mean to say that you may not have an opinion about it, but it is not a pressing matter in your neighbourhood?—It is not a pressing matter.

59,703. You talk in your brief about the Government helping the farmers to purchase their farms, and so producing the good class of yeoman that we admire in history; but do you find that the farmers are buying their farms where they have opportunities of cheap terms?—I know in every case they do if they can do it. I know a large number of tenants on Lord Ashburnham's estate who bought their farms two years ago in Carmarthenshire on the borders of Brecon. There were some 12 or 15 of those tenants, and some had the money, and they all bought their farms at from 34 to 40 years' purchase.

59,704. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Was that done privately?—Yes, privately.

59,705. (*Mr. Elton.*) Were the terms tolerably easy?—I do not believe so.

59,706. You know the experiment has been tried, and the Ecclesiastical Commissioners have sold a large estate in which they made it very easy?—I believe so; and some of their money was allowed to stand on mortgage. In Lord Ashburnham's case I know several parties that paid up although they had to borrow the money, very many of them; but some had half the purchase money and others less than half.

Farmyard manure.

59,707. You talk about the management of the farmyard manures, and so on, to prevent waste. I suppose it partly depends upon the situation of the farm whether it is worth while to take it up to the hill or not?—It depends entirely upon the situation of the farm, but certainly the tenants ought to have some proper place for the storing of manure.

59,708. And great discrimination is required under that head because you may be preserving what is practically useless; it would cost more to take it up than to let it go?—But still farmyard manure is very valuable, and we cannot get the effects of farmyard manure from artificial manures, or anything that we can apply from outside. I think that the greatest care should be taken in preserving the farmyard manure.

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59,709. I do not disagree, but I only wanted to point out to you that discrimination is required?—Great discrimination is required; still, every farmer should keep it together, and in better order than it is at present, and not allow it to run to waste.

59,710. When you talk about the waste land, and the reclamation of waste land, do you mean the waste of the farm?—I mean woodlands in the area of the farm.

Inclosure of hill lands.

59,711. You have mentioned one point that stands outside of the area?—Yes, the mountain land. It would be of very great benefit to the farmers in Wales if the hills were enclosed. We have large tracts of land unenclosed in our county; between 30,000 and 40,000 acres.

59,712. You think that they would be considerably enhanced in value if they were enclosed?—Yes; and if each farmer could do as he liked with his own, although a large amount of stock is sent there at present, the benefit is not so much felt, because it is entirely grazed by the brinkers.

59,713. When enclosures used to take place, is it not a fact that a great deal of that land was not worth the cost of enclosing?—The Commissioners reported that it was not worth while to fence.

59,714. It was not reported in the blue books that it was not worth the cost of fencing?—That was the conclusion arrived at with regard to the forest of Brecon; but there is some very good land in the forest, and some very inferior.

59,715. But still with discrimination you think there are parts that should be taken in?—I think it would be very much more valuable if it were properly enclosed.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,716. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Has the Agricultural Holdings Act been adopted throughout your district?—I only know one case in which it has been acted upon within the last 10 years.

59,717. Have the tenants any agreements, or have they contracted themselves out of the Act, or have the landlords done so?—I believe Lord Camden has done so, and one or two others, but not many. There are very few agreements in our county. On some large properties there are agreements; but not to any great extent.

59,718. Would you say generally that the tenant farmers are satisfied with the management of estates?—Pretty well so. I do not think there are any great complaints on that score.

Security for improvements.

59,719. Do you think if the tenants had better security that more money would be spent on the land?—There is no question about that. I believe that more allowance should be given for many things that the tenants do on the farm; and that if the tenant does improve he should be recouped for the amount laid out in the improvement of the farm.

59,720. Is it a general rule to compensate tenants for all unexhausted improvements made by them?—As a rule it is so.

59,721. Is that done by the incoming tenant or by the landlord?—I believe the incoming tenant generally has to pay, although in very many cases it is done between the outgoing tenant and the landlord. I know last year in two or three cases the valuation was made between the outgoing tenant and the landlord; the landlord paid the outgoing tenant, and I could not say what amount the incoming tenant had to pay, but no doubt he had to pay.

59,722. Was the rent raised in that case?—No, I do not know of any case of rent being raised for several years. I think that if a tenant generally has improved his farm he ought to be allowed for it.

Scales of compensation.

59,723. (*Mr. Channing.*) Are there any scales in Lord Tredegar's and others' agreements, of compensation for manures, giving a special compensation for each manure?—I do not think that Lord Tredegar has any such agreements. I know a large number who have no agreements. Lord Camden's tenants have agreements, but no scale of compensation.

Laying down to permanent pasture.

59,724. You want to transfer the permanent pasture to the third part of the schedule; is there much land which you want to lay down in your county?—I think it would be a benefit to the farmers if the best land were laid down for permanent pasture and not ploughed afterwards. I believe that permanent pasture land pays much better than arable land.

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59,725. You have a small proportion of arable land; do you wish to reduce that still more?—Yes; I believe if the farmers turned their attention to the upland portions of their farms, and to some of the worst land on the farms and cultivated it, it would be very much more to their advantage.

59,726. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is the upland the pasture portion?—Yes.

Breaking up old pasture.

59,727. Would you break up land already in pasture?—Well, on the uplands part of our farms we have old pasture that may have been lain 10 or 12 years, and cultivation would improve it very much; if that land was cultivated and laid down after a good crop of turnips, for instance.

59,728. Why do they not cultivate it?—Simply because the pasture land is more convenient and easier to work.

59,729. So that it comes to this that they find that it does not pay to cultivate the uplands portion?—Of course it takes less to work the best portions of the farm, and they do not trouble themselves with the upland portion.

59,730. If it would pay them to take trouble with the difficult portion, they would naturally do so, would they not?—There is no question it would pay them very well, but still in very many cases it is not so.

Competition for small farms.

59,731. To what do you attribute the fact of there being more competition for small farms than large farms?—You will get a dozen people able to take a small farm who would not be able to take a large farm.

59,732. There are a larger number of people with small capital than with large capital?—Yes.

Tenants' capital.

59,733. Have farmers lost much capital of late years?—Large farmers have lost a good deal.

Reduction of rent.

59,734. Have they had adequate reductions?—I do not say that they have had inadequate reductions; I think that landlords have met them very fairly.

59,735. Except the small landlords?—Some of them have done very little.

59,736. And therefore they have not met their tenants fairly?—They have not.

Value of land.

59,737. You mentioned an instance in which land was sold from 34 to 40 years' purchase?—Yes.

59,738. Is not that extremely high?—It was so. I know one sold for 40 years purchase, the rents have not been altered for 30 or 40 years, but I do not think that the rents were very low. I think that it was a fabulous price.

59,739. And that showed the very great desire of the Welsh tenant to become the owner of his holding?—I think so.

59,740. How is the price fixed—was it fixed by public auction?—No, it was simply between the agent and the tenant. Of course, the agent asked them to send their terms in, I know, in some cases.

59,741. It was practically sold by tender?—Well, to a certain extent it was competition, because some neighbouring farmers were anxious to secure the farms.

Compensation for deteriorated cultivation.

59,742. You say in your proof, "Restrictions in the "methods of cultivation should be to some extent "modified, and the tenant should be allowed to adopt "his own system of farming, subject to the landlord "being always allowed to claim for deterioration in the "value of the farm through negligence or over "cropping"?—Yes.

59,743. Do you think that the claim of the landlord would be sufficient to protect him against a bad farmer?—Yes, it would be a protection certainly.

59,744. Would it be sufficient?—I believe it would except in very exceptional cases. If a tenant knows that he has to pay a certain amount for deterioration or negligence, he would take proper precautions to keep away from them, I should say.

Inclosure of hill lands.

59,745. (*Mr. Channing.*) In cultivating those high grounds, would you contemplate your employing temporary grass as against laying it down for two or three years?—I would just say the high land would be very much better if cultivated every 10 or 12 years.

59,746. You would have better feeding grass in the interval?—Yes. The grass gets rough and mossy, and consequently you do not get the same quality of grass, and there wants a certain amount of alteration in the herbage.

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Freedom of cropping.

59,747 (*Mr. Little.*) On the subject of the restrictive agreements, do I understand that the law should prohibit those restrictions, or simply that you would be satisfied with the landlords and tenants making a different bargain?—I think that it is a case of a bargain between the landlord and tenant, and there ought to be given more latitude to the tenant.

59,748. Should it be imposed upon the landlord and tenant, so as to be compulsory?—No, not compulsory.

59,749. You think that it would be wise on the part of the landlords to give greater freedom of cultivation?—Just so.

59,750. But you do not propose to make agreements restricting cultivation illegal?—No, freedom would be all that was required.

59,751. Have those restrictive agreements the effect of preventing deterioration of the land?—I could not say that they have, not to a great extent.

Compensation for deteriorated cultivation.

59,752. You said that the fear of being charged for deterioration would make the tenants careful about cultivation?—I believe it would.

59,753. But there is that chance of their being charged for deterioration now?—Of course.

59,754. And it does not have the effect?—If there is a claim made, but the landlord cannot claim for deterioration unless the tenants claim for improvements.

59,755. He cannot claim under the Act, but he can claim under the agreement?—Decidedly.

59,756. Would you have the landlord able to claim for deterioration during the currency of a tenancy?—I should think that the landlord should be able to give notice.

59,757. To step in if anything wrong is going on?—Yes.

Rates.

59,758. Upon the question of rates you have shown that there has not been much increase in the rating in the pound, but has not the ability of the ratepayer to pay a rate, diminished?—Yes.

59,759. You are an occupying owner?—Yes.

59,760. And your returns have diminished considerably?—Yes, to a great extent.

59,761. Therefore if you pay the same rate it is a greater burden?—It is a greater burden.

59,762. Have you got a reduction in the assessment on the land that you occupy?—In one case I have, I had a permanent reduction.

59,763. I mean where you occupy your own land?—No, I have not.

59,764. Have you appealed?—I have appealed, but they have refused to reduce the assessment.

59,765. There is no question about the value having decreased?—No, the value would naturally decrease. I believe in every case where the landlords occupy their farms they have refused to allow anything in the rates.

59,766. But there are a considerable number of occupying owners in your district?—A large number.

59,767. Is your union mainly agricultural?—Entirely.

59,768. Which union is it?—Brecon

59,769. A large proportion of the rateable value is land?—Entirely, except the town of Brecon.

59,770. If all the land were reduced, the rate would rise?—Yes.

59,771. And you would only get the benefit of the increased rateable value of property other than land?—Certainly.

59,772. No great benefit would be derived from that if there was a universal lowering of assessments?—That would be so.

59,773. Those fortunate enough to get reductions do benefit by it?—Yes, at the expense of others.

59,774. Have you an apprehension of rates increasing under recent Acts of Parliament, expenses of Parish Councils and District Councils, for instance?—To a certain extent it is bound to increase the rates, because the establishment of all those councils will cost some money besides working expenses.

59,775. The working expenses of those numerous bodies will add to the rates even if they do not indulge in any ambitious expenditure?—It will add 1*d.* or 2*d.* per pound, and more in some parishes.

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59,776. With regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act, you propose that there should be an official arbitrator; do you think that that would do away with the necessity for farmers consulting some expert as to their claims?—Possibly not. The claims would be more uniform than if left to different people.

Official arbitrators.

59,777. Referring cases to one single arbitrator is advocated on the ground that you would get rid of two out of three persons employed, but would it?—I think it would be very much better; but it is very possible that people may be called in by the landlord or tenant afterwards. Still, a judgment given by one person would be preferable to a decision by two or three.

59,778. If an umpire is appointed it is the decision of one person?—Just so.

59,779. Now the referees for the respective parties act more or less as advocates for their own sides, and the umpire comes in and gives the decision?—That is where the evil comes in.

59,780. Would that evil be removed by the appointment of an official arbitrator?—I think so, to a certain extent.

59,781. By building up a system upon a series of decisions, the official arbitrator having given his decision, other referees would follow it?—Yes, I have acted last year and the year before simply by myself in many cases, and I think it is in every case preferable.

59,782. But there is a provision under the Agricultural Holdings Act for appointing a single referee?—It is quite possible.

59,783. You may take it from me that there is and further that there need not be any referee at all?—I think that it is very much preferable; that is my opinion.

Laying down permanent pasture.

59,784. (*Mr. Clay.*) You clearly think that it will be beneficial to your part of the country that there should be more old pasture laid down?—Yes, if laid down in an improved manner, that is, in good tilth, and cultivation.

59,785. Owing to the arable land, and the low price given for corn, it is not remunerative?—Very far from it. Only we are obliged to cultivate a certain amount or we cannot rear young stock. Of course, it is indispensably necessary for a farmer to have a certain amount of corn to produce stock for the markets.

59,786. If you had more pasture you would have more manure to cultivate the arable land?—Yes, it would be of great advantage, if more manure were produced, because it would improve the quality of the the land very much.

59,787. Is it not the case that some farmers have too much arable land, and they cannot do justice to it?—Yes, it is so, most decidedly in Wales. Of course we simply plough what is urgently necessary for the rearing of stock, and it is very little grain that is sold in any case in our county, with the exception of barley.

59,788. I gather from you that in laying down pasture land, and making it so much more valuable to both landlord and tenant, you think the Agricultural Holdings Act should recognise it, and give compensation to the tenant, who has made the pasture land?—Most decidedly; it would be an inducement to the tenants to keep the land in a higher state of cultivation, knowing that they would be repaid if they removed, or died, and that their families would be recouped.

59,789. To make pasture land, would not it take more cake, especially for sheep, to being that pasture land to perfection?—Not very much more.

59,790. But it takes more time than people think to really make pasture land?—Of course the land would be properly prepared, and made of fine tilth and good cultivation.

59,791. Is it your experience that you cannot lay down good pasture land without you begin with arable land in a good condition to form that pasture land in the long run?—It ought to be in condition to be laid down. The condition of the land ought to be improved by grain cropping, and things of that kind, so that it should be in a condition to be laid down for permanent pasture.

59,792. If you lay down pasture land, and do not feed it, it will remain poor, will it not?—Possibly.

59,793. So that increased feeding by the tenant should benefit the land, and the tenant should have the benefit of it too?—Decidedly, he ought to have the benefit of it; but still land varies in different district, and some land would require more attention and more improvements than others.

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59,794. At the same time you think that it should come under the Agricultural Holdings Act, and that the tenant should have the advantage of that?—Yes, the tenant should have the advantage of any benefit that he confers upon the holding.

Payment of compensation as between outgoing and incoming tenants.

59,795. Regarding the outgoing tenant and the landlord, should not it be a matter between them in the way of compensation, and not with the incoming tenant?—I think it would be preferable that the landlord should deal with the outgoing tenant.

59,796. But the landlord and the outgoing tenant are the only contracting parties. What does the incoming tenant know about it when he offers for the farm?—Of course the incoming tenant would know from the landlord or the agent. The agent would inform the incoming tenant of the proceedings.

59,797. Is it fair or reasonable that the tenant should turn the compensation over to the incoming tenant, he paying the rent by the increased value that the outgoing tenant has made?—I think if the incoming tenant gets the benefit of the improvements made by the tenant that he should pay for them.

59,798. Does not a landlord often value his farm according to the increased value that the manures have made?—It is quite possible, but still an incoming tenant may be similarly treated in leaving another farm.

59,799. But if the incoming tenant has to pay on an improved farm, he is paying twice over?—I do not know where the rent has been increased. But it is possible that it may be so. I do not think that it is fair that the rent should be increased upon the value of the increased improvements.

59,800. When a tenant offers for farms on a high condition of manures, does not he pay according to that?—Very often so.

59,801. If he has to pay the landlord's share of what he is getting for the land, is not he paying for it twice over?—No doubt it has been so.

59,802. (*Mr. Channing.*) Do the new tenants get the advantage of those abatements that are given for five years?—Yes, they are given to the new and to the old, I believe.

59,803. Then the new tenant would take it subject to the abatements?—The abatements are not denied to the new tenants, so far as I know.

Permanent pasture.

59,804. (*Chairman.*) How long does it take in your county for good pasture to come into effect, three or four years?—Of course the artificial grasses would lose in three or four years, and in the case of five or six years the good pasture would run out. It would depend upon the quality of the land. Good land would make good pasture sooner than bad land; high land would not come quite as soon.

59,805. How long would it take good land?—Between four and five years, but the other land a little longer.

Inclosure hill lands.

59,806. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You wish to see a large acreage of unenclosed common, mountain land, enclosed. You are only referring to sheep runs, I suppose?—Yes, it is principally the sheep runs.

59,807. Would any part of the existing commons be broken up into arable enclosed?—There are several small commons in my neighbourhood, and one with quite as good land as any on my farm, but still it is an open common, and I have no control over it, but simply to turn so much stock there.

59,808. Would it pay to break it up?—I am certain that it would. There are a large number of those small commons throughout the country, and some of them are very good land, which could be cultivated and very much improved.

59,809. There are many commons, you say, upon which the farmers have rights but do not exercise them?—When farmers reside at a distance of six or eight miles, it is too much trouble to drive them there and back, and consequently the "brinkers"—the adjoining farmers—get the benefit of the rights of those other people.

59,810. How would they be benefited by the enclosure?—Of course the land would be fenced, and they could do what they liked with it.

59,811. Do you mean that each person having rights, whether landowners, or commoners, should have his

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land allotted to him so that it could be fenced off?—Yes, and if they did not like to graze it, they could rent it off to some adjoining owners, and get paid for it.

59,812. Do you know any Welsh commons that are put under regulations?—No, I have heard that there are regulations in some places, but I do not know of any case in point.

59,813. They have been enclosed more or less, but access has been allowed to the public?—Yes, it is possible. I think there are certain commons in Carmarthenshire that have been inclosed some years ago, but the expenses are very heavy and it is practically purchasing the land.

59,814. You do not know whether it is any benefit to the farmer in such a case?—I could not say from experience, but I know in the case of this hill there was a surveyor appointed many years ago and his estimate was 800*l.* to 900*l.* to enclose 700 acres of ground or about 25*s.* an acre, and we thought then that the expense would be too much, and the thing was never considered afterwards.

Valuation under the custom of the county.

59,815. (*Chairman.*) When you act as arbitrator between the outgoing and the incoming tenant, on what basis do you make your award? Do you take the Agricultural Holdings Act as your basis?—No, the award generally given in our county is under mutual agreement, and we generally allow for all purchased stuffs.

59,816. Is that upon the custom of the country?—There is a custom to some extent, I do not know that it is a law—it is a custom.

59,817. Is it more favourable to the outgoing tenant than the landlord?—Yes, it is more so. They prefer valuation under the custom rather than under the Act.

59,818. It was the intention that where the custom is more favourable than the Act that the Act would not be used?—It is allowed.

59,819. That was the object of the Act, to make a minimum which would apply where there was no custom, but where the custom was more favourable than the Act, then the custom should apply?—Quite so.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

59,820. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Why are tenant farmers in your district so anxious to buy their farms and to pay such high prices?—It is a sense of security, and they know that afterwards they would be able to improve the farms and remain on them.

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59,821. Are they better off after they buy them than before?—I know in many cases they are not so well off, but they feel a sense of security, and that goes a great way.

Inclosure of Brecon Forest.

59,822. (*Mr. Elton.*) Can you give me at all the date of the report on the enclosure of the great forest of Brecon?—1819 was the date of the Commissioners' award.

59,823. And then the Blue Book of Commons of 1844 goes fully into the Breconshire case?—Yes, I believe so. I have got the award in my possession at home. There was an Act passed in 1816 for enclosing the whole forest, but afterwards an Act actually passed, based upon the report of the Commissioners, which was that the expense would be more than the value of the land, and consequently it was left unenclosed, and has ever been so.

59,824. I think that in the Blue Book of 1844 the history of the Breconshire commons is given pretty much as you gave it, that it was not worth enclosing or fencing?—Quite so.

Unenclosed sheep runs.

59,825. (*Lord Rendel.*) In your experience have difficulties or disputes arisen between the owners or the shepherds of different flocks upon those unenclosed sheep runs?—Difficulties continually occur. A great quarrel has existed for two or three years between two different occupiers in our county, they were summoned before the magistrates and fined many times; and last summer they agreed to refer it to arbitration in order that the boundaries of the two sheep walks should be defined and marked; I was the referee, and was there, and had a lot of bother with the parties. Of course party feeling ran high; at last I defined the boundaries, and, so far, they seemed to agree much better.

59,826. (*Mr. Elton.*) Is dogging still in vogue?—Dogging and killing and everything. I think it would be very desirable in that sense that all the commons should be enclosed.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. G. J. Roberts.

Mr. Griffith Jones Roberts called and examined.

Mr. G. J. Roberts.

59,827. (*Chairman.*) What part of Wales do you live in?—I live in Anglesea, but I farm both in Anglesea and Carnarvonshire—on both sides of the Straits.

Particulars of witness' farm.

59,828. What do you farm?—I farm 320 acres in Anglesea and about 300 acres in Carnarvonshire.

59,829. Is any of it your own land?—No.

59,830. And you hire this land from some other landowner?—Yes, I farm under two landowners, I act as agent for one of them.

Depression in Anglesea.

59,831. Speaking of Anglesea first, what is the position of Anglesea as regards the depression?—The depression has told upon Anglesea a good deal; it is a county that rears a great quantity of stock, and all the grain would be oats, it is not a wheat-growing county, and during the low prices of animals it suffered very much.

59,832. Was that in 1893 you are speaking of?—There has been a great reduction in the price of stock before 1893, and so, when the stock was reduced, it told very much upon the breeders of stock and the feeders of cattle.

System of cultivation.

59,833. What is the system of agriculture in Anglesea?—Grazing and rearing cattle and sheep; and what corn crop is grown is almost entirely oats.

59,834. Mainly for feeding cattle?—No, there is a great deal of oats sent out of the county; and the straw, again, is used for cattle in the winter.

59,835. What proportion of your farm is arable land?—It will be about 50 acres I have under tillage the same year; 300 acres can be ploughed, there being 20 acres of waste land.

59,836. Is that about the general proportion?—Yes.

59,837. About one to six?—Yes, never more than 60 acres.

Dairying.

59,838. Is there any dairying in the county?—Yes, but I do not keep a dairy.

59,839. But there is some?—Yes; inasmuch as there are many calves reared, they have to keep a lot of dairy cows.

59,840. In your own district, and on your own farm it is merely the rearing of stock?—Yes; and all through the county.

Reduction of rent.

59,841. Is there anything in the shape of permanent reduction?—No, I do not think there has been a permanent reduction anywhere.

Size of farms.

59,842. What size of farms are they?—From 40 acres up to 400 and 500 acres.

59,843. Are there many small farmers holding between 40 and 120 acres?—Yes, a great many.

Large and small farmer compared.

59,844. How have those done; have they done better than the larger farmers?—Yes. I think the small farmers from 15 to 80 acres did not suffer at all from the depression till the price of butter and pigs were reduced. They depended mostly upon the feeding of pigs and dairy cows, and did not plough, except what they required for their own use.

59,845. When did they begin to suffer?—They seemed to make a fair living profit up to eighteen months ago

59,846. What affected them?—Fat pigs were reduced a great deal in price, and butter. They suffered also when the price of cattle gave way, but yearling cattle have been selling very much better than the two and three-year old cattle, which have been kept on the larger farms.

Price of cattle.

59,847. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Is it only the last two years the young cattle have been selling better?—Yes. There was a great panic about four years ago in the prices of cattle, from over-production. When grain and tillage farming was unprofitable, people went to rear stock, and they over-reared till the country got rather flooded with young stock, and then about two years ago they left off rearing, to a great extent, and so the calves were sent first to Manchester and Liverpool, and other

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districts, and sold as fat, and the result was that there was a great scarcity of young stock, especially after the dry summer of three years ago; so that the price of young stock increased gradually, and are now selling at remunerative prices.

59,848. (*Chairman.*) The great drought of 1893 in England caused a great fall in the price of lean stock then?—It did, till the winter passed over.

59,849. And in consequence of the great fall in price a great many farmers gave up rearing?—But those very farmers, owing to the price of fodder, had to buy again, and the prices increased the following summer.

59,850. In your part of the country they have suffered from the drought and the consequent want of demand for stock in England?—Yes. The price for oats has been reduced from 17*s.* to 12*s.* a quarter; it used to be 18*s.* to 1*l.*

59,851. No. I am talking of those farmers that reared cattle?—Those that reared cattle and sold them to those that grazed them and fed them did better; but all those who fed them had to sell at a low rate, owing to the present low price of beef.

59,852. And the small farmers did better than the large ones?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

59,853. And there is no reduction of rent so far?—Not in Anglesea. There has been in some places in Carnarvonshire.

59,854. The evidence you have given so far as to Anglesea. Does it apply also to Carnarvonshire?—To a great extent.

59,855. But there have been some reductions of rent there?—In South Carnarvonshire, on Captain Wynn Griffith's estate, they have reduced the rents on farms over 200 acres, and the smaller tenants have got abatements.

Wages.

59,856. The small farmers have not felt the cost of labour so much as the large ones, I suppose?—They have not.

59,857. Have wages increased considerably?—Very much in our district.

59,858. Both in Carnarvonshire and Anglesea?—Yes. A great number of the Anglesea workmen go to Carnarvon to the State quarries.

59,859. What has the increase been?—We have to give now from 16*s.* to 1*l.* a week to our best workmen.

59,860. How does that compare with 10 and 15 years ago?—They used to be then from 12*s.* to 17*s.* per week.

59,861. And now they are from 16*s.* to 1*l.* That is nearly 30 per cent. increase?—I may say that that has been going on during the last 20 or 25 years.

59,862. Is that a gradual increase over the whole of that period?—It has been about the same for the last 10 or 12 years.

59,863. The increase went on between 10 and 12 years ago, and has since remained stationary. Is that so?—Yes.

59,864. The increased wages of the labourers, having regard to the low price of food, must make them much better off?—Certainly.

59,865. One of the difficulties of the large farmers must be the increase of wages?—And the reduction in the price of cattle and corn.

59,866. And the effect of the wages on the small farmers is not felt because they do not employ so much labour?—No; they do the most of the work themselves.

59,867. Is there any reduction in the number of labourers employed?—Yes. There are now mowing machines and reaping machines introduced. The farmers find they have to use them; but even then there is a scarcity of labourers in our district.

59,868. That has kept up the wages, I suppose?—Yes.

59,869. Has any amount gone out of cultivation in those districts?—No.

Deteriorated cultivation.

59,870. Are the tenants from being short of capital not able to farm the land so well or keep it in so good heart?—That is more generally seen now by going through the country. Some are more slovenly kept, and the hedges are neglected; and we generally know that they cannot afford to farm so well.

Bad seasons.

59,871. Did those two counties suffer from the dry seasons?—Very much.

59,872. There was very little hay produced, I suppose?—Yes; and no pasture during the summer months.

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59,873. And they were obliged to sell off their stock at low prices, and the following year to re-buy?—Yes, and pay a great deal for artificial food.

59,874. Then the following year, 1894, was a good year, I suppose?—Yes.

59,875. But from the scarcity of stock many of them did not benefit as they would have done?—No; the stock was too dear to pay for the grazing.

59,876. Has the present year's drought affected them?—It has.

59,877. The drought of April, May, and June told upon some districts very heavily, I believe?—Yes.

59,878. There was a very light hay crop, and very little straw, I suppose?—Very little.

59,879. Then you had two bad years out of three?—Yes.

59,880. Then it would be clear that the larger farmers have three causes. First, the low prices of their productions; and, secondly, the increased price of labour; and, thirdly, the bad seasons?—Yes; and I think I can say increased rates.

Rates.

59,881. What has been the increase of rates?—In certain districts there are now rates paid that we never used to hear of before.

59,882. What do the rates amount to?—The poor rates are as high as they have ever been. I see here by the demand note that the poor rate is 3*s.* 1*d.* in the £ in the last 12 months.

59,883. Does that include the general rates?—No.

59,884. Are you sure of that?—I will show you the demand note (*handing the same to the Chairman*).

59,885. I expect that does include it. I see it does. 2*s.* in the £ poor rate; 2*d.* in the £ for the county rate; 6*d.* for the sanitary rate; and 3½*d.* the school board rate. They are all included. How does that compare with a few years ago?—There are now what they call special rates again, especially in some parts of Carnarvonshire, for the drainage of villages and water supply; and all these have also come upon the farmers in these parishes.

59,886. Is that a special rate in your own parish?—Yes.

59,887. What did it come to?—It comes to, I have no doubt, about 6*d.* in the £.

59,888. Is land partially exempt from that?—No, it is charged upon the farms, and upon the tenants who live in the houses.

59,889. But not upon the land?—The ratepayers are liable and charged, and all the farmers as well.

59,890. It is charged upon the houses?—Upon the houses in the villages, and also upon the farms that are in the parish.

59,891. Is it charged at the full value of the farm; does not the land get the benefit of being assessed to only one-fourth of its value?—No, not at all.

59,892. (*Mr. Little.*) Not for the special rate?—No.

59,893. Is it a rural sanitary charge?—It will be a rural sanitary charge.

59,894. It is spent by the rural sanitary authority?—Yes.

59,895. Would not the land be charged at one-fourth for the special rate?—It may be so, but we do not consider that they ought to be charged on the farms.

59,896. It was charged one-fourth; that was the question the Chairman put to you?—It may be.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,897. (*Chairman.*) Did you hear the evidence of Mr. Owen Price on the subject of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and rating, and upon other matters, affecting the remedies for agricultural depression?—Yes.

Compensation.

59,898. Do you agree with him?—To some extent I agree.

59,899. To what extent do you agree with him; take the Agricultural Holdings Act for instance?—I think that the Agricultural Holdings Act, with regard to manure and feeding matters, is very liberal. I think that is more liberal than any system, or any custom of the country, is allowing; but with regard to permanent improvements, I do not think that it is sufficient.

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59,900. You agree that certain improvements should be transferred from the first schedule to the third?—I think so.

59,901. Then I suppose that in your county the custom of the country was not quite so good as the custom of the country in Breconshire?—I think the tenants almost prefer the custom of the country to the Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,902. I thought you said just now that the Agricultural Holdings Act dealt very liberally?—With regard to artificial manure and cake consumed on the land.

59,903. But I suppose the custom of the country would only apply to things of that kind?—I think the custom with regard to turnips, and straw, and manure, that has to be valued; that is more liberal according to the custom of the different counties.

Rates.

59,904. Are there any other matters than those which Mr. Price spoke about that you would like to refer to?—I think that the rates ought to be on a different basis, especially the poor rates; and, with regard to those special rates, I think that the owners of the houses who have all the benefit ought to pay towards the special rates, and not the farmers.

59,905. You think that the rates ought to be divided between the owner and the occupier?—Yes, of the houses.

59,906. And the farms should be exempt altogether?—I do.

59,907. My impression is that the farmers are exempt to the extent of three-fourths of the rates, for special rates?—But that also is a great deal, where there happens to be an outlay of 500*l.* or 1,000*l.* in drainage, and in bringing water to a village in populous districts.

59,908. You think that they ought to be exempt from those special rates?—Yes, and the sanitary laws are so strict that they are continually compelling villages and populous districts to spend money upon water supply and drainage.

Position of labourers.

59,909. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are the labourers doing well enough to enable them to take small farms when they become vacant?—Yes, the men who save 200*l.* or 300*l.* take farms, and they are generally the best tenants; and they are always ready to take a farm of from 50 to 80 acres.

59,910. Do they go on from the small holding to the larger ones?—They do sometimes.

59,911. So that the agricultural classes in Carnarvon and Anglesea are still able to cultivate the land?—Yes; and when a farm gets vacant, there are generally plenty of applications for those farms from men with more capital than those who have gone before.

59,912. Have the men taking farms at recently reduced rents done the best?—Yes, as a rule.

Remissions of rent.

59,913. You say there are no permanent reductions of rent. Have there been remissions of rent?—They were pretty general at the commencement of the depression and they are dropping off one by one.

59,914. Have not rents fallen upon re-letting?—They have not, but the general feeling is that some of the higher rented farms should be reduced permanently, and that would be fairer than abatement.

59,915. Has not the standard of rents fallen since 1879?—No, it has not, and I think that on some estates the rent is much higher than others.

59,916. Owing to the keen competition?—That might have been, and some estates have been valued at perhaps the very prosperous times and the rents have continued the same since.

Competition for farms.

59,917. (*Chairman.*) When a farm is vacant are there plenty of applicants for it?—Not so many for the larger ones of late years.

59,918. Take the smaller ones, how do they compare?—I suppose five would apply for a small farm to every one that would apply for a large one.

59,919. Are they let again at the old rents?—They have been doing.

Bankruptcy of farmers.

59,920. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Have there been many cases of bankruptcy amongst farmers?—Occasionally.

59,921. Not during the last two years?—I cannot say there have been more, although we find that many are little better off than if they were bankrupts.

59,922. Owing to loss of capital?—Inasmuch as the tenants are getting poor and short of money and unable to pay their rates they get backward with their rents.

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59,923. But it has not reached bankruptcy in many cases?—No, they cling on for a long time.

Fall in prices.

59,924. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) When, in your opinion, was the commencement of the depression in our part of the country?—When the price of wool was reduced about 18 years ago, and when the price of grain again was reduced soon after that, and then when the price of beef was reduced—it was 9*d.* per lb. when I first took the Anglesea farm about 18 years ago, and now it is as much as we can do to get 6*d.* per lb. for beef, after we have been able to get 9*d.* for it—that would be 3*d.* difference in the price of fat cattle. As I am not a breeder, but a grazier and feeder, the price of beef has been reduced 3*d.* per lb. in the last 19 years.

59,925. Rents were generally raised previous to the depression, were they not?—Yes, they were.

Reduction of rent.

59,926. And since then they have not been reduced?—I do not know of any estate that has made a reduction.

59,927. What would you say is the average remission in Anglesea and Carnarvonshire?—I think the highest was 15 to 25 per cent., and I think now the last year or two there are only about one or two estates that remitted anything at all.

59,928. Do you think that rents are too high?—I think that rents are too high for farmers to make a fair living profit. If anything else could be reduced I do not think that rents, taking them as an average, are too high, but some farms are more highly rented than others; it is the general burden coming upon tenant farmers that I complain of.

Average rent.

59,929. What is the general average rent of Anglesea—is it about 1*l.* an acre, or more?—I suppose it would be. I do not think it is much over 1*l.* an acre. There is a great deal of inferior land, and a great deal of good land in the county. I think it lets from 10*s.* to 12*s.* up to 32*s.* an acre.

59,930. Is there much unenclosed land, or is it mostly enclosed?—It is mostly enclosed.

59,931. (*Chairman.*) The rateable value apparently in Anglesea is only 43,000*l.* for 60,000 acres, which is a good deal less than 1*l.* per acre?—Of course there may be a greater quantity of poor land letting at 12*s.* and 14*s.* or 15*s.*, than of good farms, which rent at 30*s.* and 40*s.*

59,932. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) There is some land in Anglesea which is let as accommodation land for 2*l.* and 3*l.* per acre, is there not?—That may be let for one season only.

59,933. How is it that these rents have been so well maintained in Anglesea?—I do not think that land in Anglesea, taking it altogether, has been as highly rented as Carnarvonshire. I think that the present mode of farming and rearing of stock has been by far the most profitable, and Anglesea is particularly adapted for that.

59,934. Have tenants applied for permanent reductions?—They have done; they have applied for reductions, and perhaps an abatement has been given them.

59,935. Have they been satisfied with the abatement? Well, those that got an abatement felt grateful, but those that did not get any were very ungrateful, so that it has not been the universal rule. It is merely the largest landowners who have granted them.

Farmers' capital.

59,936. What do you say is sufficient capital per acre for a farmer?—I think the farmer ought to have from 10*l.* an acre to be able to make the best of his farm.

59,937. A mixed farm?—Yes. A stock farm takes so much more to stock than a tillage farm.

59,938. What per-centage do you think he ought to make upon his capital?—Really, I do not know. We have not been making anything of late years. I think it has been a losing game with large farmers especially, if they kept up their farms well and attended to them right, as they should have done.

59,939. They have been paying rent out of capital?—Some of them.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

59,940. Do you know of any estate in Anglesea where the Agricultural Holdings Act has been adopted throughout?—No, I do not. I think there is very little knowledge of it altogether. I think that it was at the time of the Welsh Commission on agriculture that

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many of them got to hear of it. The farmers seldom know of it until they get into trouble about leaving the farm, and they go to a lawyer, and that is the first time they get to hear of it.

Custom in Anglesey.

59,941. What is our custom—it does not provide for compensation for unexhausted improvement, does it?—No. There are some very good agreements. Lord Penrhyn has liberal agreements, and Mr. Assheton Smith grants liberal agreements which in one way comes up to a lease. They grant so many years for draining to recoup themselves, and so many years for building done by a tenant to recoup themselves.

59,942. Is that paid by the incoming tenant or the landlord?—If the tenant is disturbed, the landlord will pay.

59,943. And raise the rent?—I suppose he is at liberty to do that, and it is right that he should.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

59,944. Is there a desire in Anglesea and Carnarvonshire for the tenant farmers to buy their farms?—Most of the farms sold during the last 10 years in Anglesea and Carnarvon have been bought by farmers.

59,945. Do they borrow the money?—In many cases.

59,946. Are they better off? Why do they buy them?—They do not like to lose their homes, and they have spent money on their farms, and in that case they are willing to pay interest on the money, even if it be a little more than the old rent, sooner than leave.

59,947. (*Mr. Channing.*) How large are the farms that they buy?—Sir Richard Bulkeley sold some farms this year of the size of 400 and 500 acres.

59,948. The farmers have been able to buy?—Yes, with borrowed money.

Value of land

59,949. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What is the average price paid per acre?—There was a reference by the last witness about the years purchase, and it was mentioned that it was about 34 years purchase to 40 years. Of course that depends upon the rental of the farm. I have no doubt that farms of 28 and 27 years' purchase have been high rented, and then other cheap farms run up to 32 years, 33 years, and 34 years' purchase; but that depends entirely upon whether the farm is high rented at the time or low rented.

59,950. There was a big farm sold the other day for 40 years' purchase?—Yes, that is one of the best farms anywhere to be found.

59,951. (*Mr. Everett.*) What amount per acre did that make?—That farm was only 251 acres, and it sold for 12,250*l.*

59,952. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What did the tenant offer for it?—The tenant offered 10,000*l.*

59,953. He started as a labourer, and farmed a small farm, and gradually went from one farm to another, until he got this farm, and was able to offer 10,000*l.* for it; is not that so?—Yes, but that was an exceptional case, and an exceptional farm. That farm belonged to a college; it was low rented, and the farmer taking it had almost renewed the farm. It was naturally good land; I do not think there was better land in Anglesea; he drained it, and walled it, and built buildings upon it, and thorn hedges alongside the walls; and it was particularly adapted for grazing. A river ran through each side of the farm, and there was water in every field and a road going through the centre of it; and it can be let as accommodation land for grazing.

59,954. What rent is he paying?—I think the rent he was paying was 300*l.*—the advanced rent.

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59,955. (*Mr. Elton.*) With respect to what you have said to the Chairman, are not there some sandy tracts about Anglesea that are very poor?—Very poor.

Character of land.

59,956. And very large tracts of land?—Yes.

59,957. That does not come into the pound per acre? It will make the average to be a good deal under the pound. It is worthless for sheep. A great quantity of it is rabbit warren.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

59,958. (*Chairman.*) When the tenants have bought their farms they do not borrow the whole of the purchase money, do they?—Well, I think where they have well bought they got very near to the value. There are some farms that have been sold to the tenants privately by some landowners in Anglesea—Lord Boston, and others. Lord Boston allowed them to get the farms from 28 to 30 years' purchase, according to the rental, and in those cases where they bought them well they were able to advance about as much as they gave for them.

59,959. But where they have given a fair average price they would not be able to borrow the whole of the purchase money?—No.

59,960. But, generally speaking, they would only borrow about two-thirds?—Or three-fourths. Yes. Timid people who did not know the value of farms would not advance nearly the whole of the purchase money.

59,961. The great bulk of them would have to produce some of the purchase money?—Yes.

System of cultivation.

59,962. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is the bulk of the land in Anglesea pasture or arable—mixed?—Some portion in Anglesea will graze always, and is kept for grazing; and they plough a certain portion again, and the country is well adapted for turnips and oats.

59,963. So there is a good deal under the plough as well as pasture land?—Yes, a great quantity.

Value of land.

59,964. Has there been any depreciation in the freehold value of land in Anglesea?—I think there has.

59,965. Should you say that the freehold value, generally, of agricultural land in Anglesea had kept up to its standard of 25 years ago?—Yes. But of late years the landowners have not been purchasing farms. They have got rather timid about buying land, so that as a rule merely the tenants have bid for them, and they have been bought in most cases at a reduced value.

59,966. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) And the fact of a great many owners selling their land has made the tenants buy?—Yes, and a great many have been forced to buy, owing to that.

59,967. (*Mr. Everett.*) There has not been a very large depreciation in the value, then?—Not so much in the part of the country that I come from as in England.

59,968. Is that mainly with grass land or mixed?—I think the Welsh farmers' mode of mixed farming has helped them more, and they are very thrifty, and they have prospered when other farmers have not been able to do so.

59,969. Is more than half the land in grass, do you suppose?—Well, I should say there would be more under grass, but then that is not in permanent pasture. Every farm will not have as much under tillage as under grass.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. J. Davies.

Mr. John Jenkin Davies called and examined.

Mr. J. J. Davies.

59,970. (*Chairman.*) Are you a tenant farmer at Blaenwaun, near Lampeter, in Cardiganshire?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farm.

59,971. What amount of land do you farm?—Only a small-sized farm; it is about 30 acres.

59,972. Do you own any land yourself or are you merely a tenant farmer?—I am a tenant.

59,973. Whom do you hold under?—My father is my landlord.

59,974. Do you pay rent to your father?—Yes.

59,975. What do you pay?—I have offered him 30*l.*, but he has not had it all yet; he generally gives an abatement.

59,976. What has been the general course of depression in your district; has any land gone out of cultivation?—No. They put a great deal of land down to pasture, and, instead of tilling the soil and growing corn, they have taken advantage of the common allotments, and they plough parts of that land up. They put the better land of the lowlands down to pasture and till parts of the allotments that have been given to the farmers from the common lands.

System of cultivation.

59,977-8. What is the general course of cultivation in your district?—It is mixed farming all through Cardiganshire.

59,979. Is there much arable land?—Yes; but not so much as there used to be; it is down to half what it used to be.

59,980. What do they do, do they rear or fatten cattle or what?—In some districts along the river valleys

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there is very good grazing land and they fatten cattle there. Then, generally, every farmer through the county does a little in pigs, butter, and cheese, and he rears a horse or two or more, and he sells generally store cattle.

Size of farms.

59,981. What is the size of the farms generally?—From 20 acres up to 300.

59,982. Are there a great many small ones?—There are more small ones than large ones; generally they are from 20 to 100 acres.

Reduction of rents.

59,983. Has there been any reduction of rent?—There has been no permanent reduction that I know of. There have been abatements of from 1*s.* in the pound to 5*s.* or 6*s.* even in some years.

59,984. But not continuously year after year?—No, it is not permanent; they are only abatements.

59,985. Have abatements been made year after year on the same farms?—On some estates there have been abatements for two or three rents; then at the last rent audits they have not had any.

59,986. When did the abatements begin?—About four years ago.

59,987. Was that in 1892 or 1893 should you say?—That would be in 1892.

Bad seasons.

59,988. Was that a bad year?—The depression was getting worse and worse during 1892, though it had commenced years before.

59,989. Did the country suffer in 1893 from the drought?—Yes, severely; and I daresay some tenant farmers dependent on the farms had to feed so much of their stock during the summer of 1893 that they have not got over it yet.

59,990. What has been the condition of the agricultural labourers?—They are better off now than they have ever been during the memory of the oldest people in the neighbourhood.

Wages.

59,991. Have wages increased?—Yes they have increased.

59,992. Since when did they begin to increase?—My father kept a diary of the wages he paid. He commenced farming in 1864 and he had a farm servant—a man servant—then at 10*l.*

59,993. Living in the house?—Yes, hired for 12 months; now he would have to pay from 25*l.* to 28*l.* for a man in the same position.

59,994. Without going back quite so far as that, go back to the year 1880; can you tell us what has been the increase in wages since then?—They have been increasing every year.

59,995. Is there a competition with the collieries there?—Yes.

59,996. They draw away the men, I suppose?—Yes; agricultural labourers are very scarce.

59,997. What do they get now?—From 2*s.* to 2*s.* 6*d.* a day when they work on their own food; but in our district the system is that when a labourer works on a farm he gets all his food with the farmer.

59,998. What does he get then in money?—He gets from 1*s.* 6*d.* to 2*s.*

59,999. Then if they do not get their food with the farmers, they get 2*s.* 6*d.*, is that it?—Yes.

60,000. How much has that been increased by in the last 10 or 15 years?—It has not increased so much in the labour of working day labourers; it has been increased mostly in the servants that have been hired annually for a twelvemonth.

60,001. You say that the labourers, you think, have not suffered at all, and that they are better off than ever they were?—Yes.

60,002. I suppose, therefore, the rise in the price of labour has been one of the difficulties of the farmers?—Yes. Then they are working less hours than they used to.

Large and small farmers compared.

60,003. I suppose the small farmers do not employ many labourers?—Not very many.

60,004. They work themselves?—Generally. I think that in Cardiganshire the agricultural depression affects the small farmers—I mean farmers of about mostly 50 to 120 acres—worse than it does the large farmers.

60,005. Take the smaller farmers still, who cultivate from 50 to 100 acres. What has been the effect upon those?—Taking the farmers of, say, 40 up to 80 acres, they work it generally themselves, having some children who help them do the work.

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60,006. Therefore they have not suffered from the increased price of labour?—They have not suffered so much. The little tenant farmers with farms of from 80 up to 120 or 150 acres suffer mostly.

Causes of depression.

60,007. Then I suppose you would say that the causes of the depression are the reduction of prices and the high price of labour?—Yes.

60,008. Have unfavourable seasons anything to do with it?—Yes.

60,009. You had a bad year in 1893, did you not?—Yes; and it was a bad year in 1894 too. It was too wet a season in the summer then. We had a very wet season. During our hay harvest it was very wet, and we could not get it in in good condition. This year it was too dry.

60,010. Has this year been a bad one?—Yes; but not quite so bad as 1893.

60,011. You have had a bad hay harvest, I suppose?—Bad hay and bad corn—about half the quantity of hay and just the same of straw. The ear of the corn was not so very bad, but the straw was very scarce.

60,012. Have you heard the evidence of the last two witnesses?—Yes.

Agricultural Holdings Act. Tenants' improvements.

60,013. Do you agree generally with them as to the Agricultural Holdings Act and those other matters upon which they spoke?—Yes, I agree with Mr. Price about the Agricultural Holdings Act. There is one thing I should like to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act: that is, that a tenant farmer generally, when he makes an improvement on his own farm, does it for his own sake chiefly, and of course, if it is good for the tenant it is good for the landlord as well; but if a tenant farmer wants the consent of his landlord for improvements on the farm, the tenant farmer thinks, perhaps, that he disappoints the landlord by asking him to give his consent to do these improvements; and so I would like to have improvements done generally on the farm by the tenant farmer without the consent of the landlord.

60,014. I see in the remedies you suggest in your proof for this state of things you agree very much with Mr. Price with regard to State loans, the reduction of rates, the better education of the farmers, and the promotion of co-operation in the manufacture and distribution of agricultural products?—Yes.

60,015. I suppose you have nothing much to add to what he said?—About State loans, I believe the tenant farmers, unless they have greater fixity of tenure than they have generally got now, would find that it would be no good to them, but for the occupying tenants State loans would be very good.

60,016. You want to promote occupying ownership?—Yes. The occupying owners who bought their farms, say, from 8 to 18 or 20 years ago, when land was very high, had to pay a very heavy rate of interest; some even bought their farms for more than they are worth, and as this depression has come on now, they are not able to pay their way. State loans, at a cheap rate of interest, would be very beneficial to them.

60,017. The mortgagees have not reduced their interest, I suppose?—Not to my knowledge.

Competition for farms.

60,018. When farms are vacant in your district are there applicants for them?—Yes, but not so much during the last two years as there used to be.

60,019. Is there a fair competition for them still?—Yes. All farms are let, but the small farms are more in demand than the large farms.

60,020. If there is a small farm vacant, would there be five or six applicants?—Yes, or even a dozen.

60,021. As many as a dozen?—Yes, very often, if it is situated in a good position, and there is pretty good soil.

60,022. For the larger farms there are not so many applicants?—Not so many.

60,023. But still they are let?—Yes.

60,024. At the old rents?—Generally.

60,025. Is there any difficulty in finding a tenant at the old rent?—There is no difficulty in finding a tenant at the old rent, except so far as that the applicants are not so many as they used to be.

Cultivation of enclosed hill lands.

60,026. (*Mr. Elton.*) I did not quite understand one answer you gave about tilling the allotments. You said

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something about turning the allotments into corn; what was it?—In Cardiganshire most of the Crown lands have been enclosed, and a portion given to every farm; the farmers put down the low land they have got to pasture, and in order to get straw and corn they till a part of these enclosures almost every year.

60,027. That was not forbidden, then?—It is not forbidden.

60,028. Do you think it is bad policy?—No, I think it is good policy.

60,029. It struck me so too, that it was good policy. They make their arable on the high land and they have got their bottom land in grass?—Yes, they put more of the bottom land in pasture than they used to do.

60,030. Then you said something about the people who had bought their farms and had mortgages on them—at 4 per cent. I suppose?—Yes, and even more than 4 per cent.

Interest on mortgages.

60,031. You said that the mortgagees did not reduce their interest?—No.

60,032. Do you know whether they have reduced it or not?—I have not heard of any reduction at all on the part of the mortgagees.

60,033. Have you ever heard of anyone asking the mortgagee to reduce it?—Yes, some of these occupying owners have changed mortgagees.

60,034. At a lesser rate of interest?—I do not believe they do much.

60,035. Perhaps not much, but they would not change if it was not for a lesser rate of interest, would they?—Some of the mortgagees wanted to have the money given up because of the depression; they wanted to invest somewhere else, and so the farmers had to give the money back.

60,036. In some parts of England I have understood that the mortgagees have had to reduce the rate of interest, because the farmers could always get another customer to advance the money for less; has that happened in your part?—No, it has not in our part.

60,037. Can you tell us whether the mortgagees have insisted on the old rate of interest or not?—Yes, they have.

60,038. Do you know of any case for certain?—I cannot say for a fact whether they have given a little reduction.

60,039. That is what I meant?—I do not think they have given it as a permanent reduction or as an abatement, but when the interest is paid perhaps they give a sovereign or two—as a gift more than anything else; I do not think it is anything further than that.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

60,040. Then you say that a good many of these gentlemen bought their farms, giving very large prices for them, thinking things were going to be good?—Yes.

60,041. Making a kind of speculation of it?—Yes, and they wanted to have the benefit of what they had improved on the farm.

60,042. They were going to make a benefit because things were rising?—Yes. They wanted to reap what they had sown in the land, I mean to say in the way of drainage and improving the soil.

60,043. Then you say the speculation did not succeed very well?—No, it does not.

60,044. That, I think, we all know, do we not, the speculation did not succeed, I said?—No, it did not succeed.

State loans.

60,045. Then you think the State ought to come and give them money to get straight?—I think it would be very good for them if they could get money cheaper than they do now. If their farms were put up for sale now they would not fetch within 20 or 25 per cent. of what was paid for them then.

60,046. It would apply also to anybody who bought estates a few years, would it not?—Yes, it would.

60,047. They bought a thing that they thought was going to be good, and it turned out bad, and you think the Government ought to compensate people generally who bought so?—Yes, I think that is so.

Inclosure of commons

60,048. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) You said something about common allotments; has any of the common been enclosed in your part of the country?—Yes, it has been enclosed in about five parishes in our immediate neighbourhood.

60,049. Who enclosed it?—The landlords pay for the fencing.

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60,050. Has that been a benefit to the farmers?—Yes, it has.

60,051. Is it much better than when they were allowed to send so many sheep, cattle, and so forth on to the land?—It has been a great benefit to those farmers who have their lands not adjoining the common land; but it has not been so much of a benefit to those who have their land adjoining the mountain land.

60,052. (*Mr. Elton.*) Because the brinkers took it all?—Yes, perhaps because they took a little more stock there than their fair share.

60,053. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) In your district are farmers able to make their rents out of their holdings now?—They are not. I am positive of it.

Position of farmers.

60,054. How is it they are paying more rent than they are able to make out of their holdings?—Many tenant farmers in our district take up something else as well. They do a little dealing in cattle, or find some office as sanitary inspector, or something of that kind—some little office such as clerk to an auctioneer, or an auctioneer, perhaps; they take something up to assist them to pay the rent.

60,055. That would mean a few of them, of course; but I am told the farmers know very well they are paying more rent than they ought to pay?—Yes.

60,056. Have they applied for a reduction?—Yes, they have.

Abatements of rent.

60,057. Has it been granted to them?—Abatements have been given.

60,058. Abatements?—Yes, but no permanent reduction.

60,059. Are they satisfied with the abatements?—I should think they are, because they are keeping on, and they do not want to leave their farms.

60,060. If they said they would give their farms up, what would be the result?—If they would all join I dare say they would get a reduction.

60,061. But they are afraid?—Yes, they are afraid. On some estates the tenants are afraid of their agent and landlord, on other estates they are not.

60,062. On which estate do they get on best—where they are afraid of the landlord and the agent, or where they are not?—Where they are not.

60,063. They are on better terms all round where they are not?—On much better terms.

60,064. Are the tenants and the landlords able to converse together, or is the language an obstacle?—They are mostly able to converse together.

Railway rates.

60,065. (*Mr. Channing.*) I see in your proof you refer to railway rates; what company serves your district?—The rates for foreign produce are cheaper than for home produce.

60,066. I was asking you what company serves your district?—The Manchester and Milford Railway Company.

60,067. Have you had any reduction in the rates charged since 1893?—No, we have not.

60,068. Were the rates raised in 1893?—They have been raised, but I could not tell you exactly, perhaps it was four or five years ago.

60,069. What you are prepared to state is, that you think that home produce ought to pay the same rate as the foreign produce?—Yes.

Ground Game Act.

60,070. Have you any special grievance to state about the Ground Game Act; I see you have put that down?—Yes; some landlords put it in their agreement that the tenant is not to touch the ground game, and has no rights to the ground game.

60,071. Have you seen agreements to that effect?—Yes.

60,072. Are they maintained?—Yes.

60,073. Kept up?—Yes.

60,074. Do you mean that tenants would have to leave if they used their rights under the Ground Game Act?—Most likely they would be summoned.

60,075. Is the Ground Game Act made a dead letter to any extent by those agreements in your district, for instance?—Yes; in some of the agreements it is made a dead letter.

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60,076. Are there a great quantity of rabbits in consequence?—Not so much as there used to be. I remember them more numerous than they are now.

Allotments and Small Holdings Act.

60,077. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What complaint have you to make of the Allotments Act and the Small Holdings Act?—The Small Holdings Act has not been taken advantage of in the district. It has not been made practicable by the county council.

60,078. Do you think it ought to be made a more working measure?—Yes. It ought to be made so that it could be worked out.

60,079. Has any use been made of it at all?—It has not been made use of at all.

60,080. Nor the Allotments Act?—No.

60,081. You are in favour of the more extended operation of those Acts?—Yes.

Rent of allotments.

60,082. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Are labourers very keen on getting allotments?—Some of them are very keen. As a rule, all the labourers would like to have a small allotment to keep a cow.

60,083. An acre or two?—Yes, three or four.

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60,084. How much an acre do they pay for allotments?—It is according to the quality of the soil—from 5*s.* up to 2*l.* 10*s.* an acre.

60,085. Do they rent them from some local authority or from the landowners?—From the landowners or the tenants, and then they are under-tenants.

60,086. I suppose allotments are really higher than the ordinary agricultural land?—Much higher.

60,087. If it were otherwise, and if they could get allotments at a reasonable rent, the men would perhaps take allotments;—No doubt they would.

60,088. Are the farmers against the labourers having allotments?—No, they are not against them, but they are afraid that the labourers will take some of the best land they have got, or that the labourers would want the best parts of the land.

60,089. You would not expect them to take the worst, would you?—No, of course not.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

One Hundred and Tenth Day.

Friday, 1st November 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. WALTER HUME LONG, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

MR. DUDLEY W. DRUMMOND, called and examined.

Mr. D. W. Drummond. 1 Nov. 1895.

60,090. (*Chairman.*) I understand you have been for eight years exclusively managing landed property in the county of Carmarthen?—I have.

Estates he manages.

60,091. And that you are now the agent for the Edwinsford Estate containing 10,700 acres, the Derllys Estate containing 3,300 acres, and Lord Cawdor's Estate containing 50,000 acres, making a total area of 64,000 acres?—Yes.

60,092. You are also a justice of the peace for the county, and an inspector under the Land Improvement Acts of the Board of Agriculture?—I am. I might state that the property in the county of Carmarthen is comprised in 39 parishes.

60,093. I believe you were brought up at an agricultural college, and that you have had the experience of the management of an estate in England?—I have.

60,094. So that your experience has not been confined to Wales?—Not altogether.

60,095. You have had opportunities of noticing the system of farming prevalent in most parts of England and Scotland?—I have.

60,096. But of course your immediate experience is connected with South Wales, and principally Carmarthenshire?—Yes.

Character of land in South Wales.

60,097. What is the general nature of the land that you are agent for?—The elevation of the lands under my care ranges from the sea-level farms through the valley of the main river Towy, with its rich alluvial soil, and thence by its tributaries gradually to the poorer upland and hill farms and sheep-walks at various altitudes up to 1,000 feet. The chief geological formations of the county are those of the coal measures, carboniferous limestone, old red sandstone, Llandillo flag, and argilaceous slates and rab strata. Coal (chiefly anthracite) is worked in large quantities in the eastern division of the county, and limestone, silica, clay, ironstone, lead and even gold is worked in the county.

Size of farms.

60,098. Is the extent of the farms very varied?—They range from 6 to 600 acres. It is difficult to strike a correct average, but they may be quoted roughly s being at from 60 to 140 acres.

Rents per acre.

60,099. What do the rents generally run at?—On hill farms they run from 3*s.* to 5*s.* per acre, on upland farms from 10*s.* to 12*s.* per acre, and on low ground from 15*s.* to 25*s.* per acre.

60,100. I suppose the hill farms are much larger than the average?—The hill farms are much larger in proportion; there are generally large sheep-walks comprised within them.

60,101. When you speak of 5*s.* per acre, you mean then that there is a great extent of sheep-run included?—Yes, there is a great extent of sheep-run, but attached to that there is a certain amount of low ground on which they keep a few dairy cows and young stock as well.

System of farming.

60,102. What is the general system of farming?—It is entirely that of stock-raising and dairying. The chief products consist of store cattle, horses, mountain and low-land sheep, lambs, wool, pigs, and general dairy produce.

60,103. What is the stock raised; is it cattle chiefly?—Cattle and sheep.

60,104. What is the dairying; is it butter or cheese?—Butter principally.

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Mr. D. W. Drummond. 1 Nov. 1895.

60,105. Where do they find a market?—There are several local markets of some importance. The main markets of the county are at places called Llandovery, Llandillo, Carmarthen, &c.

60,106. Do they make cheese?—They make skim-milk cheese to a great extent. One or two farmers lately have been making whole-milk cheese on the Caerphilly principle.

Caerphilly cheese.

60,107. What is the Caerphilly principle?—It is whole-milk cheese made on the Stilton principle, but I am not quite prepared to go into the details of it.

60,108. Is it a good quality of cheese?—Very good.

60,109. Do they find a local market for it?—No; it generally goes further away—at least it goes into the towns. The skim-milk cheese is marketed in the local districts among the country people, and the whole-milk cheeses generally go into the towns.

Co-operation in dairying.

60,110. Is there any co-operation among the farmers in making cheese and butter, or do they each separately make their own cheese and butter?—They each separately make it. We have started a Tenant Farmers' Butter Factory in our county. The land was given, and it was subsidised by the proprietor who gave it, but it has not turned out as great a success as it ought to be.

60,111. What is the nature of the factory? Is it merely a process of buying the butter from the farmers, and sorting it?—The milk comes in daily, and they treat it and separate it and make it into butter.

60,112. That is really what one would technically call a creamery; a factory is apparently a place where they buy the butter and sort it and make it up after the Normandy plan?—They call it the Tenant Farmers' Butter Factory there. I expect they do mix it up a good deal as well.

60,113. But they buy the milk and make it into whole cheese?—They buy the milk there and convert it into cheese and butter.

60,114. Why has it failed?—We put it on the tenant-farmers' principle, hoping that it might be more successful by removing any local prejudice in the matter, but it has not been so. I do not know why the tenant farmers in Wales are prejudiced against it.

60,115. The tenant farmers do not send their milk to it then?—No, they do not send their milk to it.

60,116. Then, financially, it has not been successful?—Not hitherto, but we are still hoping.

60,117. Is the product good?—Yes, the product is very good indeed. They sent some butter up to the Dairy Show the other day, and they were very highly commended. I could not say that all of it is very good, as I suppose there is a good deal mixed up according to the different requirements they sell it for.

60,118. How long has the factory been established there?—I think it would be about five years now, but I cannot remember exactly the date.

60,119. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do the farmers take back the skim-milk?—Some of them do, and with the remainder the pigs at the factory are fed.

Depression in Wales and England compared.

60,120. (*Chairman.*) Now, comparing your district with other districts in England, to what extent have you suffered from the depression?—I do not think we in Wales have suffered in anything like the degree that our English confrères have done from the effects of the now wholesale depression. The heavy fall in the values of all cereals and wheat in particular which commenced in the middle of the seventies, and has increased so recklessly to the present time had but little effect on Welsh agriculture, and it was not until 1884 and on to 1889, that the outlook was depressing, and with a general revival in 1890 which continued fairly strong through 1891, we had hopes that it was a short cycle only of depression. Since that time the fall in values of local produce has been severely felt until in 1893 and 1894, the effect was noticeable in the difficulty of getting rid of certain classes of stock at all, and especially in the rent arrears which then for the first time became considerable.

60,121. Was the difficulty in 1893 largely caused by the fall in price of stock due to the great falling off of the demand in England?—Yes.

Effect of drought of 1893.

60,122. Owing to the great drought?—Owing to the great drought generally through the country, and to the fact of the Welsh stock being in such a miserable condition they could not get it off their hands at all.

60,123. Then the stock itself was in a bad condition?—The stock itself was in a very bad condition and the demand was miserable as well.

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60,124. There was a lessened demand for it in England, was there not?—Quite so, and only the best class of stock was at all marketable in that year.

60,125. Did your district suffer much from the drought?—Yes, it did very much indeed, especially on the sea-coast land.

60,126. Was it due to that that the condition of the stock was so bad?—Yes, it was due to that.

60,127. Then you have suffered in two ways—both from the drought itself in your district and from the reduced demands for your stock in England—which was owing to the drought in England—in 1893, and I suppose all through the winter of 1893–4?—Yes.

60,128. Was 1894 a better year?—1894 was a somewhat better year, but it was not actually so as regards the position of the tenants and of the landlords, because they were just then beginning to feel more keenly the depression of the past year or two.

60,129. The effects of the previous year lasted on into that?—Yes, I suppose they did.

60,130. But I suppose the year itself was a better year?—Yes. I do not think they feel the depression so much actually in the particular year in which it comes.

60,131. (*Mr. Little.*) It was a more productive year, agriculturally, was it not?—Quite so.

60,132. (*Chairman.*) In the present year, what has happened?—The present year opened with brighter prospects, which we all hope may continue.

60,133. Do you mean by "brighter prospects," that the price of stock has risen?—Yes, stock was selling very well in the early part of the year, and up till the summer.

60,134. Did your part of Wales suffer from the drought of this year or not?—To a certain extent, but not to a very great extent.

Prices of stock.

60,135. Has there been a fair demand for your stock from England in this autumn?—No, not so much in the autumn. Prices have gone back in the autumn. The hay crop was very light and very short; we got better weather later in the summer, and we got a heavy crop of lattermath grass—and everybody was buying in cattle in the latter part of the summer, but they got so small an amount cropped to keep them over the winter time that they had to clear out at Michaelmas or in the early part of this month, and then prices went down.

60,136. But in the early part of the year the prospects and prices were good?—Certainly, I may say they were good.

60,137. Had they gone back to the prices of the good times?—I think they had very fairly; I do not know that they had gone back to the highest prices of the good times.

60,138. But they had gone back to fairly good remunerative prices?—Certainly.

60,139. Then there was some check again due to the drought in England?—Due to the drought in England, and to the shortness of winter keep generally in England and Wales.

60,140. In fact, you are very much affected by the condition of the English produce?—Very much so. Nearly all our produce goes there—all our young stock that is—not the dairy produce.

Price of sheep.

60,141. Now take the case of sheep. Has not the price of sheep risen considerably?—Yes, that has risen considerably this year, and sheep are really selling very well this year.

60,142. What has the rise been?—It has been a good penny a pound.

60,143. A penny a pound in mutton do you mean?—No; that would be in live weight.

60,144. What does that amount to per sheep?—It depends on what class of sheep we keep. We keep nearly every class; we keep the Welsh mountain sheep and the low ground Shropshire sheep as well.

60,145. It rose about a penny a pound?—Yes.

Price of wool.

60,146. Has the price of wool improved lately?—No, the price of wool is very bad. We do not get more than 6*d.* or 7*d.* a pound for wool.

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60,147. How do you account for the price of your wool not having risen in the same proportion as the price of long wool; because there has been a very great rise lately in the price of long wool?—I cannot account for it, except that I suppose there is a better demand for a better class wool than we keep. Most of our wool is marketed locally, and converted into cloth in the county. There are a large number of cloth factories in the county, which provide the county generally with the rough Welsh flannel and cloth that farmers use.

60,148. Has there been any rise lately in the price of wool?—No, there has not been any rise at all lately.

60,149. (*Mr. Little.*) Is the wool sold generally immediately after clip day?—Yes, very soon after.

60,150. Then a rise which took place later in the year would not affect the farmers?—No, it would not.

60,151. Or at any rate very few of them?—That is so.

60,152. (*Chairman.*) You say in your brief, that in the years 1865 to 1875 there was a great rise in the selling values of Welsh farm products, and a proportionate fall from 1879 to 1889, but from old farm accounts it appears that in the exceptional year of 1893, stores were selling at from 2*l.* to 3*l.*, sheep at 5*s.* to 6*s.*, and chickens at from 2*s.* to 3*s.* a couple?—Yes.

60,153. Was that all due to the very exceptional season of that year?—Those prices were higher to that extent than the prices ruling 50 years ago, as were also those of all classes of produce, and especially young stock.

60,154. The prices I have named were higher than the prices existing 50 years ago?—Yes.

60,155. Then even in 1893 they did not go back to the old prices?—No, not to the old prices of 50 years ago.

60,156. But there was a fall as compared with those higher prices during the years from 1879 to 1889?—As compared with the higher prices from 1865 to 1875.

60,157. During that period the rise and fall of prices were largely influenced by the nature of the seasons from decade to decade?—That was so generally, I think, during that 50 years interval.

Reductions of rent.

60,158. Has there been much reduction of rent during the last few years?—I think we began in 1878, and every year since, with the exception of the years 1890 and 1891 abatements varying from 10 to 15 per cent. on the annual rents have been made to all agricultural tenants under my management, and generally so by the other larger proprietors.

60,159. Have abatements of from 10 to 15 per cent. been made in every year from 1878 down to 1890?—Down to the present time with the exception of the years 1890 and 1891. In addition on one estate, under my management, the tithe has been allowed to the tenants in full ever since the passing of the Act of 1891.

Tithes.

60,160. (*Mr. Little.*) What would be the average amount of tithe per acre?—I could hardly tell you.

60,161. Is it a heavy charge, or is it a mere nominal charge?—I estimate it roughly at about 10 per cent., that is about 2*s.* in the pound.

60,162. Equal to about 10 per cent. on the rent, you mean?—Yes.

Reductions of rent.

60,163. (*Chairman*) You say that these abatements have been made year by year, and in every year except 1890 and 1891; have they not been made into permanent reductions?—No, not generally so. The abatements have been made generally throughout the whole estate. On several individual re-lettings I have reduced. I think there are about five re-lettings which I have had from last Michaelmas, and they have all been reduced considerably.

60,164. Why is it, then, that the rents of the other tenants have not been reduced permanently? If you make temporary abatements from year to year, and if on re-letting you find yourself compelled to make reductions of rent, one would suppose that the abatements would be converted into permanent reductions?—No doubt we shall have to do that if things do not improve very shortly. It greatly depends upon the individual merit of the farmer. If you fix every rent at its proper value, say to-day, in five or six years the individual farms would be all wrong again, according to the class of man you happen to get on to the farm, whether, for instance, he was a good or a bad tenant. Some of our farms have been very cheap, and others tight, and on re-takings I generally re-value them, and try to put them at a fair rent.

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60,165. You say the same course has been pursued by the owners of large properties?—Yes, generally.

60,166. But not by the smaller ones?—In a few cases, but not generally by what I may call the small investment proprietors who buy land as an investment.

Competition for farms.

60,167. When farms have been vacant have you found any difficulty in letting them?—No, none at all.

60,168. Are there many applicants for them?—Yes, a great many, for all our farms, anyhow.

60,169. Are they men of sufficient capital?—No, they are not; that is the great difficulty.

Tenants' capital.

60,170. Have you been able to let to men of capital?—It is impossible to estimate a man's capital. That I find is the difficulty. I have endeavoured to get hold of the men's capital through the usual means. I apply to them for some testimony of their financial standard, and I have been a good deal taken in; they bring me deposit receipts from the banks sometimes, and then I find that the money has been deposited by a friend a few days before, or something of that kind.

60,171. What do you consider to be the necessary capital; how much would you put it at per acre?—Theoretically we used to consider in England, when I was learning estate work and farming, that 10*l.* per acre was supposed to be a proper figure.

60,172. That is rather high, is it not?—It is high.

60,173. You do not require so much as that, do you?—If I get 3*l.* an acre I am very well satisfied in Wales.

60,174. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) What kind of farm would that be for?—For a mixed farm. You see there is so little corn growing in Wales that we require very little machinery, which is one of the most expensive items in the equipment of a farm.

Large and small farms compared.

60,175. (*Chairman.*) Have you found much difficulty in the letting of the smaller farms as compared with the letting of the larger farms?—No; we never find any difficulty as to letting either the one or the other, but I think the smaller farms are rather more run after.

60,176. There are more applicants for them?—Yes.

60,177. What do you consider a small farm now?—We consider a farm which keeps two or three cows is a small farm.

60,178. Would you say how many acres?—That depends on the quality of the land, of course. We generally call small farms those which keep two or three cows. It depends entirely on the quality of the land what is the size of it. It may be 20, or 30, or 40 acres, or even down to 10.

60,179. (*Mr. Little.*) Would you express it in rent?—About 12*l.* to 18*l.*

60,180. (*Chairman.*) I suppose the tenants of these farms do the work mainly by themselves and their families?—Yes.

60,181. Is there a large number of these small farms?—Yes, there is a large number of them.

60,182. A large number?—Yes, of these particular small farms there is a very large number—a large proportion, I should say.

60,183. When you get to the larger farms do the tenants of those work themselves, too?—If you get into a large low ground farm on the sea-coast level, where you will find some of our finest farms, the men there are in rather a better position and they do not work themselves.

60,184, Then there is an intermediate class between this very small class you have been speaking of and the larger ones?—Yes, in fact there are two intermediate classes.

60,185. What are they?—There is a class of farm which keeps say five or six cows, and 30 or 40 sheep; then you get on to the larger hill farms where they keep a large head of mountain sheep; and then you get to a different class of farm on the low ground—a rich land farm.

60,186. On what size farm do they begin to employ labourers?—On the ordinary up-land farms according to their size they employ additional labour. It just entirely depends on their families. Many of the Welsh farmers on the large farms have two or three sons at home, who work on the farm with their father.

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60,187. Then the work is largely done by the farmers themselves and their families, even on the larger farms?—Yes, that is largely done still. Of course the tendency now is for the younger generation to go away, but it is largely the case still for the work to be done in that manner.

Labourers' wages.

60,188. As regards the labourers, what has been the course of their wages?—The labourers are now in a better position, I suppose, than they have ever been.

60,189. What has been the course as regards their wages?—As regards the per-centage of the rise of their wages?

60,190. What have they risen to—what were they and what are they now?—In the old days I suppose their wages were from 9*s.* to 11*s.* a week; now they are from 16*s.* to 20*s.* a week.

60,191. When did the rise take place?—I should think it began about eight years ago.

60,192. Not longer ago than that?—I do not think so; not to any great extent.

60,193. Eight years ago?—I might say 10 years ago, but I could not fix it.

60,194. Have they been rising continuously since then?—Yes.

60,195. They have actually risen from 11*s.* to 16*s.* and 20*s.*?—Yes, that is the wage for the ordinary weekly labourer; but then our system in Wales is the hiring system, and we hire them by the year, both men and maid servants.

60,196. Do they live in the house?—Yes, they live in the house.

60,197. What has been the rise there?—Even an ordinary inexperienced man now gets from 22*l.* to 25*l.* a year and his keep.

60,198. As compared with what?—As compared with 15*l.* or 16*l.*

60,199. So that there has been an increase of more than 25 per cent.?—Yes, certainly.

60,200. Then having regard to what the labourer can get for his money he is very much better off?—He ought to be—I do not know whether he really is. I do not know whether the depression in agriculture has really affected his buying power.

60,201. One of the difficulties of the largest farmers then must be that of the labourers' wages?—Yes, that is one of the greatest difficulties in the country.

60,202. It is a great difficulty?—That has been the greatest difficulty of all.

60,203. That has been one of the most serious causes of whatever difficulty there is?—Yes.

Migration of labourers.

60,204. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you suppose that labourers coming from other counties into your county could get employment now at this time of the year?—Yes, there is no doubt of it, I wish some system could be arranged for that; we are dreadfully short of labourers.

60,205. (*Mr. Little.*) Do they not come from Wiltshire and Dorsetshire?—No, we do not get them.

60,206. They go to some of the South Wales counties, I believe?—I suppose the Welsh language and one thing or another of that kind prevents them.

Demand for labourers.

60,207. (*Chairman.*) Are there any collieries in your district, and have you any competition with them?—Yes, we have had a very large amount of mineral works on our property, of every kind, lately.

60,208. There has been a great increase lately?—Yes, a large increase.

60,209. That, I suppose, accounts for the rise of wages?—Yes, almost entirely. The anthracite coal in the eastern part of the county is going very strong now, and I have the greatest difficulty in providing house accommodation for the people.

60,210. What you have said about the language accounts for the fact that other labourers have not come into the district?—I suppose it does; I do not think the English and the Welsh are always very happily united.

60,211. (*Mr. Little.*) Do you not have reformatory boys?—Yes, we have had a great many of them, and some have turned out satisfactorily. I have known a great many in my time; some have risen to good positions, and are tenant farmers now, but, as you know, there is a great risk with boys of that kind.

60,212. Is there any prejudice against them?—Yes, people are rather prejudiced against them. They generally are throughout the country, and I think, generally speaking, justly so. There is only a small per-centage of them who turn out really useful members of the community, I think.

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60,213. (*Chairman.*) Then the farmers who employ labourers have felt this difficulty of the rise of wages?—Yes, very much so.

60,214. But the smaller farmers who do not employ labour have not felt that?—No; a man who has got some grown-up boys on his farm is in the best position of all.

Condition of labourers and small farmers compared.

60,215. Comparing the condition of the labourers with that of the lowest class of farmers—the smallest farmers—should you say that the labourers have improved much more than the small farmers?—I think they are in a far better position; but, as I was telling you just now, really small farmers are generally men who are labourers as well; they are masons or labourers on the home farms, or something of that kind.

60,216. You spoke of men with two or three cows; they do not live only on the land, do they?—No, not wholly on the land. Then there is an intermediate stage again of a little larger farm on which there is enough work to employ a man constantly. On these smaller farms they generally get employment on the roads.

60,217. They are employed as labourers elsewhere, either on the roads or at other occupation of some kind?—Yes, at some occupation of some kind or other.

60,218. Then there is a great gradation of men from labourers up to the larger farmers?—Yes, there is.

60,219. Do they gradually rise from labourers to be farmers?—Yes, I have known some very interesting cases on the estates that I manage. There are men that I can remember very well, as labourers in the old days on small wages, who have gradually got on first by taking a small farm; and I know several who are now renting farms of over 100*l.* rent and doing well.

60,220. These small farms form a step in the ladder on which they gradually rise?—Yes.

60,221. There is a continual progress going on?—Yes; of those who are hardworking and keen to get on.

Small occupying owners.

60,222. Are there any small ownerships, or are these people generally tenants?—There are a great many small ownerships. A great deal of the land has been purchased by the tenants in past times. There has not been so much land brought into the market in the last two or three years as there has been in the past.

60,223. Before the last two or three years, was land brought into the market and sold in small pieces?—Yes, a great deal of it.

60,224. And did the tenants buy it?—Yes, to a great extent they have bought it.

60,225. Borrowing the money for the purpose?—Yes.

60,226. I suppose not borrowing all the money, but part of it?—Not all the money; in fact you would not get anybody to lend it all on the prices they have given for the farms. I know farms that have been mortgaged two or three times deep.

60,227. You have seen that, but a good many of them must have had something to deposit?—Yes, or even if they had not it themselves they get it from their friends and relations. Many of these Welsh farmers have got sons abroad who have gone out to America and colonised and one thing and another, and they have been assisted in that way. There are various ways in which they get assistance.

60,228. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are they reducing their indebtedness, do you think?—I do not think they are in these times.

60,229. (*Chairman.*) Then you say that the tenant farmers have felt the effect of the depression, and that they have suffered largely from the labour difficulty?—Yes, very largely, more largely from that in my opinion than from anything else, not only because of the price of labour, but from the effect which the loss of labour has had on the farms.

Diminution of labour on farms.

60,230. Has there been much economy in labour?—Yes, a very great amount.

60,231. During the last few years, do you mean, or in the previous decade?—In the last 10 or 15 years, since the depression.

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60,232. The census for Wales shows that the great reduction of labourers took place between 1871 and 1881, and not between 1881 and 1891?—I have not got the figures before me.

60,233. How is that in your district?—I should have said that in our district the number of labourers has been continually decreasing ever since 1880.

60,234. How do they economise in labour, by employing more machinery, and so on?—No; by doing without it altogether, unfortunately.

60,235. (*Mr. Little.*) You mean that the labour has been diminished; "economy" would hardly be the proper term?—No, certainly not, it is not true economy.

60,236. (*Chairman.*) They have economised in that sense, that they have cut down their expenditure?—Yes, but that is not true economy at all.

60,237. They have naturally endeavoured to meet the rise in wages by doing with less labour?—That is the case.

60,238. Even at the risk of damaging their farms, I suppose?—Yes. In my opinion what they have suffered more from than anything else, is the diminution of labour on the farm, and the consequent loss of fertility on the farms generally, which is very marked all through our county.

Demand for farms.

60,239. How do you account for the fact that in spite of these difficulties, and of the higher wages for the labourers, and also of the lower prices that the demand for farms keeps up?—It is difficult to account for it, and I must say as an individual that I cannot account for it, except that everybody seems to like to have a bit of land.

60,240. I suppose farmers' sons find it difficult to get employment elsewhere, is that it?—Yes; the present generation do not care about sticking at home like they did so much in the past; they like to get away and to get better opportunities for amusing themselves, and to get better wages.

60,241. That is rather a process to the contrary, I thought from what you said that the farmers' sons would grow up and be competitors for these farms?—So they are.

60,242. But you say now they go away?—Yes, a great many do, but I did not say the whole body of them went away.

60,243. (*Mr. Little.*) Are the competitors principally derived from that class, or do they come from outside people who have made money in other branches of business?—They generally come from that particular class. I make it a rule on the estates I look after to give our own tenants the first claim on a farm that becomes vacant for their sons, always.

Effect of depression on large and small farms compared.

60,244. (*Chairman.*) What class of farmers has stood it best do you think on the whole?—I think the large farmers with capital have stood the fall in prices best, whereas those with a small working capital have felt it most acutely. The difference lies in my opinion simply in the matter of working capital. I do not know whether I might just give you a note as regards the smallness of the working capital on the farms which I was mentioning just now, and which I think is one of the chief causes of the depression. The Registrar General in Bankruptcy before the Welsh Land Commission quoted some instances from the Carmarthen District Bankruptcy Court, as follows:—One farmer failed for 423*l.*, and he was insolvent when he took his farm; another farmer failed for 625*l.*, and he had no capital when starting; another farmer failed for 953*l.*, and he had a capital of 100*l.* at starting, and took a farm of 350*l.* rent; and another farmer who failed for 1,303*l.*, started with 120*l.* borrowed capital and took a farm of 150*l.* rent. Those I just give as instances.

60,245. Those people probably would have failed under any conditions?—I suppose they would.

60,246. Those are not illustrations of the depression of agriculture, but of people trading without capital?—Quite so, but my point was to show the little capital on which people go in for farms in Wales generally. That is only an instance, but it is an official one.

60,247. Then would you say that the medium sized farmers, who I suppose are midway between the men who work themselves and the large farmers with capital, are those who have suffered most?—Yes; that is my point, they have very little capital.

60,248. Do you say that men who have got sufficient capital on the whole have been able to bear the brunt of the thing?—I think so; those who have maintained the value of their farms have, I think, been able to stand it best.

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60,249. On the other hand, the very small farmers who either work for wages in part, or work themselves on the land have not suffered much?—No, they have not suffered except to a very small extent, they have got such a small stake in the country.

Land out of cultivation.

60,250. Has any land gone out of cultivation in your district?—No land can actually be returned as having gone out of cultivation, that is to say, there is none that I know of unoccupied. Much land that I know of is practically out of cultivation from the neglect of the elementary principles of husbandry applied to it, and this I find is the case in good and bad times generally.

60,251. That seems to be not altogether dependent upon the depression?—Not necessarily.

Changes in system of cultivation.

60,252. Has there been any change, in the system of cultivation—has more land been laid down in grass, or is less corn grown, or what?—There is much less corn grown than there was 20 years ago.

60,253. Is the land laid down in grass or is it cultivated?—What lands are suitable to be laid down are laid down, but there is not very much land that is suitable to be laid down in Wales to permanent grasses; it is laid down to a certain extent in rotation grasses.

60,254. I suppose the area of land available for arable is not large?—It is very small. I have never seen a handful of our corn in the local markets.

60,255. What corn is grown then is not sent to the local market?—No, the farmers do not take it to the local market; they make their own bread out of it.

60,256. Do they feed there cattle with it?—They do not grow enough for that. They take advantage of the very low market price and buy for that. There is a large amount of barley and corn brought into the country for feeding purposes. The farmers mostly grow their own wheat and make their own bread.

Condition of farming in Wales.

60,257. You do not appear to have an exalted opinion of farming in your part of the country?—No, I have not, indeed.

60,258. What is your general view of it?—The land was the first to suffer when the depression commenced, and the effect is now clearly to be seen in the face of the country and in the demands for the reduction of rent which the land is still well able to bear if efficiently cultivated. In no part of the country have I seen such primitive ideas of cultivation as in Wales, nowhere such foul arable, and happy-go-lucky way of cropping it generally.

60,259. Do you think that the spending power of the agricultural classes has been lessened?—No, I do not think it really has The purchasing power is greater in my opinion, generally, among all classes of the community.

Landlord's expenditure on improvements.

60,260. Besides the reduction of rent have the landlords done more for their tenants in the way of improvements and of spending more on the land?—We have not found any difference in the estates I manage as regards the maintenance and the repair. In addition to the reductions we almost invariably give time to new tenants and assist them with artificial manures in the first year of their tenancy. The general rule is, that at the end of a tenancy one gets the farms left in a bad state.

Causes of depression.

60,261. What do you consider the causes of the difficulties such as they are, apart from the labour difficulty that you have spoken of?—The wholesale and universal foreign importation, free of rates and taxes and charges, and with special facilities for carriage transfer and marketing over and above what home products enjoy, is held by all to be the chief cause, and no doubt the existing monetary basis has also adversely affected prices. Gambling in the American wheat markets seems also a great source of injury to the corn trade.

60,262. That difficulty about the wheat cannot affect your district, can it?—It does not affect our district particularly.

60,263. Will you please confine your evidence to what mainly affects your own district?—Yes. The placing and admixture of inferior grain, meat and produce, upon our British markets, bad seasons, increase of rates and wages, insufficient capital employed in agriculture, and unscientific cultivation are no doubt among the many evils we suffer from.

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60,264. I will not go into the question of tenure which is the next item in your brief, but what have you to say with regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—The Agricultural Holdings Act in my opinion is a very fair and just one; its shortcomings seem to me to lie, like many Acts of Parliament, in the difficulties attached to its procedure. The Welsh system of selling off all crops at Michaelmas does away to a great extent with its adoption. It might be made easier to put in motion by appointing official arbitrators to deal with any reference in each county, and a legal code adopted comprising the more local requirements and customs. I hold that no improvements should be made without the landlord's consent on whom the repayment of such is forced. I believe it to be fair that the landlord should reap some proportion of the pent up store of the land's fertility, although brought into activity by the tenant. I would suggest that the landlord, in fairness, should have the privilege of putting the Act into operation without waiting first for the tenant to claim.

Procedure under Agricultural Holdings Act.

Method of compensation.

60,265. What is the case in your district when a tenant leaves? is the compensation a matter of arrangement between the incoming and the outgoing tenant, or are proceedings taken under the Act?—Proceedings are never taken under the Act. I have had a notice which I accepted as one under the Act, but it was not done in accordance with the provisions of the Act. It was in the case of a tenant leaving this year; that was the first time in my experience that I have had such a notice.

60,266. (*Mr. Little.*) Have you agreements providing specific compensation?—No, not providing specific compensation. The crops are sold in the usual way, in fact everything is sold off on Welsh farms at Michaelmas, and the only things that are usually taken over are the seeds and the manures.

60,267. (*Chairman.*) What is the usual course? Does the incoming and the outgoing tenant each of them appoint a referee and an umpire between them?—They generally arrange it together, and if they cannot arrange it themselves, they arrange it through their friends. Generally it is settled satisfactorily; sometimes there is a little difficulty. I had one the other day and I paid the amount of the valuation myself; there was a little disagreement between the two as is very often the case. In those cases I pay it myself and the incoming tenant refunds it to me afterwards.

60,268. Then they take the procedure of the Agricultural Holdings Act, that is, each party names a referee and the referees I suppose, name an umpire?—No; I cannot say they do that officially in any kind of way; they talk it over together among themselves, and arrange it generally satisfactorily.

60,269. Is there a custom of the country which is followed?—Only to the extent I have mentioned, that all the crops and stock are sold off at Michaelmas and the incoming tenant pays for seeds and manure.

60,270. What is done about the improvements in the farm, the manure that is left in it, and things of that kind?—There is no special custom in the country for those. You find they generally agree, and if they have used artificial manures in the last couple of years of their tenancy, they are generally able to arrange between themselves as to the value of it to the incoming tenant.

60,271. (*Mr. Little.*) What does the valuation amount to compared with the rent, what ratio would it bear to a year's rent?—I should think generally it comes to about half a year's rent; that is roughly speaking, of course.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

60,272. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) How is the outgoing tenant compensated for unexhausted improvements?—Under that system by the incoming tenant, if he has got unexhausted improvements.

60,273. Does that apply to drainage, walling and everything?—He would not be compensated for anything of that kind. Sometimes a small amount of drainage is done, which the incoming tenant pays for, but that would generally come under the landlord; in fact, I have known of no cases of the kind happening in my experience.

Improvements effected by tenants.

60,274. Do not the tenants do any kind of improvement?—They have not done during the experience I have had, but I think they have done so in the past. I do not think they have done so during the times of the depression; at any rate, they have not improved their farms much; a good many sitting tenants are still improving their farms, but I have within my recollection, no outgoing tenants who have done so; my experience, as a rule, is just the other way.

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60,275. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is it not the case with you, that on such small farms they really have very little money to lay out, and the Agricultural Holdings Act, therefore, is never called into operation?—That, no doubt, is a great cause of it.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

60,276. Therefore, you have not had experience of the Act?—We have no experience of the Agricultural Holdings Act in Wales. I have heard it said by people that it was constantly brought in evidence before the Welsh Land Commission, that the Agricultural Holdings Act ought to be in the Welsh language; I believe that it might be in Chinese for the effect it would have. I do not believe anybody would read it; I do not think any of the tenant farmers would read any Act of Parliament, whatever it might be.

Local rates.

60,277. (*Chairman.*) What has been the course of rates in your district?—The rates have largely increased from what they were 20 or 25 years ago.

60,278. Have you got any data upon the subject?—I am afraid I have not got comparative figures.

60,279. It is very important to make an actual comparison of figures?—Yes, and I wish I could have done it.

60,280. There is sometimes an impression that the rates have increased, but somehow the figures do not always tally with that?—I can confidently say that they have in our country increased generally. I wish I had brought the comparative figures with me.

60,281. What do the poor rates amount to?—From 3*s.* to 5*s.* 4*d.*; I have been paying as much as 5*s.* 4*d.* in the £ this year.

60,282. Is that in a purely agricultural district, or is it in an urban district?—There is an urban district contained in the area covered by the higher figure.

60,283. Is the high rate due to the sanitary rate, or the school board rate?—It is due to the sanitary rate to a great extent, and to the school board rate. The school board rate runs up to 6*d.* or 7*d.*, and the sanitary rate to 8*d.*

60,284. When you speak of the rate of 5*s.* 4*d.*, is that on a house, or on a farm, because there is a distinction is there not, between the rate on the land and the rate on the house?—In the sanitary rate there is I think a reduction of a fourth.

60,285. It is a reduction of three-fourths, is it not?—Yes.

60,286. What would be the rate there on the land? When you speak of 5*s.* 4*d.*, that probably is the general rate through the district on a house, and it may not be the rate in the case of the land?—I have here an instance of the actual rate on a plantation.

60,287. What are the particulars of that?—Here is 5*s.* 4*d.* in the pound, that I am paying on a plantation in the parish of Llanelly.

60,288. Is that on the house, or on the land?—It is on the land, there is no house in the plantation

60,289. In that case, what are the poor rates?—The rate for the relief of the poor is 9*d.*, the county rate is 2*d.*, the highway rate is 2*d.*, the school board rate is 9½*d.*, the general expenses 11½*d.*, and then there is a halfpenny for technical education, and a halfpenny for intermediate education.

60,290. What is the sanitary rate there?—It is 8*d.* in addition to that.

60,291. That does not make up 5*s.* 4*d.*, does it?—Yes, it does.

60,292. Will you just let me look at it?—Yes (*handing in receipt*).

60,293. (*Mr. Little.*) How much is that plantation land assessed at?—It is a small thing, I think it is only 4*l.* or 5*l.* but I am not quite sure. I cannot tell you the rate per acre, I have not got the particulars, but it is according to what is usually done.

60,294. Is it at prairie value?—Not prairie value, but the value of the neighbouring lands let to tenant farmers; I wish they would put it at prairie value.

60,295. Should it not be assessed as land unimproved?—It should be, but they generally assess it on the same ratio as the adjoining farms.

60,296. (*Chairman.*) The particulars of the rate you have just quoted, amount only to 2*s.*?—Yes, 2*s.* for the

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poor rates and other rates, and 8*d.* for the sanitary rate each half-year, that is 5*s.* 4*d.* on the year.

60,297. That is in Llanelly?—That is in the Llanelly Union.

60,298. That is, I suppose, an urban district?—Yes, there is a town in the district; it is a very extensive parish, one of our largest parishes.

60,299. (*Mr. Long.*) What is the size of the town part of Llanelly, do you know at all?—I am afraid I could not give you a proper answer.

60,300. Is the whole of it an urban district?—There is an urban district council.

60,301. Does that cover the whole area?—No, gracious me, no! The great majority of it is purely agricultural land.

60,302. In reference to the receipt that you have handed to the Chairman, does that apply to land which is within the urban area, or to land which is outside the urban area?—It applies to land outside.

60,303. Then the existence of the urban rate does not affect that rate in any way?—Not altogether, certainly; but I do not know whether it does to some extent; I am not sure that the school rates are not general through the entire district for instance.

60,304. The school rate would not be applicable to the Chairman's question, because that is not a sanitary rate. I presume you are aware that there is a distinction between the sanitary rate and the poor rate?—Yes.

60,305. One is assessed on the full value of the 100*l.* and the other on the 75 per cent. discount?—Yes.

60,306. (*Chairman.*) It says here that the sanitary is 8*d.* but the sanitary rate on plantation land, and on land only, is charged at one fourth, therefore on the land it would be 2*d.* I suppose?—It is still 8*d.*, only the assessment is reduced, but of course it comes to the same thing.

60,307. (*Mr. Long.*) The rate is the same, but it is on the reduced amount you mean?—Yes.

60,308. (*Chairman.*) The rate being an eightpenny rate, and one-fourth only being charged on the land, it would be 2*d.* on the land or 4*d.* for the year?—Yes. In the parish of Cenarth, in Newcastle in Emlyn, we have got 4*s.* 8*d.* in the £.

60,309. (*Mr. Long.*) Newcastle in Emlyn, I suppose, has a local board?—No, there is no local board there at all.

60,310. Has it not even a district council?—It has not an urban district as I think it would be called.

Allotments and Small Holdings Acts.

60,311. (*Chairman.*) Have any proceedings taken place in your district in respect to the Allotments Act of 1887, or the Small Holdings Act of 1892?—No, there have been no applications until just lately.

60,312. From what you have said of the conditions of tenure there, and the number of small holdings it would seem that these Acts are hardly wanted?—I have lately had some applications from the parish council under the Allotments Act, and I am hoping in one or two districts to formulate a scheme. The great difficulty is that the applicants apply for land here and there, and that we have got very small Welsh farms. They generally select the best piece of land, perhaps the only water meadow on the whole farm. I made the parish council at Newcastle in Emlyn an offer the other day; I wished to give them a whole farm. I said I would sooner give you a whole farm and you can cut it up as you like than let you take little pieces here, there, and everywhere. But they do not seem inclined to take that. There is rather a difficulty in satisfying everybody in that respect.

60,313. (*Mr. Little.*) What class of people are the applicants?—Of the applicants in that particular district one was a sewing-machine agent, another was a beer merchant; another was an artificial manure agent, and there was one mason, I think; there was not a single labourer.

Ground Game Act.

60,314 (*Chairman.*) Then with regard to the Ground Game Act of 1880, has that been taken advantage of?—That is very largely taken advantage of in Wales, and has led in many cases to the tenants taking more interest in rabbits than in their stock and crop. Tons of rabbits, hares, and winged game are brought into each local market during the season. I am always glad to see the tenants destroying the rabbits, and it is satisfactory to see that the Act has, in many cases, transformed the rabbit into a popular denizen of the farm from being a destructive pest. The money value of this Act to the tenant farmer is one that is often not sufficiently taken into consideration, I think.

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60,315. Do you think they have derived benefit in point of money from it?—I think they have, undoubtedly, but I do not know that they have done so, speaking economically.

60,316. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I suppose the land has not benefited?—I do not suppose it has.

60,317. Have the rabbits been scientifically cultivated?—I do not think they have.

60,318. (*Mr. Everett.*) They multiply without much scientific cultivation, do they not?—Yes, they generally do. In a few farms where there is rough land which is of very little use for anything else, they are protected. I do not know whether they are bred scientifically though, in any kind of way; I do not think they are.

Planting.

60,319. (*Chairman.*) Has anything been done in your district in the way of planting?—On the Cawdor Estate we have done a very large amount of planting, but forestry generally is much neglected throughout Wales altogether.

60,320. How much have you planted of late years?—I am afraid I could not tell you the acreage, but I suppose that during the last 25 years there must have been 2,000 or 3,000 acres planted.

60,321. As much as that?—I should think so, generally, on our estate. That is a rough figure, and I am afraid I have not got the particulars with me, but I could supply them.

Effect of rating plantations.

60,322. Is the incidence of rating a hindrance, do you think, to planting?—I think it is a very great hindrance both to planting and to shelter which is very much required in Wales. Rates and taxes have to be paid year after year when there has been nothing but heavy outlay made and no corresponding return, and when one has a crop fit for harvest in districts far from railway communication, the small possible profit is attacked by the highway authorities in the shape of compensation for extraordinary traffic. We are situated in a country well adapted for the growth of timber, but its development is crushed out of existence by outlay, rates, taxes, risks, and inaccessibility.

60,323. The principle on which it is rated is that the land is rated on its value without the timber?—Yes, that is the principle on which it is rated.

60,324. Do you think there ought to be no rating until the timber begins to pay?—Yes; that is my contention, both for rates and for income tax, I think. It is only fair and reasonable, and I should be very glad that we should pay it on the profits we make. As things are now, all small proprietors are choked off planting altogether, but we in the larger estates can afford to run losses a little more.

60,325. Is your income tax charged in the same way in respect of timber and wood?—Yes. Income tax is charged on the poor rate assessment.

60,326. How many years is it in your district before planting begins to give a return?—It depends on what class of timber you plant; take larch for instance ——

60,327. Do you grow larch in your district?—Yes, larch is largely grown.

Larch planting and larch disease.

60,328. How many years is it before larch pays?—We cut them down at 20 years for pit wood in certain districts, but of course they vary according to the soil, and the situation in which they are placed. From 20 to 30 years may be said roughly to be it. In our county we have had most fearful losses from larch disease in the last five or six years. I made a small report about it to the Board of Agriculture two or three years ago.

60,329. How was it accounted for?—It is very difficult to account for. It is a small fungus that attacks the larches. It was due, in my opinion, to the effect of the late frost we had a few years ago, very late in the spring or in the early summer, when the buds were just bursting. With all the younger trees the bark was split, and the sap used to exude very much, and I suppose that gave opportunities for the spores of this fungus, which were spreading about in the air to get in. It is quite distressing in some parts of the country, and you would be horrified to see it; there are whole plantations as black as coal all through the summer.

60,330. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) The trunk is attacked, is it not?—Yes, the trunk and branches and everything, but it is more noticeable in the trunk.

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60,331. It begins in the trunk?—Yes, I think it generally begins in the trunk, and the smaller branches too, but it is less noticeable in the smaller branches.

60,332. They eventually almost die?—They die entirely in a great many cases. Some of them in the better situations have recovered a little, but the timber is very much injured.

60,333. (*Chairman.*) Does it spread through a whole wood?—Yes, it does generally. That is the extraordinary part of it. For instance, in some little narrow valley I have had plantations on one side of the valley almost black and perfectly dead, and others on the other side quite thriving. That was the great difficulty I had, and I could not understand at all what the reason was.

60,334. It caused a very serious loss I take it?—A very serious loss indeed, and in the meantime we were paying all these rates and taxes, and are paying them still.

60,335. It is the most valuable timber you have, I suppose?—Yes, it is.

60,336. (*Mr. Little.*) Does it attack any of the other fir tribes?—No, this particular disease I think does not attack any of them.

60,337. (*Chairman.*) Has it been serious enough to deter you from planting larch?—It has, indeed, some, but I have still been going on. I have got ideas of my own about it, and I have been trying them still; but it has deterred a great many people, I think, as it is the only marketable wood we have.

60,338. What do you plant instead?—I mix them to a great extent with conifers and Scotch and Austrian fir.

60,339. (*Mr. Little.*) Do you raise your own plants of larch?—Yes, entirely. We have got a large nursery garden which we supply the estate from, and we generally get the seed from Scotland.

60,340. Have you tried any imported plants to see whether they are equally reliable?—Not from the forestry point of view yet, but I am thinking of doing so. Really the larch in our country is the most useful timber for marketing purposes, because it is the only timber that is really suitable for collieries. It is the only timber that will bear that tremendous strain that one sees when one goes down a colliery. One sees the larch bent double in the roof sometimes, and without splitting. It is the only timber that will carry that weight.

Timber hauling.

60,341. Have you not considerable foreign competition there?—Very much so. The prices are low, and the great difficulty we have is that though there are thousands of acres in our country suitable for planting there is a want of access to the railway. Now, since this question of extraordinary traffic has been raised, we have been attacked whenever we cut timber. Under the county council they attack us for extraordinary traffic and for cutting up the roads, so that really one does not dare to cut the wood at all now.

60,342. (*Chairman.*) Is that really a serious impediment?—Very much so. All the buyers now in Wales have tried to make me give them an undertaking that I will run all the risk of any action by the county council. I always decline to do that, because one is entirely in their hands then, and they may go and cart directly after a severe frost, and perhaps a quick thaw, and do thousands of pounds damage in an eight or nine miles drive.

Light railways.

60,343. Is there room for the extension of light railways in your district?—Very much so, indeed. I think a lot might be done in that way for the benefit of the country generally, and especially for the benefit of the agricultural classes. The great difficulty in one estate that I manage—the Edwinsford Estate—which is a large estate, is that it is very inaccessible to the railway, and with very hilly roads. That makes the price of manures, lime, and coal, and all requirements very heavy.. If there were railway facilities only for getting those up even, it would be a great improvement to the condition of the country generally.

Co-operation.

60,344. Do you think also that more could be done in the way of co-operation among the farmers?—Yes. I think there might be a great deal more done. A great many of the tenants in our county are members of the Lincolnshire Farmers' Club for the provision of manures and feeding stuffs, and things of that kind. I have always wondered why we could not get together some co-operation in the way of marketing produce as well as of buying it. It seems quite a reasonable thing to be done, but there are a great many difficulties in the way in Wales, and the farmers do not seem to combine together very well.

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Dairy teaching.

60,345. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What has been done by the county councils in the direction of agricultural education?—The agricultural committee for the county council have started dairy classes—that is butter and cheese classes, and there have been some lectures on agriculture, which I am afraid have not had much effect. I think the dairy classes will have some effect, but it is rather too soon to see what effect they will have. However, I know of a great many cases where butter is being properly and scientifically treated now.

60,346. Do these dairy classes move about the county?—Yes, they move about the different parishes. We get up local committees in the different districts to make arrangements for them.

60,347. Have they been pretty well attended?—Yes; a good deal of interest has been taken in them.

60,348. Does Danish butter penetrate much into South Wales?—It does into the towns a good deal I think. So, especially, does American cheese. The class of butter made in our county is generally bad, but I think the people to whom it is sold rather like it; the colliers like a strong taste in the butter. They like plenty of caseine in it.

Agricultural education.

60,349. Have you any suggestions to make for the promotion of agricultural education?—I think more might be done in that particular line. I do not know how you can get at people much more than by these local lectures, at any rate not without a very great expense. I think if there were permanent lecturers established in every county, and opportunity were given to farmers' sons in the counties of going through a regular course for a year, that would be a very great thing, but I suppose the expense would be insuperable, otherwise I do not see what more can be done than is being done in that particular line. I think it might be very easily extended to poultry, especially. That is an industry that is very much neglected in our county. There is only one farmer in the county, but he is a very large farmer, one of the largest in the county, and a well known farmer there, who I know, is going in for poultry rearing scientifically. He tells me it is the best paying thing he has got on the farm now. He goes in for eggs only, and he sends his eggs up to London twice a week. I am sure that that particular industry is one which is capable of very great improvement, but it is utterly neglected by all our Welsh farmers.

Dairy farming.

60,350. Do you think dairy farming could be extended in South Wales?—I do not know that it could, because it is almost entirely a dairy farming system with us now. It might be improved no doubt. I think it would be a very good thing if efforts were made, through the local agricultural societies to arrive at a proper standard of merit, and through stud companies for the provision of good sires and breeding stock. I think small grants in that direction would not be felt very much by the Government, and I feel sure they would do a great amount of good.

Horticulture.

60,351. Is horticulture much neglected?—Very much, in fact there is no such thing as horticulture in our county at all.

60,352. Do you think it might be advantageously taken up?—Yes, I do. I would hardly call it a fruit growing country I think, but it is a very good vegetable growing country. Horticulture is very much neglected, they seem to have no idea of it, and to take no interest in their gardens at all, that is very noticeable.

Effect of neighbouring industries on agricultural wages and prices.

60,353. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I conclude that the increase of mineral labour has had something to do with the increase in the wages of agricultural labour?—Yes, that is the cause, undoubtedly. There is a very large industry in all the eastern part of our county in connexion with the anthracite coal, tin plates, copper works, chemical works, the limestone, the silica, and so on.

60,354. Has that enhanced the value of dairy produce, milk for instance?—It keeps up the price. If we had not got that we should be in a bad way I think; but then there is so much stuff coming into Swansea, butter and cheese, which is foreign paoduce.

60,355. Is there not an increased demand for milk to be sold among the people?—No, I do not think there is, you cannot say that that is generally the case. Of

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course just in the immediate neighbourhood of these particular works the farmers gain an advantage, but you cannot say that the more distant farmers and the country generally do.

60,356. It is a matter of fact is it not, that among the mining population there is very little milk consumed?—I think that is the case, I do not think even in the local districts they make much of it. I do not know of any of our tenants, and we have got a large colliery and industrial districts in our area, who go in for it in any kind of way. They sell a few gallons of milk in a week perhaps.

60,357. At present you see no prospect of any gain to the farmer in that respect?—No, I do not.

Disposal of larch.

60,358. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Do you sell any larch fir for hop-poles, either for Kent, or Worcester, or Hereford?—No, none at all.

60,359. The distance is too great I suppose?—The distance is too great; the carriage would swallow the profit up.

60,360. Are you aware that Kentish growers get hop-poles of larch-fir from Belgium?—I was not aware exactly where they get their poles from.

60,361. That is at a distance very much farther; but probably the communication is better?—No doubt, and the rates, too, would be better.

60,362. Could you tell me at what price you could sell larch poles, 14 feet high at the place?—I do not think they are marketable at all.

60,363. They would be for hop poles; that is the size that they are required to be?—That might be so, but they are unmarketable at that size in our country.

60,364. Would it pay you to cut such poles for the supply of hop grounds?—I do not know that it would. I do not know that any of our local timber merchants consign any to the hop countries at all. Our only market is the collieries, and they will not take anything less than about 2½ inches diameter at the top.

Larch disease.

60,365. At all events, it is the fact that these poles come from Belgium. With regard to this fungus that injures the larch, *Peziza Willkommii*, I think is the name of it?—Yes, that is it.

60,366. Have any remedies been tried against it?—Remedies have been tried by incision, I think, surgical treatment.

60,367. Letting off the sap you mean?—Yes, from the actual seat of the disease; but, of course, that is quite impractical in plantations.

60,368. No practical remedy I think has been suggested?—I do not think so; I have never come across one yet.

60,369. Are you acquainted with a paper writing by Mr. Carruthers, in the "Royal Agricultural Society's Journal" with regard to that?—I am afraid I cannot remember it. I have read a good many articles on the subject in the past, but I cannot rembember individual articles now.

60,370. That gives a complete history of the fungus, and suggests certain remedies, I think, such as destroying an infected tree quickly; is that practised with you?—No, I do not think it is; because the attacks have become so general on the plantations, that one has not been able to notice it on one tree first.

60,371. Would it be practicable to destroy at once a tree which has been noticed to be infected?—I think that would be practicable if one could really notice it in one particular tree, but it seems to attack whole plantations, generally, at the same time. My idea is, that the spores are travelling through the air, and are on every tree at the same time, that is suitable for their development.

60,372. Exactly, but probably that would stop it if trees were destroyed when they were noticed?—No doubt; my idea now is to plant belts of conifers.

60,373. To keep off the spores?—To keep off the spores and to protect the larch from the weather; that is an idea I have got into my head. I do not know whether it is a correct one or not.

60,374. I think it is; I think the same thing is practised in Ceylon, in the coffee plantations there, so as to prevent the fungus coming?—My system now is to plant plenty of larch, and Scotch or Austrian fir or pinasters in belts.

60,375. Are you troubled with the beetle that destroys larch and other conifers?—No; I cannot say that we are much.

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60,376. There is a great deal of trouble from that insect in Scotland, I think?—I cannot say that we have had it. We have had rather a rare animal attacking our plantations there.

60,377. Do you think it would be desirable that investigation should be made with regard to this fungus, and the cure for it, and the prevention of it?—I think it would be a very great thing if it were done. There is no doubt, that if the loss in our country from the diseased larch was capitalized, it would represent an enormous sum of money. It has not only occurred in our county, it is general I fancy throughout the British Islands, especially so in the counties of Cardigan and Carmarthen.

Timber hauling.

60,378. You were speaking about extraordinary traffic, would that be from traction engines?—No, that is simply the ordinary haulage on the ordinary farm gamblers, as we call them in our country.

60,379. Owners of woods are charged in respect of that simple horse traffic?—Yes, they describe it as extraordinary traffic, and no doubt it is sometimes. I have been trying to represent to some of the county councils in the district, that there should be some basis of regulation; there is absolutely nothing now. If they would regulate the thing in some kind of way we might know where we are.

60,380. (*Mr. Long.*) There is a limitation under the Act of Parliament, is there not?—I do not think so.

60,381. Is there not the limitation that traffic to be extraordinary, must be traffic in excess of the ordinary traffic that there is from one spot to another?—Yes.

60,382. Therefore extraordinary traffic must be confined to a limited description of traffic?—Yes, but that is rather indefinite, generally.

60,383. (*Mr. Little.*) You want regulations as to weight of the load and the width of the wheels?—As to the width of the wheels and the weight; that is what I was referring to most particularly. Let them make any regulations they like, and then at once we shall know where we are.

60,384. (*Mr. Long.*) That would require legislation, would it not?—I think it could be done in bye-laws by the county council. It is entirely in the hands of the county council.

60,385. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Has any action been tried with regard to this extraordinary traffic?—A great many.

60,386. And damages awarded?—Yes, damages have been awarded. There have been several cases brought up before our local petty sessional courts. The people are combining now. Some of the timber merchants and landowners have attended one meeting with the object of taking an action to the Court of Queen's Bench about it, to see if we can get a case there.

Land out of cultivation.

60,387. (*Mr. Clay.*) I think you said that the arable land was going gradually out of condition?—Yes.

60,388. Is that from want of capital?—I think it is almost entirely from want of capital, and the consequent want of labour that should be applied to it.

Compensation for unexhausted improvements.

60,389. If you had a better guarantee for farmers laying out capital would it not bring more capital to hand?—If there was more guarantee for capital?

60,390. I mean compensation for unexhausted improvements?—I do not know that there would be. I think under the existing laws there is ample provision for unexhausted improvements, if the tenants like to take advantage of it.

60,391. If the fertility of the soil is gradually going down for want of capital, what are you going to come to?—That is what is so pressing at the present time; I really cannot say. In the old times when farmers were making better money they used to expend their excess of profits in improving their farms. That is not the case now. The farm is the thing that seems to suffer first.

60,392. I suppose before you can bring capital into any trade you must make that trade reasonably profitable?—Quite so, but then the great difficulty is that there is no capital with the Welsh farmers at all, whether you give them a sufficient guarantee or whether you do not.

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60,393. Are you not taking the capital away from them in the shape of rent?—I do not know that. I am taking the rent which is, I consider, the excess of profits due to the landlords for the raw material.

Payment of rent out of capital.

60,394. What if the tenant farmer cannot make that?—No doubt he is touching a little of his capital, if he has got any, but I have been quoting to you instances, which I may say represent, generally, the state of the things through our county as regards capital; they have got none. I get frequent applications for a farm; a lot of our tenants come and bring their sons who are anxious to get a farm; the son is married to a daughter of one of the neighbouring tenants and he is selected as the new tenant. He has got no capital of his own but his father and mother give him two or three cows, and the father and mother of his wife give him three or four more, and a few sheep, and a plough or two, and that is how he starts. That is the invariable custom.

60,395. Is not that rather an unsatisfactory state of matters in Wales?—That is a very unsatisfactory state of matters, but I do not see how it is to be got over.

60,396. Do you expect to go on at that pace, decreasing the value of the land?—Not with the decreasing value of the land, I do not see how we are to get on with that. But we have got on on that basis for a great number of years, and I know a great many, as I was quoting just now to the chairman, who have started as labourers from nothing, and who are now in good positions on farms, and have got a bit of money.

60,397. They are not all like that?—No, certainly not; of course they have been seriously affected during the depression generally; but those who have got sons working at home, I think, have been able to make their rents still without touching their capital—at all events a great number of them have.

60,398. Is the rent not sometimes paid out of the son's equally legitimate wages?—That has been suggested a great many times, and, no doubt, in cases that is so.

60,399. Is that not a reason why many of these young men are driven away from farming—because they see their fathers cannot make ends meet?—They get better wages away, no doubt; but I do not think it is the case that they get nothing for their labour at all, as has been suggested.

60,400. They do not get much?—They get a great deal more away, no doubt, in the industrial centres.

60,401. If the landlord presses for his rent they get still less wages?—If we increased the rents now-a-days, no doubt they would; but if you take into consideration the size of the farms, and the requirements in buildings in these small Welsh farms, you will see there is not a very great margin of profit to the landlord.

60,402. I suppose your present tenure is from year to to year?—Yes.

60,403. Martinmas entries?—Michaelmas entries and annual tenancies from year to year.

Gambling in wheat.

60,404. You have made reference to a question in your brief about the gambling in American wheat markets; have you been studying that subject?—No, I cannot say that I have. I have put that in generally as being, no doubt, a cause; but I cannot say I have had any experience of it really, and we are not affected by it in our county.

60,405. (*Mr. Long.*) I see you tell us that the system of farming generally is that of stock raising?—Yes.

60,406. And the supplying of store cattle?—Yes.

Diseases of animals and foreign imports.

60,407. Have the farmers in your neighbourhood suffered at all from cattle disease of any kind?—There has been a deal of anthrax in our county.

60,408. Did you suffer at all from pleuro-pneumonia?—No, I do not know of any cases; I cannot remember any, but we have suffered considerably from anthrax.

60,409. Is it fair to say that the farmers there regard the health of their cattle as a primary object of great importance to them?—No, I cannot say that; I do not think an English educated farmer who looked after his cattle would think so at all.

60,410. I do not think you quite apprehend my question; what I meant was this—is it fair to say with regard to the generality of the farmers, that the health of the cattle in the country is a matter of primary importance to them?—Yes, no doubt, I think that is so.

60,411. Is it desirable that they should be protected so far as possible from contagion through foreign cattle?—I think so—very much so. I did not quite understand your point at first. I do not know that they take any very great special precautions, but no doubt it is of primary interest to them. They are not very well educated in veterinary science.

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60,412. Of course the precautions are taken for them by the State?—Quite so.

Position of large owners and small owners compared.

60,413. I see that further on in your brief you say that "large owners as a rule have been better able to "cope with the depression than small ones;" would you like to give any reason for that shortly?—I can only say, that in proportion their estates are less encumbered than those of the smaller owners, generally speaking, but it is not at all an invariable rule.

60,414. Is that at all owing to the fact that on a large estate, covering of course a large area, the depression varies?—That is the case to a great extent, and that is particularly so in the case of the Cawdor estate, for instance. I have got property altogether in 39 parishes in the county that I look after, and the system of farming in different parts of the county is extraordinary.

60,415. Then you tell us that you have experienced no difference in the effect on estates owned by absolute or limited owners?—No, I have not noticed any difference in that particular.

Position of occupying owners.

60,416. You go on to tell us that the occupying owners are heavily over-burdened, is it not your experience that the occupying owner whether burdened or not, has suffered less from the depression than the occupier?—No, I cannot say that that has been my experience; I cannot say that I have noticed any difference in that respect.

60,417. I will put it to you in this way: there are a certain number of occupying owners in Wales whom you know?—Yes.

60,418. Is it your experience, that where a man is the occupying owner there is conspicuous evidence of his suffering less from depression than where he is not the occupying owner?—I do not know that it is conspicuous. It entirely depends upon the question of his position as regards mortgages and other charges on his land. I think no doubt, he is actually in a better position, provided that his encumbrances are not excessive.

60,419. Has the class of yeomen, which is that of occupying owners, increased in Wales?—We do not know them by the name of yeoman in our country, but they have increased during the last 35 or 40 years, enormously, I think.

60,420. Occupying owners?—Yes, a great number of them have bought their farms.

60,421. And are they doing well?—They are where they are not encumbered very severely by mortgages, as a great number of them are.

60,422. When you say "encumbered by mortgages," you mean, I presume, that they have borrowed money with which to purchase their holdings?—Yes.

60,423 In other words, that their rent is in all probability, higher now than the rent paid by occupying tenants?—That is the case. I know instances myself where tenants have paid less in rent than they are actually paying in charges on mortgages now as owners, that is on the individual farms that they used to occupy as tenant farmers and now occupy as owners.

Rating of plantations.

60,424. You gave some interesting evidence just now about rates on plantations; have you any suggestion to make with regard to the incidence of rates upon land which is devoted to afforestation?—I should like to see some basis made—I do not know that I have got a scheme in view—so that some rate should be chargeable when we cut and make our profit. It is rather difficult to do that.

60,425. Do you mean that you would like the land to be relieved from rate so long as it makes no return?—Yes.

60,426. And then to be rated at its proper value when it comes in as a profitable investment?—Yes. The present arrangement deters planting very much, and in Wales there is a lot of land which is really useless for any other purpose, and might be made a benefit to the country generally, no doubt.

60,427. Have you formed any opinion how long it would be desirable that the land should be relieved from rates in order that planting might be carried out?

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—It depends on what class of timber you are planting—whether you are planting hard or soft timber—what number of years it would take to become profitable.

60,428. That, of course, is true; but what I meant was this: have you formed any idea, subject to variations in consequence of the timber varying, as to the period of time that it would be necessary to give men in order that they might increase their planting?—I cannot say that I have thought it over, but I should think that land taken up for planting, or existing plantation, should be relieved for the first 10 years anyhow of rates to a certain extent.

60,429. Have you any suggestion to make as to the basis on which you would assess when it came into profit?—I should assess on the actual profit made, I think.

60,430. The net profit made?—Like profits from investments in the funds, for instance—something of that kind, generally. I am afraid I had not formed any ideas very much on that subject. It is an interesting one, and I should like to think it out more.

System of letting farms.

60,431. Are the majority of the farms with which you are acquainted let on lease or on yearly tenancies?—They are entirely on yearly tenancies, and generally without an agreement at all. I have got a copy of my agreement with me if you would like to see it.

Deterioration of farming.

60,432. Have you any reason to believe that tenants have not embarked sufficient capital in their land to make it bear a profitable crop?—Yes, I certainly hold that view most strongly.

60,433. You think the land has not been properly farmed?—I am quite convinced of it.

60,434. Are the crops less per acre there than they are over the rest of the country?—Very much so, I think.

60,435. And is the system of farming less satisfactory?—Certainly, I think it is generally much less satisfactory.

60,436. What do you attribute that to?—Of course I am speaking generally. There are a great many farms in our country that are well farmed by strong men; scientific men, who do their farming well, but speaking generally, the actual cultivation is very much neglected. The arable land is not only not cultivated in any sort of scientific way, but it is not even cultivated on the lowest principles of husbandry.

60,437. What do you attribute it to?—I attribute it, to a certain extent, to ignorance and carelessness. I know a great many of the tenants who seem to have no ambition beyond just working up to their rent and living comfortably; just living in the ordinary way in which they have been used to live, and their forefathers before them; just paying their rent and living—that is their only ambition.

Security of tenure in Wales.

60,438. Do you think that is due to a feeling of insecurity on their part as to their tenure?—No; I do not think it can be due to that, because I do not know of any part of the country where tenure generally is more certain. I have got a great number of farms in the hands of the same families, going back for generation, and generation, and generation.

60,439. Is there any general feeling amongst them that if they put their money into the land they will not get it back again?—No; I do not think there is. It has been suggested, and landlords have been attacked on that score; but honestly, in my experience, I cannot say that there is any of that feeling. I know it has been made public, but I honestly see no justification for it whatever, because they change the tenancy but a very few times.

Freedom of sale.

60,440. You have told us here of the Welsh system of selling off crops at Michaelmas; do you impose, or is it usual to impose, any restriction upon the sale of crops by the tenants?—By the landlord?

60,441. Imposed by the landlords upon the tenants?—No; there is no restriction made whatever.

60,442. Have they practically freedom of sale as regards crops?—Entirely.

Freedom of cropping.

60,443. Are there any restrictions in use as regards cropping?—Yes, there is a rough system of cultivation generally engrossed on our agreements.

60,444. You told us just now that the majority of your lettings were yearly, without even an agreement?—So they are in a great number of instances, but where there are agreements, they generally specify that no more than three white crops, at any rate of corn, should be taken one after the other without a green crop intervening, or something of that kind.

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60,445. Would you say, generally speaking, that there is a very considerable freedom of cropping so long as men do their best?—Very. I do not suppose that there is a greater freedom of cropping anywhere in the British Islands than there is in Wales, judging from my experience of England, and of the English farm agreements that I have seen. I have got a copy of our agreement here as regards cultivation.

60,446. (*Mr. Clay.*) Will you let me see it?—Yes (*handing in copy*).

Law of distress.

60,447. (*Mr. Long.*) Your experience, I see, with regard to the abolition of the law of distress, is that it might operate hardly upon the tenant by forcing the landlord to take stronger measures?—Yes; that is my view of it. I do not see how the abolition of the law of distress would benefit the tenant in any kind of way; it would benefit his creditors, but I do not see in what shape it can benefit him, and I think it would be unjust to the landlord. In the ordinary way a tradesman can stop a customer's debt, but the landlord is obliged to let it run whether he likes it or not, and I think he should be protected accordingly.

Co-operation in distribution of agricultural produce.

60,448. In your remedies for agricultural depression, you suggest that the producer and consumer should be brought nearer together; have you considered at all any advantages that might be secured in that direction by an extension and an improvement of our postal system?—Yes; I think that might be done to a great extent.

60,449. And of our telegraphic system?—I think so; but then the question of co-operation among the tenant farmers comes in rather more; we so lack co-operation among the tenants and facilities——

60,450. We are getting a little ahead; there is no necessity to have co-operation among tenants in order to have better postal arrangements and telegraphic arrangements, is there?—No.

60,451. If the postal arrangements were better; that is to say, if the post arrived earlier in the morning before a man left for his market, and if he had the power of telegraphing to the dealer, do you think that would, in some way, meet what you want; namely, to bring the purchaser and the consumer together?—Yes; I think it would very much, especially if the tenant got educated up to it.

Labelling of foreign meat.

60,452. I see you also recommend the labelling of foreign meat; have you thought out any system by which mutton chops could be labelled as such?—No; not mutton chops.

60,453. It is no good labelling the sheep, is it, unless you label all the parts into which the sheep is cut?—That is so. I know it is a very difficult question. There is no doubt it would be advantageous to do it, but it is very difficult to carry it out.

State loans for improvements.

60,454. I see you also recommend that there should be State loans for agricultural improvement; is it your experience that the owners are unable, in any large degree, to do the necessary improvements on their estates for want of capital?—Yes; I find that is the case.

60,455. Do you think if loans were made to them that they would take advantage of them?—I think they would certainly.

60,456. Do you think it would be preferable that the loans should be made by the State or that the Lands Improvement Companies should be empowered to lend money for longer periods than they are able to do now?—I think it would be preferable through the loan societies if they were tied down to rather better terms: I do not see that it is necessary to do it through the State directly. I should say do it through the land companies, or I do not see why it should not be done through the local county councils. That I suggested in my brief rather more with regard to the purchase of holdings; I think it would be advantageous if State loans were granted to the county councils for the purpose of tenants purchasing their holdings.

60,457. That is further on; but with regard to improvements?—With regard to the improvements, I think it would be certainly advantageous.

60,458. You think that if the State were to empower the county council to make loans, or made loans itself to enable tenants to purchase, the tenants would avail

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themselves of it?—Yes, I think they would. I have got a system now somewhat on the lines of the Ecclesiastical Commissioners' system, for purchasing farms, which I am rather keen on, but it is rather a difficult thing to carry out privately, I think, even on a large estate. Tenants have a prejudice against anything new, and they are rather ignorant, and they do not quite understand things, whereas if it came from a public body I think they would be more inclined to take it up.

Agricultural and forestry education.

60,459. I will take your next three or four points together, because they practically refer to the same subject, namely, agricultural education, dairy classes, horticulture, and forestry. Have your county councils taken advantage of the technical education money to make grants for these purposes?—Yes, they have for dairy classes, and there have been some agricultural lectures. The dairy classes have been productive of a certain amount of good.

60,460. Have you only had agricultural lectures and no experiments?—We have only had experiments among private individuals.

60,461. Are you at all familiar with the proposal of Bangor College to extend its agricultural education by getting an experimental farm?—I am afraid I have not seen the scheme.

60,462. Do you think that experimental farms in the hands of these local institutions would be helpful?—Yes, I do. I was suggesting that just now.

60,463. For the purpose of testing seeds and manures?—I think so, and if possible to give a regular course of instruction to young farmers.

60,464. I presume that if it was for the purpose of giving a course of instruction to young farmers, they would have to be widely scattered about, as there would be a difficulty in getting the young farmers to go any considerable distance which would necessitate residence?—That would be so, and that is where I foresaw the difficulty of the expense which would be entailed by a necessary residence.

60,465. If you had a permanent itinerant lecturer at certain experimental stations, holding meetings at different points, do you think the young farmers would then go and listen to the lectures and watch the experiments?—Yes, I do. I think if the lecturers were made more permanent it would be advantageous. Hitherto they have just been come and go: there is a great amount of interest taken just locally, and it is all forgotten again. But if the lecturers were employed more permanently in the distrtct, and worked the county thoroughly, and had experimental plots here and there, I believe a good deal could be done.

Agricultural depression in England and Wales.

60,466. On the whole, notwithstanding the fact that you take rather a depressed view of the character of your agriculture, you believe that agricultural depression has not been so severe in the district you represent as it has been elsewhere?—No, I do not think it has; because the prices of our particular produce have not varied to the extent that the prices of other farm products have.

60,467. You have not produced very much corn, and, therefore, you are not hit by the main agricultural product falling in price—as you do not produce so much corn you do not feel the fall in price so much?—No. In fact the fall in corn has rather been a benefit to us in Wales. A large amount of corn is purchased now, and we can purchase it on better terms than we used to be able to do, so that it has really rather been a benefit to us than otherwise; in fact it undoubtedly has.

Assessment of income tax.

60,468. (*Mr. Little.*) I believe you have some suggestion to make about the assessment of income tax?—Yes, and generally on the incidence of rates and taxes which fall very severely on landed proprietors as opposed to private investors. I actually make out from our rates that I am paying as much as 12*s.* 3*d.* in the pound on outgoings.

60,469. How is that calculation arrived at?—I put it on an individual piece of land; tithes at 2*s.* in the pound.

60,470. Do you count tithe as taxes?—I count them as a charge on the land. I take an individual piece of land, say, and sum up the total rates and taxes and expenses incident to the management of that piece of land before any profit is made out of it. I put title at 2*s.* in the pound. I take the highway, education, sanitary, police, county, special, and sporting rates at 4*s.* 4*d.* in the pound, I am paying more than that I may say; I put the land tax at 6*d.* in the pound, the property tax at 8*d.* in the pound, the repairs at 3*s.* in the pound, the management at 1*s.* in the pound, and inhabited house duty at 9*d.* in the pound.

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Inhabited house duty.

60,471. How do you get house duty on land?—The farmers are charged house duty in a great many instances.

60,472. If they are above a certain value?—Yes, of course, I was taking in this case 9*d.* in the pound on a residential house and land, what the proprietor would have to pay in rates and taxes on it.

60,473. But surely that is a tax upon the house, and not a tax upon the land?—It is a tax actually upon the house, no doubt. I was taking the land and the house as rated for rateable purposes together, as they would be in the ordinary case of the poor rates.

Assessment of income tax.

60,474. But the question I asked you was with reference to some suggestion you have to make as to the assessment of income tax. Is that under Schedule A or Schedule B?—I was referring more to Schedule A. Of course we have had some advantage now by the 12½ per cent——

60,475. For repairs?—Yes, which we get off now—but that does not meet the case generally, it does not meet the case more or less generally of the repairs I think, and it does not take into consideration the nett value of the profit to the landlord.

60,476. What other deductions do you think should be made?—I think poor rates and management.

60,477. But poor rates do not come out of the rent?—No; I should be wrong in that.

60,478. I did not know whether you had some suggestion to make as to the assessment of the income tax, either under Schedule A or under Schedule B.?—No; I think we are pretty well satisfied as we are under Schedule A, but I think we should be glad of a higher per-centage off. I think management might be included.

Incidence of local rates.

60,479. Then as to rates you complain generally that land is charged out of proportion to the interest that the owner and occupier of land have in the expenditure?—Yes; I certainly think so.

60,480. Those rates in urban districts particularly are a very heavy charge, are they not?—Yes; they are a very heavy charge. In some cases they are very large parishes even where there are boroughs: the extension is very great, and it falls very hard on farmers in the neighbourhood who are within the boroughs. I have got several tenants who are paying rates within borough boundaries and in the local parishes as well, and it falls very heavily on them.

60,481. Are the boroughs co-extensive with the parishes?—Yes; in some cases.

60,482. Then all the agricultural land pays to the borough rate upon the full value?—Yes.

60,483. It does not even get the deduction of three-fourths for the borough rate purposes?—No.

60,484. And that is very unfair in your opinion?—Yes, that is very unfair, I think. I cannot see the grounds on which such large extensions of borough boundaries have been made. I do not know the principle on which the Acts were passed, I am sure, but they seem very unreasonable, and it is a great reflection upon the tenants.

Tenants' capital.

60,485. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Do you farm yourself?—No, I do not, unfortunately.

60,486. Do you consider that 3*l.* an acre is sufficient to stock a farm in your district?—Yes.

60,487. Would you be prepared to take a tenant with only 3*l.* an acre, say, for a large farm of 300 or 400 acres?—Yes, I should be very glad if I got that. I take a great many with a great deal less; I take a great many with none.

60,488. Would that be an arable farm or a pasture farm?—That would be for a mixed farm; there is no such thing as an arable or a pasture farm in our part of the country; really it is entirely mixed farming.

60,489. What proportion does the arable bear to the pasture?—I should think from about 15 per cent. to 20 per cent.

Average rent.

60,490. What is the average rent of farms in your district?—That is a very difficult question to answer. I gave you in my evidence in chief the general details as regards that. The hill farms run from 3*s.* to 5*s.* per acre; the upland farms from 10*s.* to 12*s.* per acre, and the low ground from 15*s.* to 25*s.* per acre.

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60,491. I mean a farm that a man could stock at 3*l.* an acre?—Then that would be more or less the first two items—the hill farms of from 3*s.* to 5*s.* an acre, and the upland farms of from 10*s.* to 12*s.*

60,492. What capital would the best farms require?—I think they ought to require 7*l.* or 8*l.* an acre.

60,493. How do you let these farms—by tender or otherwise?—Never by tender. When a farm becomes vacant, I get a good many applicants, and if I think there is any reason for alteration in the rent, I make a field to field valuation and rent it on that basis. I never let by tender.

Reduction of rents.

60,494. What reduction were you obliged to make when re-letting those farms you mentioned?—In one instance I cut out the tithe altogether, and in another instance, I think, in addition to the tithe, I took somewhere about 6 to 7 per cent. off the old rent. I am afraid that I have not got the particulars of each re-letting, but it was generally on that basis.

60,495. Did the outgoing tenants apply for a reduction before they left?—Those reductions were made to sitting tenants. They were new lettings to sitting tenants in every case except one.

60,496. They did not leave, then?—No; they did not leave.

Fall in prices.

60,497. What in your opinion has been the average fall in prices, comparing present day prices with the prices obtaining in the seventies?—Of what particular products?

60,498. I mean taking every farm produce from such mixed farms as you have in your district?—That is a very difficult question to answer I am afraid.

60,499. (*Chairman.*) It depends what years you take your comparisons from very much, does it not?—Yes, it does; and it depends very much also upon the particular products chosen. Everything has gone up and down so very much. It ranges from 35 per cent. downwards. Prices have varied very much. Stock occasionally has been selling well for a few months, and then back again; it has been selling very well in the spring, and it is back again in the autumn. It is entirely dependent on the state of the grass in England, and on the winter keep.

60,500. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Would you say that the average would be over 20 per cent.?—I should say over 20 per cent. generally, comparing it with the best prices of good years in the seventies.

60,501. (*Chairman.*) That is when you make the comparison with the very best period?—Yes.

60,502. But it would hardly be a fair comparison, I suppose, to take the very best years. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Take corn for instance, that has gone down more than a half?—It is a very difficult question to answer. It is almost impossible to give any idea regarding it.

60,503. Sheep have gone down?—Things vary so much within a few months of the individual year from spring to autumn, it is extraordinary.

60,504. (*Chairman.*) Could you prepare any statistics showing the price of stock over a range of years?—I could roughly, but I would not like to hand them in as really satisfactory evidence, because there are no official statistics taken of the market values of produce in our county; I wish there were; I think it would be a very desirable thing to have some official there under the Government for taking the official values at our fairs and markets.

60,505. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Labour is much dearer now than it was then?—Very much.

60,506. And rates have gone up, you say?—Rates have gone up as well.

Reduction of rents.

60,507. But rents have only come down about 10 or 15 per cent.?—Yes.

60,508. Ought not the rents to be reduced in proportion to the reduction that has taken place in prices?—No; I do not see that.

60,509. This depression has lasted for a considerable period now?—No doubt the tenant farmers have been hit very much, but in past times they have made a great deal of money. Striking an average generally, I do not think there is a necessity, but I think there will certainly be a necessity if this depression continues much longer. Hitherto I do not think there has been a necessity in our country, but no doubt the farmers feel it now.

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60,510. You say they made a lot of money before now, but you have also said that your tenants had no capital at present, that it was all gone?—Yes, that is the case; they never had any capital to start with. I do not say that they have not, some of them, got capital now. I do not say all of them, but a great proportion of them had no capital at all to start with. A great many had made a certain amount of money, and if they have not actually saved money in the banks, they have had opportunities of educating their children well, and of sending them away where they do well. I know a great many very successful leading tradesmen in London now, who have come from our parts.

60,511. Do you think that if prices do not improve, the present rents will be maintained?—No. I do not think so; my own opinion is that rents will have to come down.

60,512. Speaking generally, would you say that your tenants are satisfied with the rents they are paying?—I think they are generally, over a series of years. I do not think they are satisfied during the years of severe depression, but I think generally speaking they are thoroughly satisfied. The rents vary so dreadfully, and there is a great cause of complaint among the tenants themselves; they are so jealous of a neighbouring farmer, because he has got his land possibly in better condition, and has so much less rent on it.

Leases and agreements.

60,513. (*Mr. Everett.*) Land, I think, you said is almost all held from year to year in your part of Wales?—Entirely.

60,514. Is that an old custom?—Yes, there were a few leases granted in the past. I think, say 100 years ago. I have got a few old expired leases of that date—old leases on lives; but now on the 60,000 or 70,000 acres of enclosed land that I manage, I have not got a single farm leased; nor have I had an application for a lease.

60,515. Were they under lease 20 years ago?—I do not think so. I do know of about two farm leases in our county which are still running—old leases on lives—but the ones I have had experience of are 70, 80, or 100 years ago leases.

Tithes.

60,516. In regard to tithe, is the tithe still paid by the tenant on some of your farms?—On two of my estates the tenants refund me the value of the tithe that I have paid to the tithe owner. On the Cawdor Estate I have wiped that off entirely, and it has not been collected since the Act of 1891.

60,517. You cannot legally make tenants pay the tithe now, can you?—Yes; that is a provision in the Act of 1891, that the landowner pays the tithe owner direct, and under old contracts, previous to the Act of 1891, the tenant has to refund the value of the tithe to the landlord that the landlord has paid to the tithe owner.

60,518. Your contracts being all yearly contracts, they all ran out a year after the passing of the Act, did they not?—No, they did not; and they are not for one specific year, they are eternal; they are from year to year, not for one specific year, but for ever, until 12 months' notice by either party has been given.

60,519. I should have thought that in cases like that, the expiration of the year would have made it illegal to charge them tithe?—No; a contract goes on for ever, unless there is a specific notice from either party.

60,520. That is a point of law that is new to me. In regard to these yeomen farmers, are they a comparatively new creation, or are they simply the successors to their fathers or others who held these freehold farms?—In a great many cases they are successors to their forefathers who occupied these farms as owners for a great number of years. In the majority of cases within my experience those farms were sold in the good times of the seventies, and taken by the tenants then.

Distribution of estates.

60,521. Were estates broken up and so divided into several ownerships by sale?—Yes, generally. Some have been sold to sitting tenants by private treaty, and a great deal by public auction.

60,522. So that they have been to a certain extent a new creation in the last generation?—Yes; they have. I fancy the old original yeoman farmer in Wales died out, and was bought up by the larger proprietors who are now——

60,523. Taking the other process?—Taking the other process.

60,524. And a great many of these men you fear are eaten up nearly by mortgages?—Yes; a great many of them who bought at high prices in the good years.

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State loans for redemption of mortgages.

60,525. Do you think the Government would be doing a good thing if they could see their way to lend money at a low rate, in order to redeem these mortgages and to clear these mortages off?—Yes; I think there is no doubt that a great relief would be granted to a large population in Wales if that was done, and also if it were done for the purchase of farms as well.

60,526. We have a member of the Government here and I hope he will take notice of what you say. There are districts where people with tears in their eyes implore that something should be done to relieve them?—Yes, there is one particular parish which has been rather notorious, the parish of Penrhyn in Cardiganshire—which I have a little experience of; I have been through that district. During the late tithe riots there I went on a very big day when we expected to have a row. I was up in the neighbourhood collecting the rents. We went with a large body of police and with a bailiff, and served a lot of distraints. The position of the tenantry there, who are occupying owners, is certainly bad. A large estate was cut up and disposed of by sale some years ago, and the sitting tenants bought at very high rates and had to borrow a considerable proportion of the money.

60,527. And to pay, I suppose, 4 per cent. for the money?—Yes, 4 per cent. is the general rule. There are very few mortgages over that or under that—4 per cent. is the general rule.

60,528. If they could get the money at 3 per cent. with an arrangement that in so many years it would be all paid off, that would be a large help to them, would it not?—Yes, I think, a good deal might be done in that way, generally, by the repayment of principle and interest over an extensive period.

60,529. With the advantage of the Government low rate?—I think so; I think there is excellent security for the money in every way.

60,530. That is the point I was going to put to you—whether the land retains enough of its value so that it would be safe?—Yes; I think if those great burdens were relieved from the occupying owners a bit, they would have more encouragement to farm better perhaps and to get a better education. No doubt they will in the future where they have not done it in the past—at least I hope so, if times are reasonably fair.

Appreciation of money.

60,531. I notice you allude to the monetary basis as having adversely affected prices; I gather from that that you hold the opinion that there has been an appreciation of money?—Yes, there apparently has. It is a question I am not at all well versed in and I should not like to bear a severe cross-examination on that at all; but there is apparently no question that it has adversely affected prices, and if some system could be adopted by which it was put on a basis by which there was less fluctuation things would be better.

60,532. Should you say generally that it is quite possible that the closing of mints has had almost as depressing an effect as the opening of ports. (*Chairman.*) Have you given much attention to the subject?—No, I am afraid I would not be prepared to bear a cross-examination on the question of bimetallism.

60,533. (*Mr. Everett.*) You must have paid some attention to it or you would not have named it in your brief?—Yes, but I do not know that I have gone into it at all deeply. I have seen a good deal of correspondence in the papers about it, and I know there is a great diversity of opinion on the subject.

60,534. Would you like to see a conference with a view to the restoration of open mints?—That is a question I would not be prepared to give an opinion about, I am afraid.

Assessments of income tax.

60,535. In regard to the income tax, I see that on the last page of your brief you speak of an assessment of the income tax on the net profits, as in the Schedules D. and E; you are aware, I dare say, that as regards Schedule B the farmer has that option?—Yes; I know he has that option now, and also, that we are in a better position under Schedule A than we have been in the past; I do not know that I am really very satisfied with that; I should like to get more.

60,536. You are also aware, I dare say, that by the arrangement made quite recently, any farmer whose rent is not more than 480*l.* is free of income tax altogether?—Yes.

60,537. So that every farmer in Wales, probably, is exempt from income tax?—Yes, that is the case, as a rule.

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Incidence of local rates.

60,538. (*Chairman.*) With reference to these rates in your district, and the papers which you have put in my hand, I have been looking through them and it appears to me that assuming that the sanitary rate is not included in the demand for the other rates—which I suppose is the case from what you state——?—Yes.

60,539. Then the rates in the Llanelly Union, altogether, on houses come to 5*s.* 4*d.*?—Yes.

60,540. But of that the sanitary rate is 16*d.*?—Yes.

60,541. And one-fourth only of that would fall upon land. Therefore the rate upon land would be 4*s.* 4*d.*?—The rate would be the same, but the assessment for that particular rate would be reduced by three-fourths.

60,542. It would be 4*s.* 4*d.* instead of 5*s.* 4*d.*?—That does not affect the actual amount—5*s.* 4*d.* is paid exactly the same.

60,543. 5*s.* 4*d.* is charged upon house property, but only 4*s.* 4*d.* upon land. (*Mr. Long.*) Is it not the other way? The charge made is identical; it is the assessment which is reduced, not the rate; a uniform rate is made——but it comes, of course, to the same result. I think the witness is puzzled by the fact that the charge of 1*s.* 4*d.* is made equally on urban and on rural land, the difference being that in the one case the assessment is taken on 100*l.*, and in the other on 25*l.*?—5*s.* 4*d.* is the actual rate paid. If it had not been for that special way of assessing the sanitary rate, it would have been about 7*s.*

60,544. (*Chairman.*) It works out to 4*s.* 4*d.* on land, as compared with 5*s.* 4*d.* on houses, because the land is charged at that special rate?—It works out to 5*s.* 4*d.*, which I actually pay for that particular plantation. If that were assessed to the sanitary rate at the full rate, I should have to pay about 7*s.*

60,545. No; it is reduced by the reduction of the sanitary rate to one-fourth?—If it had not been for that assessment, instead of 5*s.* 4*d.*, I should be paying about 7*s.* I do pay 5*s.* 4*d.* with the reduction—that is the actual rate.

60,546. I do not think that can be the case?—You will see the receipt there.

60,547. That cannot be an accurate way of putting the case?—If, instead of that 8*d.* being put on the 1*l.* for that plantation, it was put on the 4*l.*, I should pay 32*d.*, but for the purpose of this special assessment, it is rated at 1*l.* and I pay 8*d.* each half-year, but as I say, if there was not that reduction, I should be paying 32*d.*

60,548. No doubt; but you cannot say you would be paying at the rate of 7*s.*?—Yes; that would make it that.

60,549. That cannot be accurate. I think my way of putting it is really the right one. If you compare the actual payments out of pocket for the land as compared with the houses—in the case of the houses it comes to 5*s.* 4*d.* in the pound, and in the case of the land to 4*s.* 4*d.*; if you work it out you will see that that is the way it comes out?—There is no question about houses in that receipt at all. That is an actual rate, paid on a plantation, of 5*s.* 4*d.* If there had been a house included there I should have been paying something like 7*s.* instead of 5*s.* 4*d.*, because that sanitary rate, instead of being 8*d.* for the half-year, would then be 32*d.* every half-year.

60,550. That cannot be an accurate way of putting it. This demand note is made upon all property and for all property; it is at the rate of 5*s.* 4*d.* including the sanitary rate; therefore land undoubtedly gets the advantage of being assessed for sanitary purposes at one-fourth its value and, therefore, for that purpose that particular rate is reduced to one-fourth, and inasmuch as the sanitary rate is 1*s.* 4*d.* for the whole year the rate upon the land would only be 4*d.*; then if you deduct that 1*s.* from the rate which falls upon the houses you find it comes to 4*s.* 4*d.* on the land?—I would not wish to contradict you, but that is the actual rate paid on that plantation.

60,551. Of that 5*s.* 4*d.* falling upon general property apparently 1*s.* 7*d.* is the school board rate?—Yes.

60,552. Therefore it is a very heavy school board rate. Apart from the sanitary rate and the school board rate, the rates in that union do not appear to be very high?—No; they are not high.

60,553. They are 9*d.* for the half-year for the poor, 2*d.* for the county (which is a very low rate for a county

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rate—4d. for the year); then the highway rate is 2d; that is for the half-year and amounts to 4d. for the whole year, which is also a low rate; and then the technical education rate is one halfpenny, and the intermediate education rate is also a halfpenny, making a penny each for the year. Therefore, apart from the school board rate and the sanitary rate, the rates in the union are low?—Yes, the other portions of them are, and fortunately so.

60,554. I see there is another case of the Kidwelly Union; there the rates, apparently, amount to 3s. 6d. in the pound; of that the poor rate is 9d. for the half-year, making 1s. 6d. for the year; the school board rate is 6d. for the half-year, making a 1s. rate for the year; and the county rate is 4½d. for the half-year, making a 9d. rate for the year; and there is a borough rate of 1½d., making 3d. for the year; or a total of 3s. 6d. if you deduct the school board rate, that is 2s. 6d.?—Yes, for other purposes.

60,555. There, again, I should say that apart from the school board rate—which is a very high one——?—Yes.

60,556. The ordinary rates are low?—Yes, but that does not help our position.

60,557. Quite so, but let us arrive at what is the real grievance in those two cases. In those cases the grievance seems to me to be the high school board rate, which is a very high one indeed in the Llanelly Union—being 1s. 9d. in the pound, and the sanitary rate, that being 1s. 4d.; both those rates are excessively high?—Yes.

60,558. Those two rates fall upon general property to the full amount; but one of them—the sanitary rate—only falls upon land at a fourth of its value?—Yes.

60,559. Apart from those rates, the rates are low in that district?

60,560. (*Mr. Long.*) I do not know whether the witness wishes that to go forth as his opinion. I understand him to have told us here to-day that he wishes to present a case for an alteration of local taxation on the ground that the local rates are unduly high in respect to the value of the land. Therefore, whether the rate is a low rate, or not, as compared with rates in other places, it does not affect the contention, which as I understand he submits, in respect of the districts in which he is interested, land as such pays more in rates than it ought to do?—Yes, that is my point.

Incidence of local rate.

60,561. Those rates may be low from the point of view of the rate collector, but they may still be too high from the point of view of the ratepayer. (*Chairman.*) I have asked the questions with regard to the comparison of the rates with previous years. If the value of the land has gone down, the rate out of pocket is less?—It is very much on the same basis then.

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60,562. The question is, what is the cause of the high rate. There is no doubt that 5s. 4d. in the pound on all property is a very high rate, as I have shown, I think, in the case of land, in that district it is 4s. 4d., and even that is a high rate. But that is due to the very high school board rate, which is a very exceptionally high one, of 1s. 9d., and to the high sanitary rate, which is 1s. 4d.?—Yes, but the fact remains that I am paying as much in that particular district on my land as 5s. 4d. in the pound, and that is what I am complaining of.

60,563. No; excuse me, you are not paying 5s. 4d. on the land, you are paying 4s. 4d.?—You will see my receipt.

60,564. If you look carefully through the figures you will find you are only paying 4s. 4d. on the land?—There is my receipt.

60,565. So far as house property is concerned you are paying 5s. 4d., but on the land it is quite certain from those figures you have laid before me, it is only 4s. 4d.?—I cannot accept that contention I assure you. There is my official receipt for this particular plantation on which I am paying 5s. 4d., and if there was a house on it I should be paying 7s.

60,566. It is absolutely certain from the figures that it is 5s. 4d. upon all property and 4s. 4d. upon land?—I cannot accept that.

60,567. (*Mr. Little.*) Has your assessment for poor rates been reduced in your case in the last 10 years?—Only in cases where the rent has been reduced.

60,568. The value of the land has decreased, has it not?—Not generally, only as regards the abatements on which the assessment committees have not assisted one.

60,569. But you have given those abatements on the ground that the value has decreased?—Yes, quite so; but the assessment committees will not take that into consideration.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. J. G. Kirby.

Mr. John Gibson Kirby called and examined.

Mr. J. G. Kirby.

60,570. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I think you farm about 200 acres near Swansea?—Yes.

60,571. Within 5 miles of Swansea, I think it is?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farm.

60,572. What description of farm is it?—It is chiefly a grazing farm. I just grow sufficient corn to carry me through the winter, that is all—nothing to sell.

60,573. Are you well acquainted with the district?—Yes, in my brief I have said I am acquainted with it for 10 miles round, but I think I could double that really.

60,574. What is the position of agriculture in that district?—They have come down considerably within the last 12 or 15 years. They have suffered very much, I think, from the very great importation of stock of all kinds, and of meat.

60,575. The importation of meat; not of live stock?—Of live stock to be slaughtered at the different ports. It is still sent and distributed in our markets.

60,576. In the large towns?—Yes.

60,577. But still you have got a very large market at your doors?—Yes, we have.

60,578. Are you within the borough of Swansea?—No, I am not.

Local rates.

60,579. You have not got to pay any of the Swansea rates?—Not exactly the borough rates, but we come within the union of Swansea for some rates.

60,580. Do you have to pay sanitary rates?—Yes; and the school board rate to the union of Swansea. I think we have to pay all the light and water rates.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

60,581. In the last 20 years has there been a considerable quantity of land sold in the district you are speaking of?—Yes; some estates have come into the market, and portions of estates.

60,582. Have their farms been largely bought by tenant farmers?—In many instances they have.

60,583. Is that going on up to the present day?—Yes. Whenever a tenant sees a chance he does purchase.

60,584. They would be tenants, I suppose, who have made money?—Yes, but they have to borrow a considerable amount of the purchase money.

60,585-6. Still they must be men of credit to do it?—Yes, they are.

Position of occupying owners.

60,587. How have the occupying owners done as a rule?—Some ten years ago I think they were doing fairly well, but gradually they have felt this depression—I think chiefly owing to the importations.

60,588. Have they diminished their indebtedness, do you think?—Not all; some of them have. They have been gradually coming down and they are not able to farm up to the standard that they used to.

60,589. Are they paying more in the shape of interest on their loans than tenant farmers are paying in rent?—Yes, in some cases they are.

60,590. They have not got the same consideration, I presume, from their creditors as they would have from their landlords?—No.

60,591. Should you say they are doing worse than the tenant farmers?—I should say they are doing worse now than they did before as tenant farmers.

60,592. Worse than the tenant farmers?—Yes, in many instances.

Condition of farmers on large and small estates compared.

60,593. Is the land in your neighbourhood mostly held by large proprietors?—Yes, chiefly.

60,594. Do you think farmers have done better upon large estates than upon small ones?—Very much

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60,595. What is that due to?—It is due to their landlords being able to give them concessions in all ways and to allow them time to pay their rents. I know of several instances now where they are fully two years behind and still not pressed, although they have been allowed 10, 15, and, in some cases, 20 per cent. to assist them in the bad times.

60,596. Have many farmers on these large estates bought their holdings?—Not so many, there are a few. Unless they find the price goes too high they generally try to do so.

60,597. Are the farms of a large or of a moderate size?—They are moderate and medium sized. I think in the parish of Llangyfelach, which is about 27,000 acres, there are only seven farms of over 200 acres, and there is one in Llandilo in Talybont parish, and three in Llanedi. I may say that in the case of the Loughor parish I have not got the figures before me but they are somewhat similar to Talybont. Loughor has an area of between 7,000 and 8,000 acres, and the class of farm is somewhat similar.

Size of farms.

60,598. Upon what sized farm do you say that the tenant and his family can generally provide all the labour?—I should say up to about 100 acres.

60,599. So that the great bulk of the land is let under 100 acres?—The smaller tenancies cover the greater part of it.

Position of large and small farmers compared.

60,600. Have they stood the depression better than the larger farmers?—I think they have.

60,601. Have they held their own in fact?—They have held their own better. They have children able to manage the farms and able to assist them, and in many cases they go out to works: they take contracts for the horses and one thing and another of that sort, and so earn money in addition to their farms.

60,602. Have there been many changes of tenancies?—No, very few indeed.

60,603. Not many farmers have gone bankrupt then?—No, not many; very few.

Deficiency of labour.

60,604. Is there much difficulty with regard to the labour upon those farms where labourers have to be employed?—Yes, there is in our neighbourhood. The middle aged and strong people go to the works to find employment as a rule, and they leave us with much smaller boys. We employ our servant boys by the year and they are kept in the house, and we are left with much younger ones and not such skilled labour.

Industrial and agricultural wages compared.

60,605. Are wages much better in the works for unskilled labourers?—Yes. They are seldom or never under a guinea at the works, and they get from that up to 25*s.* according to their branches. If they are labourers they get a guinea.

60,606. Do you think the labourers prefer to work in the towns?—They do. I think there are certain reasons for that. They have more of their time perhaps at liberty than they would have on a farm, though our hours are from six to six. But still they have many days off and they earn the same wages.

60,607. Then your wages, I suppose, have been forced up by the competition of the works?—Yes, they have been forced up to from 18*s.*, the lowest, to a guinea. I think it is chiefly through people leaving for the works.

60,608. From what figure would you say 10 years ago?—15*s.*, now they are not under 18*s.*, and go up to 21*s.*

60,609. Do the women do much work in the fields?—Very few; women's labour is very scarce now.

60,610. What wages do they get when they are at work?—From 7*s.* to 9*s.*

60,611. Finding their own food?—Yes.

Demand for small farms.

60,612. Then taking the smaller farms of 50 acres and under is there much demand for them?—Yes.

60,613. Do men make a fair livelihood out of them?—Not exactly on the farm alone. As I said before, I think they take contracts at these works and some of their family work at the works and give them assistance in case of need, especially now. Still they seem to hold their own better than men on larger farms.

Effect of industrial strikes on agriculture.

60,614. So that the proximity of a great town or a great manufacturing centre is a great advantage to this class of men?—It is; but we suffer very much from strikes. That is one of my great points. I should be glad if possible to form boards of conciliation in our immediate neighbourhood. Not six months ago they were out for about 10 weeks, and we lost at the rate of about 2,000*l.* a week in the circulation of money. That made a lot of difference to the farmers in the neighbourhood.

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60,615. Do you mean that they restricted their purchases of the necessaries of life to a great extent?—Yes, they could not possibly buy our butter, our meat, nor anything we had for sale; there was no money circulating in the neighbourhood. Some of them had a kind of labour club or something or other which gave them 8*s.* to 10*s.* or 12*s.* per week for the time, but there was a vast difference between getting that and 30*s.* or 2*l.*

60,616. You had to dispose of your produce as best you could?—Yes, and at very much lower rates.

60,617. Do you think that the evil is such a serious one that it calls for government interposition?—I do; and I should be very proud to see it.

60,618-9. So that there should be measures taken——?—To try and prevent these strikes by boards without really stopping the work.

60,620. On the whole, there has been a considerable immunity from strikes in South Wales, has there not, compared with other districts?—There is a large number of strikes there.

60,621. The strikes have been very serious when they they have taken place?—Yes, they have.

60,622-3. But you have had fewer strikes, have you not?—I do not know. The tin trade has been very bad up to now—even in the last month.

Causes of depression.

60,624. What do you consider is the main cause of such depression as there is in your part of the world?—I am rather afraid that we must fall back upon there being so much of this foreign importation and upon our very much higher rates. I find that the poor rate, the highway rate, the county road rate, and the school board rate (which is very high), and the sanitary rate for the last 15 years have gone up from 2*s.* 8*d.* to 5*s.* 6*d.*

Local rates.

60,625. Have you got the particulars of that here?—No, I have not each one. It is added on our demand note; but I have not got that with me, I am sorry to say.

60,626. Have you got the different items made out on the demand note?—Pretty near, I have; it is 1*s.* 6*d.* for the poor rate, our school board rate, I think, is 1*s.* 3½*d.*—the reason I know that is that I am one of the members of the board.

60,627. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) What was it in the year that you are comparing it with—1875?—About 3*d.*

60,628. Now it is—what do you say?—1*s.* 3½*d.*, and we are now being pressed very hard by the Department to spend another 60,000*l.* at once, which will amount to another 6*d.* rate.

60,629. (*Viscount Cobham.*) These are Swansea town rates entirely, are they not?—Yes.

60,630. Has the sanitary rate increased to a similar extent?—It has—up to 9*d.*, I think it is.

60,631. And the poor rate?—The poor rate has gradually gone up from about 10*d.* to, I think, 1*s.* 6*d.* in the last 15 or 20 years.

60,632. You pay altogether 5*s.* 6*d.* now instead of 2*s.* 8*d.* in 1875?—2*s.* 8*d.* we had 15 years ago.

60,633. Has that been a steady increase?—Yes.

60,634. It was not due to any large or special expenditure?—No, it has been a steady increase.

Foreign competition in meat trade.

60,635. Do you find that you suffer much from foreign competition in the articles you produce?—Yes, in our meat trade we do considerably.

60,636. Chiefly in meat?—Chiefly in meat.

60,637. You do not grow wheat, I suppose?—No. The farmers in our neighbourhood only grow just a little for their own use—say, some 8 or 10 acres for their own use. It does not pay them to grow it for sale.

60,638. Your farming is mainly devoted to the production of meat?—Yes, and milk. There is a considerable milk trade in our neighbourhood, and that we find has come down very much.

60,639. Do you find much to complain of in the price of meat just now?—Just now it is better than it has been. I think the only improvement I could suggest there would be the marking of the meat. Foreign competition has undoubtedly reduced the price of agricultural produce in the market, as may be seen from a comparison of the market prices of 1875 with those of 1894. Fourteen years ago the number of carcases of cattle and

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sheep imported was 400 only, but that number has now risen to four millions. Most, if not all, of this meat is sold as British, and is not marked as foreign. I would press, if you please, that if it is possible it should be marked as foreign mutton. I think butchers in all our markets sell it as home produce, and thereby reap a considerable profit.

60,640. Do you think that your mutton is better than any foreign mutton?—Yes, our Welsh mutton is far better.

60,641. Does not the consumer detect the difference?—There are so many buyers in these markets who, if they are told that it is our country meat, take the word of the butcher for it and purchase.

60,642. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What markets might you be speaking of?—Swansea chiefly; I am near Swansea.

60,643. You are only referring, then, to the local markets?—Yes.

60,644. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You do not propose to restrict the importation of foreign meat in any other way than that, do you?—I do not know. It would be a difficult matter to touch upon, but I myself, should like to put a small rate upon them.

Deficiency of labour.

60,645. As to the decreasing supply of labour; have you any suggestion to make to remedy that evil?—No, I am afraid I could not suggest any remedy for that. In our particular neighbourhood we are so near the works, and, of course, anyone is free to do the best he can for himself, and we abide by it.

The Agricultural Holdings Act and custom of the country.

60,646. You have, I suppose, very little to say to us about the Agricultural Holdings Act?—It does not apply very much in our neighbourhood. Everything is very quiet, as far as the Act goes. We have all yearly tenancies, and I do not know of anyone who has applied for a lease of any kind. Then we have a very good custom in our county. When anyone is leaving, the outgoing and incoming tenants each appoint a man, and they between them appoint an umpire, and they decide these questions very amicably as to the value of in-going and out-going.

60,647. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I suppose they do not appoint the third man unless they cannot agree?—Before the two men begin they appoint the third man, but he is not called upon unless he is required.

60,648. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are written agreements pretty general?—I think they are pretty general, but I do not think they are ever enforced. I think there is very much freedom of contract in all our neighbourhood.

Law of distress.

60,649. Do you think that there should be any alteration in the present law of distress?—I am afraid the proposal is rather against the tenant than for him. I have instances before me which I know of now, where a landlord cannot distrain further than six months, I think it is; and I know there are many who owe two years' rent and more than that, but still they are not pressed.

60,650. Do you think that the alteration would operate harshly against the small tenants?—Yes, I think it would be rather against the tenant.

System of marketing.

60,651. Is your system of marketing a favourable one to the producer? Yes, I think so. We have a very good market, and a certain day for it, and they all understand that in the whole of the neighbourhood. I think it is a very old custom in our neighbourhood; I think a change in that direction would not be any benefit.

Land out of cultivation.

60,652. You say that very little land has gone out of cultivation, but you think that a great deal will soon go out of cultivation if there is not an improvement?—I am afraid so. I know of several instances where they are getting behind.

60,653. Do you mean within 20 miles of Swansea that there is a danger of land going out of cultivation?—Yes, I am afraid so; but there has nothing gone hitherto.

60,654. The poorest class of land it would be?—It is rather the poorest class of land. Within five miles, say, it is the poorest class of land, but outside that it gets better; it is more out of the reach of the mineral.

Incidence of local rates.

60,655 Have you any suggestion to make to us to meet this serious state of things?—I do not know about the adjustment of rates, and whether anything can be done in that direction. I fancy that the sanitary rate is not really what ought to be put upon the farmer. We are so far out that we do not get any of the sanitation; still we come in because we are under the union.

60,656. It is in your interest, I suppose, that Swansea should be a flourishing town?—Yes, no doubt of that.

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60,657. Do the farmers in your district favour some taxation of imported food?—I think they do chiefly now. They were not of that opinion I know, but they are feeling the pinch so very hard that they must turn to something, and they do not know what else it is to be.

60,658. Do you think that is a pretty general feeling?—In the neighbourhood it is a very general feeling now.

60,659. (*Lord Rendel.*) Are you an occupying owner of your farm, or a tenant?—I am a tenant.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

60,660. You were saying that a considerable number of farmers in your neighbourhood have bought their land; have they been generally small, or moderate holdings?—I should say some are 50 acres, and some up to 150 acres—they are different sized farms.

60,661. Would 150 acres be about the limit?—Yes, the 150 would be the outside.

60,662. Would that be 150 acres of the richer land?—No, mixed farms; they are all mixed farms, with some low ground attached to almost everyone, and some hilly ground, such as sheep runs and sheep pasture.

60,663. So that in those cases the purchasing tenants would not have a heavy labour bill, I presume?—No, they would not; generally those who buy have a family to work it.

60,664. They buy and they calculate to some extent on finding the labour?—Yes.

Size of farms.

60,665. In your immediate neighbourhood you have shown very clearly that the farms are generally very small?—They are small.

60,666. In fact there is a very large number of comparatively small farmers in that one parish?—Yes.

60,667. Numbering several hundreds should you say?—I think so.

60,668. In one parish?—Yes.

60,669. As regards the bulk of them their labour bill would be very small, I presume?—Yes, their labour bill would be small in our neighbourhood.

Sub-division of farms.

60,670. Do you think that this sub-division of the farms is in any sense due to the rise in the price of labour?—No; they are very old takings.

60,671. It is the natural form of dealing with the land?—Yes, it is.

Effect of rise in wages on character of labour.

60,672. Do you think that the increase in wages has been attended by an improvement in the work that has been given for the wages?—No; I do not think so. I think that has been chiefly caused by so many new industries opening, such as very large collieries, and the building of tin works and steel works in the immediate neighbourhood; that is the cause of our rise in wages.

60,673. That would be the undoubted cause, but do you think the cause has been accompanied by any improvement in the quality of the labour?—No; I am afraid it is rather the other way. They have left us with more unskilled labour, with younger men, because the wages have risen and everyone tries to get the cheapest he can without any consideration as to the consequences, which I am afraid are bad.

60,674. Then in your experience the higher wages have been accompanied by somewhat inferior work?—Yes, I am afraid so.

60,675. Causing a double loss to the farmer?—Yes, that is so.

60,676. Are the rates borne exclusively by tenants in the cases of land occupied by tenants?—Yes.

Re-adjustment of rents to rates.

60,677. And has there never been at any time any re-adjustment of rent to meet the new rates?—No; only what has been allowed by the landlords—from 10 to 20 per cent., according to the position and the state of the land.

60,678. That allowance has been general, has it?—That allowance has been general on the rents, but there has been nothing on the rates.

60,679. The great increase is largely due to the fact that what you would consider an urban rate—that is the sanitary rate—falls upon the farm land?—Yes, that is so.

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60,680. At the same time your school rate is exceptionally heavy?—Very heavy.

60,681. To what do you attribute that?—I do not know. It is a very large district, and very thickly populated; and we are pressed to build so many schools by the Education Department, and they are costly.

60,682. Then you are really breeding and training labour for the manufacturing district?—Yes.

60,683. And the farmer has to bear the burden?—Yes.

Price of meat.

60,684. You said you found in experience that the better meat—the higher quality meat—does not obtain, relatively, a higher price. Is that a general experience, do you think?—Yes, it is.

60,685. That the great aim of the butchers is to maintain uniformity of price, is that so?—The great aim of the butchers, I believe, is to purchase so much foreign meat and so much of the home produce, when they can get it at their own price, or comparatively near to the price of the foreign meat; then they sell the whole as home produce. That is one point that I would like to point out; would it be possible to get this under the Marks Act in some way?

60,686. The consumer is slow to take notice of the difference in the quality of the material he buys?—Very slow.

60,687. Your view is that he ought to be helped to take notice of it?—Yes; besides, if he did take notice they charge him the same price as they would for the home produce, which I consider too much profit; they buy this foreign produce so much cheaper.

60,688. The butchers buy it from salesmen, I suppose?—Yes.

The Glamorganshire custom.

60,689. You spoke of having a good custom; is it a Glamorganshire custom?—Yes.

60,690. And that is one which gives general satisfaction?—Very great satisfaction.

60,691. And has done over a long period of years?—Yes—very long. I do not know how far it runs back, but it runs back a number of years.

60,692. Do you consider that the existence of that custom has contributed to the general contentment of the tenants farming under it?—I do.

60,693. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Does that custom provide compensation for unexhausted improvements?—Yes.

60,694. Is that paid by the landlord, or by the tenant?—Often by the in-coming tenant; sometimes by the landlord; but I think chiefly by the incoming tenant.

60,695. You hold a farm under an agreement, I suppose?—Yes.

60,696. Subject to the custom of the country?—Yes.

60,697. How is it that so many of these farmers are anxious to buy their farms?—I do not know. They have some feeling like this: "Well, if I can buy at near the "same rent as I pay I shall feel quieter, and no one "can disturb me, and I can do as I like;" although, really, I do not see myself any improvement in it, because, although we have agreements they are never enforced; in fact in some cases they are not enforced when they ought to be.

60,698. But there is some feeling of security when they purchase it?—Yes, there is; and I believe it is that chiefly.

Demand for farms.

60,699. Is there much demand for farms in your district?—There has been a very considerable demand, but not lately. I consider that a great reason why many farms have been put at their present rents, not exactly in my own neighbourhood, but farms that I know of chiefly in Carmarthenshire and Pembrokeshire. The farmer's sons and daughters marry, and they have, I suppose, not sufficient capital to leave the neighbourhood for any other farm, and so they bid one above the other; and then in the course of a year or two they find it difficult to meet their payments, and they come and say, "It is too dear, we must have a reduction."

Rents in his district.

60,700. What are you paying for your farm?—15*s.* an acre.

60,701. Is that about the average rent paid in that district?—It is fully the average. Of course, I do not mean to say they are quite as good as mine; but there are many there at 5*s.* per acre.

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60,702. Have you had any reductions?—Only 10 or 15 per cent.; 15 per cent. once, and down to 10 per cent. We were having 10 per cent. up to last year.

60,703. Are you all satisfied with that?—Some think that things are yet too high for them to meet their demands; but still there is not much grumbling. We have always had it up to now.

60,704. Of course in that district you have a better market than a great many other people. You have the whole of South Wales, we may say?—We have a very good market. The only things, as I say, that affect us are these strikes; they do affect us very much. We had one in our neighbourhood for 10 weeks, and we lost 2,000*l.* a week in that time, which is a lot of money to lose.

60,705. You admit that you are far better off in your district than farmers are—say, 50 miles from Swansea?—Yes.

60,706. You have not felt the depression so much as they have?—Not so much.

Fall in prices.

60,707. And your prices have not gone down so much, have they?—They have gone down rather, because those people 50 miles off bring their goods into Swansea market: so we are liable to compete with their prices, and they go into the same markets. We do not get better prices for our sheep because buyers go into the country and purchase.

Tenants' capital.

60,708. Have the tenants in your district sufficient capital to farm the land, or are they short?—I think they have had sufficient capital up to now, but I think they are going down. They do not seem to farm so well.

60,709. What capital do you consider necessary for a farm of 200 acres, say?—I should think that in our neighbourhood, where they are mixed farms, they do not carry very expensive stock, and that about 6*l.* an acre would do.

Market gardening.

60,710. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Is any market gardening carried on in the district near you?—Yes.

60,711. Extensively?—In one portion of the district, to the south of Swansea, very extensively.

60,712. In order to supply the mining population?—Yes.

60,713. Has that been prosperous and satisfactory?—Yes; I think it has been fairly prosperous.

60,714. Is it extending?—It is extending rather.

60,715. I do not think you have told us whether small holders have done better than large holders in your district?—I think they have.

60,716. Would that be in consequence of the market gardening produce?—Yes, to a certain extent; and it would also be in consequence of their being able to work them without outside employment.

60,717. By themselves and their families you mean?—Yes; and without other employment.

60,718. Would that be in consequence of what may be called the production of minor products—chickens, eggs, and that sort of thing?—Yes; they generally go into a little of everything.

60,719. There must be a very large demand for that kind of produce?—There is; although we have large dealers who leave our neighbourhood and go into Carmarthen, Llandillo, Llandovery and Llangattock, and all those towns, and bring up produce from there.

Fruit culture.

60,720. Is there any fruit culture there?—Not very much.

60,721. The climate would not suit it?—Not very well.

Effect of strikes on value of farm produce.

60,722. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) You said that owing to strikes, the value of the farm produce went down very much?—Yes.

60,723. And has not recovered itself, you say?—It has not recovered itself yet. They have only just gone in really for a very large strike near us now.

Milk trade.

60,724. In your neighbourhood is the milk sold and retailed by the farmers to the mining population?—Yes.

60,725. Is that business increasing?—No, it is not. We get more milk sent now than we did two or three years ago, very much more; it comes from the heart of Carmarthenshire, and from some parts of Brecknockshire and Gloucestershire, and all those places, so that the trade is cut up compared with what it was.

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60,726. Have you tried it yourself?—No; I have not. I do sell, but I do not take it into the town. I do sell near home.

60,727. Retail?—Yes, some; perhaps 10 or 12 gallons a day.

60,728. Do you look upon it as a profitable trade?—I do.

60,729. Do you think it might be more developed?—I do not know I am sure. I think it is developing itself gradually, and has very much within the last 12 months, too.

60,730. I suppose on some of these small holdings of under 50 acres, and of about 50 acres, the occupier does some other trade, or at all events is able to let out his horses?—Yes, that is so; that is a means that a great number of them have. There are collieries about there, and they take contracts at those collieries, and they employ some six or eight, or ten horses, which bring them in a nice little income every week.

Size of farms.

60,731. To actually live and bring up his family, supposing he has five or six children—you consider, as I understand, that a man should have 100 acres?—I fancy 100 acres would be a very fair-sized farm.

Incidence of local rates.

60,732. (*Chairman.*) Can you give me the details of those rates which you say have risen, specifying how much the sanitary rate is, and how much the school board rate is?—I have the school board rate, that is 1*s.* 3½*d.*; but I am not certain about the sanitary rate.

60,733. Is that school board rate of 1*s.* 3½*d.* for the whole year?—Yes.

60,734. But you have not got the sanitary rate?—I am not quite sure about the sanitary rate. Our demand note comes out with the poor rate and the highway rate, the county road rate, and the school board rate, and sanitary rate on it; but they are sometimes taken out and divided. I could easily get the figures.

60,735. Perhaps you will get the figures out in detail, and send them to the Secretary?—I will, with pleasure.*

60,736. If the sanitary rate is a high one, I presume only one-fourth of it falls upon the land; that is, that the land is assessed at one-fourth of its value for that?—Yes.

60,737. Therefore it may be that the whole of that 5*s.* 6*d.* which you have mentioned, does not fall upon the land, but only upon the houses?—Yes, that is so. I take it in this light, that some 15 years ago we paid 2*s.* 8*d.* as a whole, now we pay 5*s.* 6*d.*; I did not think of dividing it.

60,738. Is that 5*s.* 6*d.* paid upon the whole of the land?—I believe it is on our rateable value. We are all rated according to the rent, less 2*s.* 6*d.* in the £.

60,739. But then for the sanitary rate the assessment is reduced. Are the small farms letting easily in your district?—Yes.

60,740. At the old rents?—Yes, at the old rents.

60,741. How do you account for this competition for farms?—Some years ago, I could only account for it in this way, that the farmers' sons and daughters were married in the neighbourhood, and they had not sufficient means to come away, and so they applied for any farms that they saw advertised, and stuck at home. In that way when a farm was at liberty, there was competition for it, and, although it was not exactly let to the highest bidder, still they bid more perhaps for it than they should. I have known instances where a man has given notice for a reduction, and he has not been able to re-take, because others have come and have offered more for the farm.

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Competition for farms.

60,742. That would seem to indicate that there are a large number of people ready to take farms?—Yes.

60,743. Who have got some capital—perhaps not enough—but still, I suppose, they have all got some capital?—Yes, all have got some.

60,744. That capital must have been made out of the land?—Yes.

60,745. Therefore there have been times when they have made money out of the land?—Yes.

60,746. And they have laid by?—Yes. Really what I am most puzzled about is, that though there has been no increase in the rents in our neighbourhood, yet we are not able to pay now as easily as we could some 12 or 15 years ago, and nothing has been touched about the rent; there has been no addition in the rent, and no addition in anything as far as the landlord is concerned.

60,747. It is a curious feature, that in spite of all these difficulties of the farmers, this large number of people is ready to occupy the position?—Yes, as regards small farms; they could not take the large ones.

60,748. Up to what sized farms would you say they would go?—Fifty acres and under, I should say.

60,749. Above that size is there a greater difficulty in letting the farms?—Yes, there is, of getting good tenants. Of course, as you know, a man may be a good man, a good worker, and all that, but his capital may be short.

Demand for large and small farms compared.

60,750. I suppose below 50 acres the farmer works himself entirely?—Yes.

60,751. And does not employ labour?—That is so. They generally keep cows, and very often go into the milk trade.

60,752. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) The small farmers pay a higher rent, do they not?—Not in our immediate neighbourhood.

Position of small farmers.

60,753. What is the language that they speak about you?—Mostly Welsh.

60,754. Can they speak English as a rule?—They can.

60,755. I suppose they do not like crossing the border to take a farm in England?—They do not seem to like that at all.

60,756. They do not like to leave?—I suppose the different customs and one thing and the other stop them, but they are crossing the borders now.

60,757. They are rather shy?—Yes, they are rather shy.

60,758. They would rather pay a high rent in their own country?—They would rather try and live at home, even if they were pinched.

The witness withdrew.

* The witness subsequently wrote:—"I beg to send you a statement of the rates now paid in our district and also rateable values, shewing a great increase since the year 1880, and yet in the face of that the rates are increasing annually. *Rateable values*:—1880, 7,561*l.*; 1885, 12,181*l.*; 1890, 13,878*l.*: 1895, 15,477*l.* It will be observed that the rateable value has doubled in 15 years. In 1880 we paid the sum of 3*s.* 3½*d.* in the £, now this year we are paying 5*s.* 8*d.* in the £ in the face of such a rise in the rateable values. I also beg to send details of the way it is divided, which are as follows:—Poor rate 3*s.*, school board 1*s.* 3*d.*, sanitary 6*d.*, highway 4½*d.*, county council 5½*d.*, parish council 1*d.*, making in all 5*s.* 8*d.* in the £. I may say there are other payments included in the 3*s.* poor rate, such as the salary of the collector, printing, &c."

Mr. J. Griffith.

Mr. James Griffith called and examined.

Mr. J. Griffith.

60,759. (*Chairman.*) Are you a tenant farmer at Castle Ceulas, Letterstone, Pembrokeshire?—I am.

Particulars of witness' farm.

60,760. What size of farm do you cultivate?—Over 600 acres.

60,761. What kind of farm is it—a sheep farm?—It is corn and grazing land, mixed.

60,762. How long have you held it?—For 26 years.

60,763. Has the rent been reduced?—Yes, the rent has been reduced 8 per cent. I took it on a lease for 21 years in the year 1868, and when that lease expired I had a reduction of 8 per cent.

60,764. What is the rent now?—490*l.*, including tithe.

60,765. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is there any hill land?—There is no hill.

60,766. (*Chairman.*) I suppose that ranks as a large farm in your district?—Yes, it is one of the largest in the district.

60,767. Have the large farmers in your district suffered more than the smaller ones?—Yes, by far, in my opinion.

60,768. I suppose the labour difficulty has been one of their greatest difficulties?—Yes, it makes a great difference.

60,769. Have the wages of your labourers increased during that time?—They have increased 50 per cent. since I took that farm in 1868; I pay 50 per cent. more in wages now.

Labourers' wages.

60,770. Employing the same number of hands?—When I took the farm in 1868 it was a farm of 225*l.* rent; there was another farm belonging to the same

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landlord adjoining it, and in about three or four years that came in, and then, in another seven or eight years, another of his holdings came in again, and now it is 600 acres in one holding.

60,771. What rate of wages were you paying when you took the farm?—I paid 103*l.* for labour in the year 1868, when I took this farm at 225*l.* rent; and now the labour on that farm is 154*l.* 10*s.*

60,772. Do you employ the same number of labourers upon it?—The same number in proportion to the increase of the farm.

60,773. Exactly the same number?—Exactly the same.

60,774. And yet you are paying that difference?—Yes; I took it from the book.

60,775. What has been the cause of that great rise in wages; is it that the collieries compete for the labourers?—Our men go to the works when they come to be 18 years of age. Our best men go off to Glamorganshire.

60,776. They go off to the mines?—Yes.

60,777. The collieries have competed with you and have tried to draw away the labourers?—Yes.

60,778. And so you are obliged to give higher rates of wages in order to keep them?—Yes. I was giving my ploughman, in the year 1868, 16*l.* 10*s.*, and now he has 22*l.*

60,779. Does he live in the house with you?—Yes; he is a servant boy, I feed him.

60,780. Then this rise of wages is one of the principal difficulties of the large farmers?—It is.

Fall in prices.

60,781. More serious really than the fall of prices?—No.

60,782. Not so serious?—Not nearly in our district.

60,783. Still, it is serious?—It is serious, but not so serious as the fall in prices, because we get implements now to save the labourers.

Character of labour.

60,784. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you get better labour for your money?—We have not such a good class of labourers as we had in 1868.

60,785. (*Chairman.*) Do you not save in the number of labourers by employing machinery?—Yes, we save a certain number in harvest as we are not obliged to employ extra hands as formerly.

Labourers' wages.

60,786. I thought you said just now that you employed the same number as in 1868?—Yes; but my farm is now twice the average it was in 1868, consequently I have twice the number of workmen.

60,787. I suppose that comparison which you made just now about your ploughman, of the rise in wages from 16*l.* 10*s.* to 22*l.*, gives about the rate of increase in wages?—Yes; my dairymaid in the year 1868 had 6*l.*, now it is 12*l.*

60,788. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) 6*l.* a year?—Yes, in 1868. They have risen more in comparison with the men.

60,789. But 12*l.* now is not high as compared with some parts of Wales?—No, they give 13*l.* or 14*l.*

Effect of drought.

60,790. (*Chairman.*) Has your district suffered, both in 1893 and in the present year, from drought?—Yes, we have suffered very badly.

60,791. I suppose the price of stock fell also in consequence of the diminished demand?—The stock fell, and we were obliged to sell off in the autumn, as there was no winter keep; we were in fact obliged to give the stock away.

60,792. You have suffered in two ways; first, from the scarcity of fodder, and, secondly, because the price of young stock was much lower in consequence of their being no demand for them to begin with?—Yes.

60,793. You suffered in both ways?—We suffered in both ways.

Local rates.

60,794. What has been the course of rates and taxes?—They have risen in our district about 25 per cent. since the year 1868.

60,795. Can you give me the actual figures?—No, I cannot give the figures. My rent is 490*l.*, and I pay about 3*s.* in the pound rates.

60,796. Is there a school board rate?—Yes.

60,797. What does that come to?—The school board rate has been in existence this 12 or 15 years. It is about 3*d.*; it may be 3*d.* for two years, and an additional 1*d.* for the third year.

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60,798. Is there a sanitary rate?—That comes in with the poor rate. I believe that is about ½*d.* in the pound.

60,799. No more?—No; the sanitary rate is not much with us.

60,800. Are there any leases in your district, or is the land let by the year?—There are very few leases.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

60,801. Is the Agricultural Holdings Act adopted in your district?—Not much with us.

60,802. I suppose you consider that the rents ought to come down still further?—Yes, they ought to come down.

Farm accounts.

60,803. What other suggestions have you to make?—I have here an account, if you would like to look at it, of the first farm I took (*handing an account to the Chairman*).

60,804. This account shows that in 1871-2, you made a profit of 149*l.*; what year are the last figures for?—1895.

60,805. For that year you had a loss of 14*l.*?—Yes. I take it for granted that the same stock was on that farm in 1895 as was on in 1872.

60,806. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) But you have not valued your stock, have you?—I have taken the valuation at 6*l.* per acre.

Agricultural Holdings Act.

60,807. (*Chairman.*) Do you think the Agricultural Holdings Act ought to be amended?—Yes, it ought to be amended. It is no good at all in Wales, because Welshmen are rather afraid of the law; they do not care for law at all.

State loans for improvements.

60,808. Do you think that the State should advance money to landlords and tenants for the improvement of their holdings?—I believe so, if it can be got on pretty easy terms.

Ground Game Act.

60,809. Does the Ground Game Act cause friction in your district?—It causes a little, but not much in our district.

60,810. Do the farmers act upon it; do they kill the game?—The farmers do not take advantage of the ground game, they are rather afraid of displeasing the landlords. For my own part my landlord has given me all the game. I have the game all to myself.

60,811. Did you hear Mr. Drummond give his evidence?—Yes.

60,812. Do you agree generally with the recommendations which he made?—No, I do not agree with all he said.

60,813. On what points do you disagree with them?—I think the farmers are a great deal worse off than he wanted to make out.

60,814. I am not speaking of what he said as to the condition of the farmers, but with regard to the recommendations he made?—There is one thing he said I do not see. He spoke of farmers taking farms with very little money; he said they had nothing to stock the farms with. I do not see that that is the case with us.

Local rates.

60,815. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I see in the account you have handed to the Chairman the rates have only increased from 23*l.* 10*s.* to 27*l.* 10*s.*?—That is an increase of 25 per cent.

60,816. Does that represent about the rise that has taken place generally?—It is from 25 to 30 per cent. in our district.

60,817. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) I suppose you farm under an agreement with your landlord?—Yes, I have an agreement.

Compensation for improvements.

60,818. Is there a custom in your part of the country which provides for the improvements and any arrangement you might make with the outgoing tenant?—No.

60,819. Is there no custom at all?—No.

60,820. Of course, you have built walls?—I have built all that has been built new since I took it.

60,821. If you leave your farm will you be compensated for what you have done?—No, I do not think so.

60,822. Your landlord knows you have built those walls, I suppose?—Yes.

60,823. Have you erected buildings on the farm?—It was the agreement that the landlord was to pay for all the buildings, and I was to pay for the carriage. He left it all to me. I built every stone, except the dwelling-house, for a 600 acre farm.

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60,824. At your own expense?—The landlord paid, and I did the carriage gratis.

60,825. Then in the case of anything else you do on the farm you cannot by law compel the landlord to pay you compensation for it?—No, I cannot.

Purchase of farms by tenants.

60,826. Have many farmers bought their farms in your district?—A great many have bought them.

60,827. Men who have improved their farms?—Yes, some have improved them.

60,828. Were they compensated when they bought their farms?—I never heard they were. I do not know of a case.

Reductions of rent.

60,829. Are the farmers satisfied with the rents they are paying down there?—No, they say the rents are too high; they do not get any reduction in our district.

60,830. Do they ask for reductions?—I believe so, but only the best landlords give them. Three or four of the good landlords give reductions, but the others give but very little—they may give 5 per cent. A great many with us have bought farms and let them out, and I believe they have mortgages on them and cannot give a reduction.

60,831. What are their tenants doing? Are they paying rent out of capital, or are they able to make their rents out of the farm?—I do not think they can make the rents out of it.

60,832. So you do not quite agree with what Mr. Drummond said, namely, that they are not so badly off as in some parts?—No, I do not.

Rack-rents.

60,833. (*Mr. Everett.*) I see you say in your brief that changes of tenancy are frequent on rack-rented farms; are there many farms in your district which you would call rack-rented?—Some farms that are sold now are sold very dear. They are farms that are rented very high, and tenants will come and take them and give them up in two or three years. It is with that class of farms that there are changes of tenancy.

Value of land.

60,834. Then there is some amount of selling of land in your district annually?—Land has gone down a deal in our district now. I know a farm in our district which was sold 15 years ago for 10,000*l.* It was put on the market this summer and they could not get 7,000*l.* for it.

Quality of barley.

60,835. Why will not the maltsters buy your barley?—The quality is not good enough.

Competition for farms.

60,836. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Is there much competition in your district for farms?—There is very great competition for farms, especially 40 or 50 acre farms.

Allotments.

60,837. Are labourers keen on having allotments?—Not at all.

60,838. Why?—Most of our tenants, have four or five acres of land, and a place to keep a cow or two.

60,839. All the labourers?—Generally they have.

Position of large and small farmers compared.

60,840. What do you pay for those small holdings?—It is a bargain that they pay so much rent, and have about 1*s.* 2*d.* a day wages, and the farmer gives them potatoes and does all the carriage work and dress their corn land.

60,841. (*Lord Rendel.*) Do I understand you to consider that that class is the class which is the best off?—Yes, they are better off than we farmers in these times.

60,842. The large farmers have suffered seriously in pocket?—Yes, they must have.

60,843. The smaller farmers have suffered in a harder life?—Yes, they suffer, because in our district a farmer with 40*l.* or 50*l.* rent has no means of making the money, except out of the place, and his place is generally rented 10*s.* an acre more than 200-acre farm land is.

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60,844. He pays a higher rent?—Yes, and then it must be taken out of the land.

60,845. His life is one of greater thrift and hardship?—Yes, it is.

60,846. Then the labourer with a small plot of three or four acres is the better off?—Yes.

60,847. Even the labourer without the small holding is better off now than he was when you first began farming?—Yes, he is 100 per cent. better off now; his wages have risen 50 per cent., and his food is 50 per cent. cheaper than in the year 1872.

Competition for farms.

60,848. (*Chairman.*) When the small farms are vacant do they let easily again?—Very easily; there is so much competition.

60,849. At the same rents?—Yes, there is seldom any reduction.

60,850. Do the larger farms let, too?—There is not such competition with the bigger farms.

60,851. Still, will they let?—They will let.

60,852. At the old rates?—Farmers will take them in the hope of getting a reduction.

60,853. In the hope of getting the rent reduced afterwards?—Yes.

60,854. That seems rather an unbusiness-like way of doing things?—Yes, it is,

60,855. How do you account for their being such competition for the small farms?—The cream of the country labourers go to the works. The servants with me are very good boys, but when they get a certain age they go off to Glamorganshire; but a Welshman is attached to his country, and so they save a few hundred pounds, and then come back and compete for those 50-acre farms.

60,856. They come back with capital?—Yes.

60,857. And they treat it rather from a residential point of view—they like to have a home?—Yes, that is the cause of it.

60,858. They give a high rent because they treat it as a home?—Yes.

60,859. The farm is a kind of subsidiary convenience, is that it? (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) They would not give the same price for the same farm in England, would they?—I do not think they would.

60,860. (*Chairman.*) These men who come back with capital, which they have saved, are so anxious to get home and to settle in their own old country that they are ready to give high rents?—That is it. I know of many instances, just now, of servants who have been in the employment of my father, who went to the works, did well, and saved a few hundred pounds, who are farming 50-acre farms now.

60,861. What works?—In Glamorganshire.

Condition of labourers.

60,862. If the labourers are doing so much better than they did, and are, as you say, 100 per cent. better off than they were, they are better able to save?—Yes, they are.

60,863. Then there are some of them saving, and some of them ready to use their savings in hiring farms?—Yes.

60,864. And to give a higher rate for them?—Yes.

60,865. So that that accounts largely for this competition?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next, at 12 o'clock.

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One Hundred and Eleventh Day.

Thursday, 7th November 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAACS ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.

JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq.
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*

Mr. PARKER NORFOLK called and examined.

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60,866. (*Chairman.*) You reside at Dunkeswick in the West Riding of Yorkshire?—Yes.

60,867. Where is that?—Nine miles north of Leeds.

60,868. Have you been farming all your life?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farms.

60,869. And you now occupy a farm of 150 acres, and manage another farm of 1,200 acres?—Yes, and also assist in the management of two other farms of 200 acres each.

60,870. What is the general system of cultivation—is it mainly a grass district?—It has been a great deal more of a grass district within the last 20 years. The bulk of the arable land has been laid down to grass within the last 20 or 25 years.

60,871. And now it has been laid down to grass?—Yes; the heavy clay land has been laid down to grass—nearly all the clay land—very little other.

60,872. How much of arable land is there?—Very little, indeed.

Laying land down to grass.

60,873. Is it good grass in your district?—Yes, where it has been properly laid down.

60,874. It comes into good grass, then?—It comes into good grass, but it requires great attention. There has been a great deal of land laid down very improperly, that is, land which has not been sufficiently cleaned.

60,875. How long does it take to lay it down into grass?—The natural grasses will come in about three years, and then it requires a top dressing and if the land is hide-bound, mossy ground, the higher grasses die away, and if you keep the sheep off and eat it pretty freely with cattle you will have a pasture right away.

60,876. Then it often depends more upon the proper feeding and manuring of the grasses after the first few years than proper laying down?—Yes, it is absolutely necessary to do that, and to put good seeds of guaranteed quality into the ground. Wherever you lay it down in open fallow, and with a little rape and mustard, you get a better grass.

60,877. Is your land in the hill district of Yorkshire?—No, it is not in the hill district, it is in the valley of the Wharfe mainly, where I come from; but it extends to the valley of the Nidd.

60,878. Then Leeds is your nearest big town?—Yes.

Character of land in the West Riding.

60,879. In the neighbourhood of these great Yorkshire towns there is a great deal of land still in arable?—Yes; close to the town there is, and they have great advantages in carting their manure cheaply, and getting it for next-to-nothing.

60,880. There the land maintains its value, I suppose?—Pretty well.

60,881. It is only when you get beyond the reach of big towns, that the land is reduced in value?—Yes, we have not suffered in the West Riding as they have in the South or Eastern counties.

Land courts.

60,882. Is it more approaching to what the condition of things is in Lancashire?—I have not been much through Lancashire but there is a great deal more grumbling in Lancashire than in Yorkshire. In Lancashire they have been clamouring a good deal for Land Courts; there is not such a thing in Yorkshire, as the tenants are all perfectly satisfied with the existing arrangements.

Reduction of rent.

60,883. Is that owing to the reductions that have been made?—Yes, the landlords and tenants have faced this question together, and there is a very good feeling between them.

60,884. What is the reduction?—Taking the West Riding throughout, it is 15 per cent. That is outside. On grass land it is considerably less than that, and on purely arable farms it is more. I know myself that on purely arable farms, which contain a large proportion of clay land, that land has not been laid down to grass; and many energetic and enterprising farmers, too, have come to grief.

60,885. What is the name of your poor law union?—The Wetherby Union.

Reduced value of land.

60,886. I see the valuation of land in the Wetherby Union has averaged, for income tax, from 84,000*l.* to 61,000*l.*?—It has.

60,887. And that is a considerable fall?—Yes.

60,888. And that is greater than the average of West Riding?—Considerably.

60,889. That is over 25 per cent. But that, you think, is not an example of the whole of the West Riding?—No, I think 15 per cent. will represent the actual reductions that have taken place.

60,890. Now Pateley Bridge, which is not far from you, there the valuation has been diminished only from 31,000*l.* to 30,000*l.*?—That is nearly all of grass land; that is the difference.

60,891. The returns of the income tax show that the valuation has been reduced very slightly, but you say that that is probably grass land?—Yes; the great reduction has been in purely arable land.

60,892. Then the union of Selby, is that near you?—It is not very far away.

60,893. There is a very slight increase in the value there from 69,000*l.* to 70,000*l.*?—Yes, there is some very rich land there; it is good potato ground.

60,894. And Sedbergh has risen from 19,000*l.* to 20,000*l.*, and Skipton from 107,000*l.* to 109,000*l.*?—Skipton is entirely grass, and you may go for many miles and not find an arable field.

60,895. Of course, when I speak of this valuation, it is not only the purely agricultural land, but it includes a good deal of property or interest which is not merely farming interest?—I think that is the understanding of the valuation.

60,896. It includes the tithe, the sporting rights, the woods and parks and domains, and gardens, and so forth?—Certainly it does.

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60,897. Therefore it is not a true indication of the agricultural land within the union, but it is so relatively —it is an index where the valuation has been more or less?—But still you will find a greater decrease in the Wetherby Union than almost any other that you will find there.

60,898. May one say, in the case of old grass land, there has been very little reduction of rent?—Very little reduction; that is the truth.

60,899. But where there has been arable land, it has been converted more and more into grass?—Yes, and that is a work of time.

60,900. And that is an expensive process, and a long one, and in the meantime the land falls in value?—Certainly.

Wages.

60,901. What has been the course of events as regards labour?—When the land was laid down freely to grass, many of the labourers went into the villages and into the towns, and thus a considerable number of cottages were vacant.

60,902. Did wages increase considerably between 1873 and 1878 in that district?—The wages kept pretty even: they are no lower. I think they are a little higher than before.

60,903. Did wages rise considerably in your district in the seventies?—Just about that time, but not for long.

60,904. They went back again, did they not?—They went back again. The agricultural depression set in within a year of that time, and wages became rather lower.

60,905. What are they?—The average wages in the West Riding of Yorkshire will be from 15*s.* to 18*s.* per week.

60,906. Does that include the harvest wages?—We have very little harvest wages; we have laid down everything to grass.

60,907. Do those weekly wages which you have given represent the two wages?—Yes.

60,908. And they are now from 15*s.* to 18*s.*?—Yes.

60,909. And, considering the low prices of food and clothing of the labourers, they are better off now than before, I suppose?—They are perfectly satisfied with their condition; they buy their flour and their clothing for less money than ever they bought them before.

Position of farmers.

60,910. As regards the farmers, have the profits been much less?—Yes, they have, no doubt whatever. A serious effect of the depression is that there has been a decrease of capital, and this has impoverished the land to such an extent that many of the farmers have not been able to do justice to their land—more particularly on the arable land, before they got it laid down to grass.

60,911. Now, what do you say as to the grass farms?—They have been able to hold their own fairly well for a great many years. They have not made anything, but they have held their own.

60,912. But on the arable farms they have been losing money?—They have lost considerably. I know many men who have in the last 20 years come to grief, and men who paid cash are now compelled to get what they want on credit.

60,913. And those who have had their ground laid down to grass are doing better?—Yes.

60,914. But the process, you say, is a long one?—Yes, and the landlords have assisted in this; they have found the seeds, and also assisted in covering with lime, or bones, or something else afterwards.

Demand for farms.

60,915. When farms are vacant, is it easy to let them?—The estate that I am on, with farms in the West Riding and East Riding of Yorkshire, has never had a single farm vacant, and the landlord has been inundated with applications for farms on that estate. It has never paid so well as during the last 20 years to be a popular landlord.

60,916. In the case of average farms, are there plenty of applicants for them?—If the estate on which a farm is, is under good management, there are plenty of applicants. There was one estate which was badly managed 20 years ago——

60,917. That appears not to have been connected with the depression?—It was entirely mismanaged, and every advantage was taken of the tenant.

60,918. That is long before the depression began?—Yes. They mismanaged the estate, and when you came to a gate you had to lift it up; ditches were closed and drains were stopped up. No good man with capital or character would take a farm under that management. That was a large estate. The tenant having signed an agreement, which not one in a hundred could understand, if they laid out on their farm 500*l.* or 600*l.*, and had through any cause to leave it, the landlord came upon the tenant for dilapidations, and they were invariably enforced.

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60,919. We hope that is an exception?—Yes, it was an exception. The late Earl of Harewood was riding over this estate with me and commenting upon how many of those farms were to let.

60,920. That is not an example of these Yorkshire farms in your district?—No; I mention that one exception.

60,921. Taking the property generally, are we to understand from you that under fair management, if a farm is vacant it lets readily at the old rent?—Yes.

60,922. That rent is somewhat reduced on arable land, but scarcely any reduction on grass land?—I do not think it is on grass land; there is scarcely any reduction.

Size of farms.

60,923. What is the size of the farms in your neighbourhood?—From 100 to about 300 acres. Some odd farms are a little more.

60,924. Are there many farms under 100 acres?—Yes, a great many from 90 or so, but most applications for farms are those of about 100 acres.

60,925. More applications for the smaller ones than for the larger ones?—Far more.

60,926. What size of farm does the farmer work himself on the land?—Do you mean without assistance.

60,927. Yes, do the smaller farmers work themselves?—Yes, with their sons; and they work about 80 acres without assistance at all.

60,928. And beyond that still, up to 150 or 200 acres the farmer works himself with his family and has assistance to labour?—Certainly.

60,929. It is only when you come to larger farms that the farmer is a supervisor?—That is it.

Effects of depression on small farmers.

60,930. Taking the number of farms under 150 acres, those farmers have not felt the depression?—They have not felt the depression. Their sons, however, do not earn anything. Their labour has all gone into the farm; if those sons had gone elsewhere, they would have received and been entitled to fair wages, and that should be taken into consideration.

Co-operation.

60,931. You have been urging the farmers to combine for many years, in their own interest?—Certainly, I have.

60,932. In what direction?—Well, in many ways. For instance, I think we have suffered tremendously from the very imperfect manner in which we have been represented in Parliament.

60,933. That is not quite a matter that we can go into?—I can prove to you where we have suffered. You remember the foot and mouth complaint, that was allowed to spread all over the country without their lifting a finger to arrest it, and many farmers date their downfall from that.

60,934. You wish to combine together for political purposes?—Not political purposes.

60,935. For parliamentary purposes then?—Yes, certainly.

60,936. For what other purposes?—To sell and buy everything to the best advantage.

Butter-making.

60,937. And for co-operating in the making of butter, and so forth?—Yes, for butter making we are far behind the times. We are taking 3*d.* less than this Danish butter is making in the market.

60,938. Is that due to the absence of quality?—It is due to the want of uniformity. No factor would dare to buy these butters and sell them to large hotels or lodging houses, because they vary in quality every week. Until we adopt the same system as is adopted in Denmark, we shall not succeed.

60,939. Is there any intention to start the system?—In one or two instances they are trying it; but the old prejudices die very hard.

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60,940. Does each farmer make his own butter?—Yes. It is not only the day that the milk is churned that it requires attention—it requires attention every day. If you go into the market and select 10 samples, you will find seven or eight different qualities.

60,941. Is there no system of buying it from the farmers, and separating it into the different qualities?—But they vary so much; it is hard work. We shall not obtain the same prices until we put up factories and get one uniform quality.

60,942. I understand that in Normandy, where great attention is given to butter, they do not adopt the system of factories, that is, common butter making, but people buy from the different farmers, and sort the butters, and make them up into butter of the same quality, and they think that that answers better than the factory system?—I think that would be a difficulty with us. You would be surprised to see the different qualities in our best butter markets.

60,943. You think a great deal has to be done in that direction?—I do.

60,944. And your butter fetches 3*d.* a pound less than the best Danish?—Yes, week by week; and that is a serious loss and reflection upon our character.

60,945. Is there any cheese made in your district?—Very little. You have got to go to Wensley Dale to get any.

Milk selling.

60,946. It is merely milk that is sold, then?—Yes; but it has fared so badly that many farmers are doing less in the way of milk and going in more for the breeding, rearing, and feeding of cattle, which is paying better.

Sheep breeding.

60,947. And sheep, too?—Sheep, too, certainly.

60,948. Have you noticed the arrivals even this last week at Liverpool; it is the largest on record for both sheep and cattle. The price of sheep at this moment is not bad?—It is not bad.

60,949. What is the price of sheep per pound?—Breeding sheep, north ewes, have been making from 45*s.* to 48*s.* per piece, and real thorough-bred north ewes have made from 53*s.* to 54*s.*

60,950. How does that compare with two or three years ago?—It is a little dearer.

60,951. Wool has gone up lately?—Yes, certainly, and after the farmers have sold their wool.

60,952. Have you long wool?—It is a good deal of Leicester and Lincoln mixed.

60,953. And that has gone up very much?—But too late to benefit the farmer.

Importation of cattle.

60,954. They sold too soon?—Yes, they had not the money. I should like to give you the total arrivals at Liverpool: 6,291 cattle; 19,137 sheep; 14,937 quarters of beef; and 1,900 carcasses of mutton.

60,955. What other combination may take place?—Well, those are the main things.

Co-operation in purchase of feeding stuffs, &c.

60,956. And also, I presume, for the purpose of buying manures?—I allude to feeding stuffs and manures, and getting them of guaranteed quality, and at the least possible price.

60,957. (*Lord Rendel.*) Do you think that combination might be advantageous for the purpose of selling as well as of buying?—I do not know. I do not see very much in that. If the farmer knows the value of cattle he ought to be able to sell them.

Sale by live weight.

60,958. The farmers are more generally weighing their stock now than formerly—is not that so?—They are doing so more generally.

60,959. They sell to the salesmen in your country, do they not, generally?—Many go to the auctions now. They are compelled to have a weigh at every auction.

Middlemen.

60,960. Do you think that much is lost to the farmer through the middleman in the sale of his produce?—It has been a loss, there is no doubt, whatever; but that is a very great difference to what it was If a man can pay cash now they run after him, and he can buy on the best terms and sell to the best advantage. The middleman is not doing so well as he did.

60,961. The farmer is getting more directly to the consumer you think?—Yes.

60,962. But you do not suggest that combination would advantage him in selling?—Not so much in selling as in buying.

60,963. Is the object of combination in buying to secure a reduction in price as well as purity?—Yes, formerly there was no guarantee of purity; even where cakes were marked genuine. I analysed several, and there was not 40 per cent. of linseed in a linseed cake. But now those cakes have to be branded 95 per cent., and with farmers combining and with agricultural clubs, they can get them analysed for next-to-nothing. These clubs all keep analysts, and they do it at very little cost, and the case is very rare where they have a less per-centage than the guarantee.

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Adulteration of feeding stuffs.

Co-operation in purchase of feeding stuffs, &c.

60,964. Do you think that farmers get reasonable discounts for their machinery, and other goods of that character?—They are doing better now. They were paying enormous prices. Many of those makers and manufacturers fixed the prices amongst them, and now that is getting knocked on the head, and farmers can buy at pretty well best terms.

60,965. Do they buy through agents or direct from the manufacturers?—The manufacturers have their own travellers.

60,966. So your experience is that these travellers have not kept up manufacturing prices to any undue level?—Up to some years ago they did, but they are not doing so now.

60,967. Do you attribute that to greater association among the farmers?—I do; they are becoming enlightened, and bringing the farmers clubs to bear.

60,968. Generally, for all these purposes you think that farmers may help themselves?—I do, and they are doing it. They are in a far better position than they were even five years ago, and they are doing better now.

Butter factories.

60,969. One word with regard to butter which is an important product in your district. Would you look hopefully to the introduction of butter factories?—I would. I think that the butter is of such variable quality and there are so many samples of butter so really poor that it would be a great benefit to the farmers.

60,970. And you think that a remedy of this character would be in itself likely to materially affect the present economical position of the industry?—Most certainly.

60,971. (*Mr. Elton.*) I understand that farmers' clubs are established in your neighbourhood?—Yes.

60,972. And the remedy is already being applied, then?—Yes, and doing great good.

60,973. And you look forward to its increase?—Yes.

Co-operation in distribution of produce.

60,974. I do not know whether you have considered co-operation in distribution. Do you think if they decided in putting up waiting houses or packing houses, it would diminish the expenses of railway carriage?—There has been nothing done yet; we have suffered from the excessive charges of railway companies.

60,975. But those farmers clubs, of course, would provide a nucleus for any agricultural operations?—Certainly.

60,976. Not only for butter and manure and cake?—All these subjects come up at their meetings.

60,977. Do you look forward to their co-operating for distribution, whether there are light railways or not?—Yes.

60,978. Is there any demand for the light railways?—Scarcely, not since the land has been laid down to grass.

60,979. Yours is not one of those districts where they want light railways?—No.

Importation of cattle.

60,980. You mentioned about the cattle coming into Liverpool. I suppose a great part of them were Irish cattle?—No, coming from America and Canada. They are all from America and Canada, and none from Ireland that I gave the figures about.

Sale by live weight.

60,981. You mentioned the subject of live weight. Personally speaking, from your great experience, do you think that the farmer does better by judging the weight of his beast or by dealing on the footing of its being weighed out of the weighing machine?—It is always an advantage for the cattle to go to the weighing machine; the farmer's judgment is sometimes at fault, and it is a check upon him.

60,982. I have heard it spoken of by big people both for and against, and I have also heard farmers say that the man who produces the beasts can tell better

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than the butcher or the middleman, who is correct?—I scarcely think that the farmer can tell better than the butcher, for the latter knows everything, and he goes into the market every week, and that enables him to get a more correct estimate than the farmer.

60,983. A great importer of Irish cattle told me the same thing?—That is correct.

Butter factories.

60,984. With regard to the butter, the difference of the soil and climate and the hills and dales make it almost necessary; at least, it appears to me that it might be well to get uniformity in the butter produce?—Quite so.

60,985. There are two ways to deal with it. One is to get an absolute uniformity, after the Danish method; that is the one you rather recommended, I think?—Yes.

60,986. The observation occurs to me that the Danish butter all comes from one flat—from one place?—Yes.

60,987. Supposing it varied, what would you think of the Cork plan of having all the butter brought in from a large country district to a body like the Trustees of the Cork Butter Market. There are four official grades and two or three fancy ones at the top; but the first quality is extremely good, and the third and fourth not so good. What do you think of that? If your country varies so much as that, it would require grading?—Our country varies tremendously, and our best land is the poorest butter land. Strong clays laid down to grass make the best butter. In the lower lands the land is so rich that the butter is almost impossible to be made up.

60,988. I think the point I was asking was rather that you should keep an open place in your mind for the consideration of that; that there might be so much difference in the qualities of butter, that you might be driven to try the Irish butter system rather than to aim at producing an absolute uniformity?—That never occurred to me, but I see something in it now.

60,989. I was sent over to examine into the Cork butter market at one time?—I see it now, but it never occurred to me before.

Average rent.

60,990. (*Mr. Everett.*) What is the average rent of land in your neighbourhood?—It varies from 14*s.* per acre up to 35*s.* per acre.

60,991. And the grass land makes more than the arable in consequence of the quality?—Considerably more; it is 35*s.* in the valley of the Wharfe, but in the higher lands, adjoining the moors, the rent is considerably lower. Those lands are not so good, and 14*s.* represents the rent of those farms.

Tithe.

60,992. What does the tithe average?—The tithe is very little indeed. A great deal has been redeemed. We have not much tithe to pay in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

Land tax.

60,993. Have you any land tax?—Yes, a little land tax in places.

60,994. It is not a heavy land tax, is it?—It is not a heavy land tax.

Labourers' cottages.

60,995. Are your labourers provided with cottages free—I mean those men who have 15*s.* to 18*s.* per week?—No, they nearly all pay rent for the cottages—about 30*s.* per year for the cottage and garden—it is a nominal rent.

60,996. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Which is your nearest market town?—Leeds.

English and Danish butter compared.

60,997. Is there much Danish butter sold there?—A tremendous lot. Every butter shop is half filled with Danish butter.

60,998. What price do they sell it at?—It is sold, as a rule, for 3*d.* or 4*d.* per pound more than we are getting—it takes these prices nearly every week.

60,999. What are you getting now for your butter?—At the present time, nearly 14*d.* to 15*d.* per pound, but the price all through the summer has been very low, from 8*d.* to 10*d.* per lb.

61,000. Have you tasted the Danish butter?—Yes, from time to time.

61,001. What is the difference between the two?—It is always consistently good; ours may be good for one week, and very poor the next.

61,002. How do you account for that?—It is the difference in the make.

61,003. But the same person makes the butter in the same way?—But you do not get it from the same person.

61,004. But the same person generally makes the same kind of butter, does he not?—Yes; there are certain varieties which command a little more than the ordinary run. But there is one thing in the making up of the butter, and that is the beating out of the churned milk, and where that shows a white mark, it makes the butter turn rancid; but there is nothing of that kind in the Danish butter, however long it is kept.

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Agreement.

61,005. Do you hold your farm under an agreement or under a lease?—Under an agreement.

61,006. Is that the general rule?—That is the general rule. Plenty have had leases, but they prefer agreements.

61,007. When did you feel the depression in your district?—22 years ago.

Fall in prices.

61,008. Since then prices have fallen?—Tremendously.

61,009. How much?—Take barley; before the malt tax we sold it at 46*s.* to 53*s.* per quarter; since then it has gradually gone down from that price, to from 19*s.* to 28*s.* It takes a very nice sample of barley to make 24*s.* now.

61,010. What do you say as to wheat?—We used to sell wheat at enormous prices; I have sold some at 19*s.* per quarter lately.

61,011. What price do you get for the beef?—We have for the best quality, 6*d.*—sinking the offal.

61,012. What was it 23 years ago?—I can scarcely go back to that, but I have made 9*d.* per pound, repeatedly.

61,013. And wool has come down?—Enormously. I have sold it at 2*s.* 6*d.* per pound, and lately the average price is 10*d.*—just one-third.

61,014. And what is the difference in mutton?—Mutton has been selling fairly well right away. Small mutton is well worth 8*d.* per pound. We have not been doing badly at all. Taking the depression during the last 20 years the sheep have held up wonderfully.

61,015. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have you had losses at all in these prices?—Occasionally; but still it is more consistent than beef, considerably.

61,016. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Taking all these things into consideration, what has been the reduction in prices—what is the per-centage?—I scarcely understand you. Do you mean to lump all the things together?

61,017. Yes, and take the average of the last 25 years?—I never went through that.

61,018. You have no idea of that?—I could not without carefully calculating for a number of years. I could not lump all those things together.

Causes of depression: (1.) Bad seasons.

61,019. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the cause of agricultural depression in your district?—There are many causes. In the South they have suffered from drought; in the West Riding we have suffered in so many ways from cold, and wet, sunless, seasons.

61,020. Do you think that the average of the last ten years has been worse than the ten years preceding that as regards climatic influences?—No, I think it is about the same.

61,021. Do you think you have had anything abnormal in the badness of the seasons, or have the seasons been colder or wetter than they were 20 years ago?—We have had several wet, cold seasons, and we have suffered very much from them, and the result is that we have bad samples, and deficient yield, and very inferior straw.

61,022. I know the results. But do you imagine that the seasons have been generally worse for the last 20 years than they were during the 20 years preceding?—I should scarcely say so.

61,023. Therefore, practically, you have not suffered any more in the last 20 years than they did in the previous 20 years?—No, not from seasons.

(2.) Low prices.

61,024. What is the other cause?—The low prices for everything we have to produce.

61,025. If the price of produce has sunk to the level as of course, everyone knows, and you have given us interesting figures about it to-day, how is it that rents have not come down in the same proportion?—Well, landlords have done a great deal besides lowering rents to meet their tenants. In our neighbourhood—in the West Riding of Yorkshire—they have drained a very great deal of wet land, and given a great deal of material

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for fencing and putting up covered yards all over the country for cattle feeding, which is as good as a reduction of rent.

61,026. And, notwithstanding all this, there has been an enormous decrease of capital amongst the occupiers of land?—I know that from men, who 20 years ago were in good positions, and were steady and industrious, who have lost their capital.

Demand for farms.

61,027. So that, notwithstanding the reduction of rent, and the other improvements which the landlords have effected, they have not been sufficient to keep the tenant farmer from losing a considerable amount of his capital?—They have not. Yet, in spite of that, there is not a single farm vacant.

61,028. To what do you attribute this innundation of applicants for farms, notwithstanding the fact that farmers have lost money?—They are hoping that there will be a silver lining to the cloud, and that things will be better.

Effects of depression on farmers.

61,029. Presuming that things do not get better, and the same level is continued, what will be the effect on farmers farming at the old rents?—They will be holding their own at present, and they are not making money.

61,030. And they are not losing money?—No; they have got their land turned down to grass, and they are holding their own.

61,031. But where it is not turned down to grass they are not losing money?—Rents have been considerably lower. I make the average 15 per cent.; five on the grass land, and considerably more on the arable.

Reduction of rent.

61,032. So that the reductions of rent have compensated the tenants on the arable farms?—To a certain extent, certainly.

61,033. Are the tenants satisfied with the reductions of rent in your neighbourhood?—They feel strongly that the landlord has been doing a great deal, and they do not always want to be asking for a reduction of rent.

61,034. Not even when they are losing money?—No; they have borne it.

61,035. Do you mean that if prices continue at their present level, there will be such a number of applications for farms?—No, I should scarcely think so. They are hoping that things will be something better.

61,036. Not unless there is a reduction of rent?—It is bound to come down in the arable farms, if there is not an increase in prices.

Grass farms.

61,037. (*Chairman.*) But not on the grass farms?—No; we are, there, holding our own.

61,038. (*Mr. Lambert.*) So that practically there is no agricultural depression in the grass farms in the West Riding of Yorkshire?—I think not.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

61,039. You mentioned one estate just now in which you said every advantage was taken of the tenant?—Yes.

61,040. Do you propose that any legislation should be enacted to prevent a landlord of that description taking advantage of his tenantry?—Well, it is so rare a case; now that difficulty is obviated on that estate. They found, when the depression had come, that it was their best interest to meet their tenants, and to make substantial repairs, and they treated those farmers better. The landlords are doing these things, and it promotes good feeling between landlord and tenant, and it is owing to that that there is not a collapse.

61,041. But still the good feeling could not be very great when every advantage was taken of the tenant?—That was a solitary landlord; there is no feeling of bitterness now.

61,042. That was only on one estate?—Only one in the West Riding.

61,043. You speak with pretty accurate knowledge of it?—I have gone about both to chambers of agriculture and clubs, and I have been asked to get information, generally.

61,044. Do I understand you to say that tenant farmers' sons were working on the farms, and those small farmers were only just holding their own, because the sons got no wages?—Certainly; they sold all into the farm, and they got clothing and were fed, and they put their all into the farm.

61,045. Do you think that the small farmers are justified in allowing their sons to work for low wages in order to keep the parents upon the farm?—That is a question; those sons would be entitled to wages, and would be able to get wages, but they are keeping the home together.

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61,046. So that their sons are making considerable sacrifices to keep their homes together?—Yes.

61,047. And the tenant farmers, as a class, do not like to have to leave their farms?—They do not, and they will make a great sacrifice rather than leave.

61,048. And they have made great sacrifices?—Yes.

61,049. And in that case that you mentioned, a bad landlord took advantage of the sacrifices they had made in good times?—Yes.

Grass farms.

61,050. (*Mr. Dalton.*) When you say there is no depression on the grass farms, do you mean that the profits of the farmers on these farms are the same as they used to be many years ago?—No, they have not been so good.

61,051. They have not done so well as when they were farming years ago?—Certainly not.

61,052. Do you not consider that that is a proof of agricultural depression?—They have been able to hold their own.

61,053. Do you think that they made too much money before?—No, I do not.

61,054. But when you say "hold their own," you mean they have been able to keep themselves, and live on the farm?—And pay their way.

61,055. But not make much profit?—Not to save money as they did formerly.

Reduction of rent.

61,056. I have not quite understood what you say has been the average reduction of rent on the grass farms. I thought you put it at 5 per cent. to Mr. Lambert?—I believe that is the outside.

61,057. Do you mean that is the outside average?—I say not more than 5 per cent., the average.

Laying land down to grass.

61,058. What is the cost, can you say, per acre of laying down arable land into grass land in your district?—The cost, a good deal in the first place, consists of the working of the land. It requires an open fallow to get that land thoroughly cleaned; where it is clay land it cannot be cleaned in any other way, and that means ploughing it two or three times at the very least in the hot weather—in the summer.

61,059. To do it well, what would it cost per acre?—To sow proper seeds would cost 30*s.* an acre.

61,060. Can you estimate at all the total cost?—I could not put it down at less than 4*l.* an acre.

61,061. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Exclusive or inclusive of seeds?—Inclusive of seeds; they cost 30*s.*, and I could not put the work down at less than 2*l.* 10*s.*

61,062. (*Chairman.*) That is, I suppose, on the assumption that the land has been well cleaned in advance?—Certainly, that is what I say.

61,063. If you have to clean the land and get rid of all kinds of bad weeds, and so forth, it would cost a great deal more?—A very great deal more; but then it is always a tenant's interest to keep his land in condition.

61,064. On that estimate you start with the idea that the land is in good condition?—In fairly good condition to start with, and then it will cost 4*l.* an acre.

Wages.

61,065. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have the average money wages of the labourer gone up or down during the last years; I think you said they were from 15*s.* to 18*s.* a week?—They are a little dearer.

61,066. A little dearer?—Yes, if there is any difference.

61,067. Formerly, when they had arable land, the labourers got additional wages in harvest time?—They did.

61,068. Have you taken that into account as well?—That will make very little difference; there will be very little difference in the wages if that is taken into consideration. Mind you they had to work a great deal harder in those times; they worked till 9 o'clock at night.

61,069. But you take it that the money wages are practically the same?—About the same.

Small tenants and free labour.

61,070. (*Mr. Clay.*) You have said that the small tenant farmer has been paying his rent by getting free labour from his family?—I have.

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61,071. How does that suit the family in the long run?—They are hoping to get on to the farm themselves. If there are two sons together then they take the farm between them, or if the farmer has saved sufficient capital he will put one on and try to get a farm for the other. That is what they are looking forward to,

61,072. Is that hope realized often?—Very often.

61,073. Of late has that often been realized?—Yes, it has.

61,074. In the bad times?—Yes, it is the rule almost without exception in the large estates of the West Riding of Yorkshire that they never take a farm out of the family unless there is something very seriously wrong; they give the chance of the farm to some member of the family.

61,075. At a rent that they may make money on and lay by?—I will not say make money; there is no such a thing as making money now—it is simply living, just now.

61,076. What is to become of them in their old age?—They must go on in the same way.

61,077. And die in poverty—is that it?—There are very few that are doing well. They continue to hold on but it is no use for me to come here and say that farmers are saving money because they are not doing it.

61,078. But small farmers are often able to pay the rent only through the young men—their sons—giving their labour free, you say?—Certainly.

61,079. That is not a very satisfactory thing for the young men?—It is the fact; I am telling you the truth.

61,080. Is it a satisfactory thing for the young men?—Perhaps scarcely, but now few farmers sons are brought up to face anything else.

Sale by live weight.

61,081. You have said, I think, in your evidence that you are in favour of selling cattle by live weight?—I am certainly in favour of farmers having their stock weighed; they know then how they can compute them.

61,082. Would you have any objections to adopting the American system? If it were compulsory for all fat cattle to be sold by live weight it would be an advantage to the farmer, would it not?—I do not know; I should scarcely think so; many farmers sell their cattle at home and never go near an auction or anything else like that. The butcher comes to their place and buys their cattle; the same butchers have done that for years.

61,083. But if he had a weighing machine he should put them over the scales before they made a bargain?—Of course, it would be an advantage to the farmer to be sure about the weight of his cattle.

61,084. It would really be an advantage to the farmer to have the live weight system adopted more than it is just now?—It would; there is no doubt whatever of it.

Co-operation in purchase of feeding stuffs, &c.

61,085. You say it is a great advantage for farmers to combine; the combination you mean is co-operative dealing in cakes, manures, and other such things, is it not?—Yes.

61,086. Do you not know that a general system of farmers' supply associations is now growing up in the country?—Yes; they have them in Yorkshire and in Northumberland, and all round.

61,087. That will be in the long run beneficial to them?—It is; everything is supplied on the very lowest terms, and there is a guarantee with everything you get.

Laying land down to grass.

61,088. I think the most important matter in your evidence that you have touched upon is the question of laying down to grass?—I think so, too.

61,089. You have no doubt, I suppose, that arable land, which just now is worth 20*s.* an acre, in a very few years, with a little extra work and intelligence on the part of the farmer, will be increased in value up to 40*s.*?—I would not say so much as that, but it can be increased considerably, although not, I think, to that amount.

61,090. Have you not in your experience seen 20*s.* an acre land—arable land—laid down to grass, and in 10 years' time worth double?—I have land myself that was valued at 15*s.* an acre; I have had it down 20 years, and now it is well worth 30*s.*

61,091. That is double?—Yes.

61,092. It would be a very great advantage to the farmer if he had more old grass on his farm, would it not?—Certainly it would. We have always a demand for our stock; we can sell them at an hour's notice.

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61,093. There is a difficulty there, what would become of the labourer if that were done?—When we let that land go down to grass, rather than let it go out of cultivation, we are employing labour on it in the fencing and in the ditching, and in the mowing of thistles, and in the making of hay, and other things. If that land, as would have been the case in the south, had gone out of cultivation the labourers would have had no work.

61,094. But naturally, if the land was laid down to grass, it would not require so much labour as if the land was kept as arable land?—That is what I alluded to; so much was laid down that so many labourers left the villages and went to the towns.

61,095. Nothing will make good grass but good cultivation first, and good seeds?—Good seeds and having the land perfectly clean.

61,096. And liberal manuring and cakeing afterwards?—Certainly; in the third year on our strong clays the grasses of the natural land begin to come, and they want encouragement.

61,097. In your opinion it would be an advantage to the farmer if more old grass were laid down in the country, would it not?—It is a very great advantage; it has been the salvation of many farmers.

61,098. And will be?—And will be; that I am convinced of.

Butter making.

61,099. (*Mr. Whitehead*) With regard to the differences in butter-making, you told one of the Commissioners that they were due probably, in some degree, to differences in the soil?—Yes.

61,100. May they not also be due, to some extent, to ignorance on the part of the manipulators, that is, the butter-makers?—Certainly they are. There is nothing else, as I said before, which requires so much care every day in the week.

61,101. Has anything been done in your county towards giving education in butter-making?—Lessons have been given in dairying at nearly all the market towns.

Technical instruction.

61,102. By the Technical Education Committee of the County Council?—Yes, and by somebody connected with the Yorkshire College.

61,103. Have they been well attended?—Not so well as you might have expected, and they ought to have been better attended.

61,104. Why is that?—There is an old prejudice against it. It dies very hard, and I never saw anything that has required so much killing as this prejudice in the dairying.

61,105. Do the farmers object to being taught?—They have objected really, but they are coming in a little now.

61,106. Do you think they will get over that?—It is a matter of time; it is not just the farmers themselves, it is the farmers' wives.

Price of sheep.

61,107. There is only one other question I should like to ask you, and that is with regard to the sheep. You say that in spite of the enormous rents, sheep are dearer than they were two or three years ago?—Yes, they are.

61,108. Can you give a reason for that?—There is such a demand for sheep, that sheep have been paying right along. If you go and buy good ewes you can make them pay either by selling off the fat lambs or keeping the lambs forward and putting them on the turnips. They are bound to pay.

61,109. Is not the stock less?—It is considerably less according to the Agricultural returns.

61,110. In your county, I mean?—Yes.

Importation of Irish cattle.

61,111. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you breed and rear your own stock?—In my neighbourhood we do, a deal; but we buy enormously of Irish cattle.

61,112. Have you ever bought Canadian cattle?—Only once. They are large coarse beasts and do not do so well as the Irish.

61,113 You would prefer having the Irish?—We can make more of them per stone, and they feed a little quicker.

61,114. Have you, in your experience, suffered from cattle disease in your neighbourhood?—Foot and mouth disease we have suffered frightfully from.

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61,115. Do you approve of the restrictions on the importation of cattle?—Most certainly; I think they have been of very great help to the farmers.

Importation of foreign cattle.

61,116. A majority of farmers in your neighbourhood are also of that opinion, too, I think?—Everyone, without a single exception. That has been a very important thing.

Dairy cows.

61,117. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What is the prevailing breed of dairy cow in your district?—A cross with the shorthorns. They are all cross-bred beasts now.

61,118-19. Is it a good butter cow?—Yes.

61,120. Is the milk rich?—Yes, it is very rich.

61,121. Do you think much can be done in the way of improving the breed of the dairy cow?—I do not know. I think it is very satisfactory. We have dairy cows in our district which will give to us four gallons of milk per day of good quality—not thin milk—where the cows are fairly well kept.

61,122. You cannot tell us what amount of butter is got from the milk?—No, I cannot. I know that these beasts are giving something like 11 to 12 pounds of butter a week.

61,123. Each beast?—Yes. But, mind you, those cattle are well kept; they are getting something like eight to ten pounds of cake a day and a little meal even when they are out at grass.

Milk selling.

61,124. Do dairy farmers combine milk-selling and butter-selling?—Yes. We have a good market for our milk at Leeds. It is just the carriage that we have to pay, and we have two or three miles to run it up to the station.

61,125. And you sell the milk in preference, I suppose, to turning it into butter, because it is more profitable?—Yes, wherever they have been selling milk, it has made considerably more than the butter.

61,126. Would you look, therefore, more to the quantity of the milk than to the quality of it?—We are bound to have a good quality now; all that goes into the town is tested.

61,127. It is a low test?—It has to be up to a certain standard.

61,128. (*Mr Lambert.*) Surely the test is a very low one?—Yes it is; but still it has to be kept up to that.

Bad seasons.

61,129. (*Chairman.*) Did your district suffer from the drought in 1893?—Very little indeed. You would be surprised to see how well we do when you would think we are burnt up; when there is scarcely any grass to be seen in the valleys our cattle can feed.

61,130. What there is, is much more nutritious than usual?—Certainly; it is of so much better quality.

61,131. Then you did not suffer in the same way, that the South and East of England did?—Oh dear me, nothing like it. I went through those counties and it was marvellous to see them. We suffered very little.

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61,132. In 1894, last year, what kind of season was it that you had?—We had a very good grazing year indeed. I can speak personally to that; my farm made me money last year. It did well.

61,133. Having so little corn, you did not suffer from the bad harvests?—No, we did not.

61,134. Then this year, have you suffered from the drought?—No, not at all. We have more meat in the West Riding of Yorkshire just at the present time than we have had for years.

61,135. Then, comparing that district with the South and East of England, you have been very fortunate?—I think so.

61,136. You have in no way suffered from the bad seasons which have affected the East and South of England?—No, we have not.

Low prices.

61,137. Then, as you grow so little wheat, you do not suffer much from the very low price of wheat?—No, we are growing out of it gradually in self defence.

61,138. Therefore what you have mainly suffered from has been the average fall of price—which is comparatively small compared with the fall in wheat and so forth—on cattle and sheep?—Yes. Of course we grow a few oats and barley; we have done that.

Compensation for consumption of home-grown corn.

61,139. I suppose you consume the oats and barley largely upon your own farms?—We should do, but for the Agricultural Holdings Act. It does not give us a farthing compensation for anything we consume of our own; therefore we sell those and buy cakes and other things.

61,140. Do you not, in spite of that, use a good deal?—No, the Act has put a stop to it.

61,141. Then you sell your oats and barley, and buy other feeding stuff?—We do—simply on that account.

61,142. Then you are strongly in favour, I suppose, of giving compensation for home grown corn?—I certainly am. It just wants a check on the farmer, of course.

61,143. Do you think if that alteration in the law was made, the farmers in your district would avail themselves of it?—They would consume a very great deal more of their own produce.

61,144. Perhaps they might grow more too?—Yes, I believe they would. The Act has deterred many; we cannot tell what a day may bring forth. A man with a family may die, or may be compelled to leave his farm, and they would get no compensation for it if he had consumed his own corn.

Price of feeding stuffs.

61,145. I suppose the low price of feeding stuffs has been an advantage?—It has been a great advantage.

61,146. What would you say is the average reduction in feeding stuffs?—Fully 25 per cent.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. A. W. Fox.

Mr. Arthur Wilson Fox re-called and further examined.

(For previous evidence, see page 101.)

Mr. A. W. Fox.

Report upon Cumberland.

61,147. (*Chairman.*) I think the general purport of your report on Cumberland is that that county has suffered very little compared with the counties in the East of England?—Yes, that is so.

61,148. On page 24 you give the prices of cattle and sheep in that county?—Yes.

Prices of sheep and cattle, 1850-95.

61,149. As you say, if you go back to the years 1860–64, the prices during the last four years have remained almost identical, being only very slightly under?—Yes; they were low from 1860 to 1864.

61,150. In a paragraph on that page you speak of shorthorn stirks; I do not know what that may mean?—One-year-olds.

61,151. The year-old animals. I see, averaged 8*l.* 2*s.* 1½*d.* from 1860 to 1864, and from 1890 to 1894 they averaged 8*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*, which is but a very slight difference; then the two-year shorthorns were 12*l.* 3*s.* 7½*d.* in 1860–64, and 11*l.* 16*s.* in 1890–94, a very slight difference again?—Yes, that is so.

61,152. Therefore the reduction you speak of, from 12 to 21 per cent., was from high prices of the years 1870 to 1884?—I took those reductions from the prices in 1880–84.

61,153. Then there was a great rise of prices somewhen after 1870, which probably coincided with the great industrial inflation of things, and then there was a reduction again about the year 1884?—Yes. Those prices are put out in detail on page 47. They really did not rise much until 1871.

61,154. I imagine the probability was that the rise took place at the same time as the great inflation took place of prices in industry, and in the commercial towns of England?—That was so.

61,155. Then that continued for some years, and then there was again a fall, and then there was a very slight rise between 1890 and 1894, but the prices are now about the same average as before the great rise of 1871?—Yes, and the prices from October 1894 to October 1895 are higher than the average of 1890 to 1894.

61,156. Can you say what they are?—I was not able to obtain that, because the autumn sales were not over, and an average could not be taken because they might have dropped. But I think I am justified in saying that prices from October 1894 to October 1895 are higher than the average of 1890 to 1894.

61,157. In the case of both one-year-olds and two-year-olds?—Yes.

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61,158. You will say the same thing in the case of sheep, namely, that the price of sheep, taken generally, has gone back to what it was in the years 1860 to 1864?—Yes, but it is rather lower than that.

61,159. Slightly lower?—Yes.

61,160. But very slightly?—Yes.

61,161. Then, again, there was a great rise between 1871 and 1884, and then a fall?—Yes.

61,162. Has there been the same subsequent rise in 1894–95 that there has been in the case of cattle?—Yes, there has been; 1892 and 1893 were the lowest years for sheep and cattle in that district.

61,163. Then the effect of the depression has been to bring back things to very much what they were before the great rise of prices took place in 1871?—Except that capital has been lost in the meantime.

61,164. Capital may have been lost in the meantime, and capital may have been earned in the meantime, because prices rose very considerably in 1870 and 1871?—People have a knack of living up to their income.

Effects of depression.

61,165. But still there must have been very good profits made from 1871 to 1880?—No doubt there were between that time, and that is illustrated by so many small farmers, or men who were labourers even, being now large farmers.

Rent.

61,166. During that time, I presume, there was a rise in rent?—No, I do not think there was, as far as I can understand.

61,167. I gather that there must have been?—During that period some of these large estates were being made at that time, and very large sums of money were being spent upon them.

61,168. I see that the income tax valuation for the years 1870, 1879, and 1893 shows that between 1870 and 1879 there was an increased valuation in Cumberland of 10 per cent., which is a greater amount than in any other county?—Is that in the rural districts?

61,169. Over the whole of the county, taking the land only?—Of course there are minerals to be considered.

61,170. I am not talking of that; I am talking of agricultural land only. There was an increase of the valuation in Cumberland between 1870 and 1879 of 10 per cent., and then a reduction in the valuation between 1879 and 1893 of 12 per cent.; therefore, there has been a somewhat greater reduction in rent during the last 14 years as compared with the increase of the previous 10 years. Then again, the valuation has rather more than gone gone back to the valuation of 1870 and 1871, which would seem to indicate that the same kind of process has been going on?—I asked at all the public meetings I attended, whether they thought they were fairly rented previous to 1879, and they all said, yes.

61,171. That may be, but the increase of rent between 1870 and 1879, although considerable, may not have been in the same proportion as the increased price of cattle?—No.

61,172. I take it that the rise in the valuation of Cumberland, between 1870 and 1879, was very considerably greater than in any other county in England, and that since then, there has been a fall in the value to a somewhat greater amount, but a very slightly greater amount; therefore, it would seem to follow the same law as it were, as the course of the prices of cattle, namely, that the rise in the rent took place in consequence of the rise in the value of cattle, and the fall again in rent has followed upon the fall in the rise of cattle. I do not know whether you follow that?—Yes, I understand your argument.

Wages.

61,173. Then, in 1873, there was a considerable rise in the wages of the labourer?—Yes; wages were at their highest point about 1873 and 1874.

61,174. Since then I think they have been maintained?—Since 1880; the wages are very little lower than they were in 1880; I think they are rather lower now than they were in 1892 and 1893.

61,175. But that is only just for the year?—Yes, just for that year; there were some very big works going on in the district then; there was the Thirlmere scheme, and men were drawn away for the Manchester Ship Canal. That affected the wages a little.

61,176. That caused a temporary increase of wages in 1892 and 1893?—Yes, I think it was partly due to that.

61,177. And that has again been met by a slight reduction?—Yes.

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61,178. But, as I gather from your report, taking it generally, the wages since 1873 have been about maintained?—Yes; there has been very little difference in the wages.

61,179. The rise of 1873 has been continued?—No; I think they were higher in 1873 and 1874 than they have been since, but it was just those two years; they have never been quite so high as they were then.

61,180. But still wages have not gone down to the point at which they were before 1873?—No; I do not think they have, but there has been practically no change between 1880 and 1895 during those 15 years.

Reduced labour.

61,181. Then I observe from your report, and also from other figures that we have got before us, that there has been a considerable reduction in the number of labourers in Cumberland?—Yes, there has been a reduction.

61,182. A larger reduction than there has been in Cambridgeshire?—Of course there are some very large towns in the North.

61,183. I think you said that the reduction in the number of labourers has been 16 per cent.?—It was about 7½ per cent. in 1881 and 1891, and about 8½ per cent. between 1871 and 1881.

61,184. I have added those two figures together, and it comes to about 16 per cent.; that is not perfectly accurate, because you are taking the per-centage upon different figures, but roughly speaking, it may be said to be 16 per cent.?—In that connexion I should state that they have reduced their wheat-growing by about 80 per cent., and their barley growing by about 79 per cent.

61,185. It never was a very important element in Cumberland?—No, but still they have reduced that as much as they can.

61,186. But I suppose it hardly accounted for this great reduction in the number of labourers?—No; it would not account for all of it, but it would account for some of it; then there is the increase in the towns during the time of great prosperity between 1870 and 1880.

61,187. And that happened in Cumberland which happened in a great many parts of England, namely, that the great demand for labourers drew the labourers away from the country districts in Cumberland, and caused an increase in the price of labour?—Yes, it has kept the price up.

61,188. It kept the price up, or made an increase?—Yes.

61,189. Farmers, in order to retain their labourers, were obliged to raise the wages?—Yes, it has had the same effect in Cumberland; it has kept them up.

61,190. One of the difficulties that the farmers have had to meet, as compared with what happened before 1873, has been the rise of wages?—Yes.

61,191. And they have met that by reducing the number of labourers?—I do not think there is much evidence that the farms are under-manned by labour.

61,192. I do not say they are under-manned, but still they must in some way or other have economised labour?—Yes; as I say there is less wheat and less barley growing, and in that way it has been economised, and they have gone in more for stock.

61,193. The reduction in the number of labourers is accordingly more than can be accounted for by the reduced arable cultivation?—I think they have only got six thousand acres of wheat and barley now.

61,194. It never was a large item?—No; it was 29,000 acres, I think.

61,195. How do you account for the reduction in the number of labourers there has been in such a county as Cumberland?—Because of the attractions in the large towns. I have always found that in the North—in the best paid districts, I do not say in all of them, indeed, I do not wish to say that generally—but in a good many of the best paid districts in the North the migration is the greatest, because the men are educated better and their parents can afford to send them into the towns as clerks and so forth. The more money they have the more likely they are to go. Up in Northumberland it is exactly the same.

61,196. Still, apparently, the farmers have met the rise in wages by reducing the number of labourers by

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16 per cent, or at all events the two things have been coincident?—They have had to meet the voluntary migration, I think, by maintaining the wages or increasing them. I think the migration has been voluntary in the North?—We are met with this curious fact, that in Cumberland, where wages have been maintained and where the arable cultivation is not considerable, the number of labourers is reduced in a far greater proportion than in the county of Cambridge, where the arable cultivation forms such a very large item in their cultivation and where wages have been reduced?—Yes; I think, from what I have noticed, it generally has been the same in the North. It is more difficult there to keep the men.

61,197–8. Still, that 16 per cent. is a very considerable reduction?—Yes.

Small farmers and free labour.

61,199. The small farmers, I suppose, cultivate the land themselves?—Yes; and their families.

61,200. And there is a very large number of these small farmers?—Yes. I might just say, with reference to labour, the farmers have been lately, during the depression, rather hiring a second-rate class of man instead of the better class; and as far as I know, that rather has been their procedure in reference to economy.

61,201. That does not altogether coincide with the figures because, as I have said, the statistics show an actual reduction in number of 16 per cent.?—Yes.

61,202. Then it may be that the smaller farmers have done more themselves and have dispensed, to some extent, with labour?—I think the smaller farmers always did work the farms themselves with their families.

61,203. (*Mr. Elton.*) The bigger ones also, I suppose?—Yes, to some extent.

Large and small farmers compared.

61,204. (*Chairman.*) Do you think the smaller farmers, on the whole, have done better, relatively, than the larger ones?—No; I do not think they have. I think, on the whole, they have done worse, because of their want of capital. I do not say if they had started fair with, relatively, the same amount of capital per acre as the big ones that they would not have done just as well, perhaps better.

61,205. But still, they have not suffered so much as farmers in other parts of the country?—No. They most of them have been farm servants and many have started on their farms rather too soon. They very often borrow money to stock them. If they had waited a year or two they would have been clear; but then in bad times they have got to pay a high rate of interest for the money they have borrowed to stock their farms.

Butter factories.

61,206. Is there anything being done in the direction of butter factories in the country?—Yes, there is a butter factory at Aspatria, and the farmers send their milk there. Several large farmers informed me that they never did so well since they sent their milk there.

61,207. Has the result been satisfactory, as far as the make is concerned, and the price?—Yes, I believe so. It was not possible to get the accounts from the Dairy Company, so I do not know their financial position, but the farmers were satisfied with the price they were getting for the milk. Of course they get a yearly contract, and it is a certainty for them.

61,208. Do you think the system might be extended there?—That has done very well, as far as the farmer is concerned. A great deal of butter is sold in the county, but it is considered to be of an inferior quality, and, like every other county, there is a great deal of foreign butter sold there.

61,209. Do the remarks you have made on the Eastern Counties apply almost equally to Cumberland, namely, as to the grave evil resulting from want of uniformity, and that the farmers might very much improve their position, and secure a greater hold upon the markets by co-operation in the manufacture of butter?—Yes, I think so, certainly. I might say that a great many witnesses put that view forward in the county. The difficulty is to find anybody to take the lead.

61,210. Did you do your best to impress them with that view?—Yes, certainly; but a great many people have pointed out that abroad the creation of factories and companies does not really come from the farmers, but from merchants who have seen their opportunity, and have started these institutions.

61,211. Why should that not be done in England?—There are a great many people who seem to say it ought to be done, and could be done, with very great advantage.

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61,212. Of course there are two ways of doing it—either by the co-operation of the farmers themselves, or by its being worth the while of traders or factors to do it independently and to work the district?—The difficulty is to get the farmers to take any steps themselves, because in this very case of the Dairy Company at Aspatria the farmers would not take any notice of the company at first; there was the greatest difficulty to get them to send milk, but after some time, when they found that it paid, they sent it.

Marketing in Cumberland.

61,213. I think you attach great importance to the fact that the farmers themselves go to the markets in Cumberland, and sell their own produce there?—Yes, I do.

61,214. Small farmers?—Yes, they do.

64,215. There are local markets where that is the fashion?—Yes.

61,216. And the farmers and the farmers' wives take their own products and sell their own products there?—Yes, some go round the town, ringing the door bells and asking if they want any butter.

61,217. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The farmers do not take back their skim milk from the factory, do they?—No, they do not.

61,218. Do they refuse to?—Yes, they do nct want the trouble of fetching it, I think

61,219. They do not go in for pigs?—No. In Ireland they take all their skim milk back; they wait for it.

61,220. So the company has to dispose of it as best they can?—Yes, and the company do not like to have it.

Grass farms.

61,221. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose Cumberland is mostly a grazing county?—Yes.

61,222. And both sheep and cattle raising have been paying a good deal more than arable farming has been doing?—Yes, certainly. They breed a great number of cattle there.

61,223. Would you agree with the last witness that a pastoral farm has not anything like reduced—if reduced at all—or depreciated in value?—The moderately good land has not fallen very much in value.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

61,224. Have you seen in your experience that when the landlords and their agents take a lively interest in the management of the farms the tenants are better off?—Yes, certainly; but I think Cumberland is very favoured about that; the Cumberland landlords are mostly prominent agriculturists themselves and they are all on very good terms with the tenants.

61,225. Is it not the fact that the Cumberland landlords and their agents are practically themselves engaged in farming and know what it is?—Yes; I think that applies to most of the Cumberland large land owners. There are a good many small landowners now, and that has arisen a good deal in this way: when the statesman or the small freeholder was tempted in the high times to sell his land, or in the bad times to get out of it, he sometimes sold it to small people; and on the west coast particularly there are a good many small owners now who have bought from the statesmen who gave up their land.

61,226. Are they prosperous?—Some of those landowners there look to a farm or perhaps two farms for their livelihood, and they have not been able to reduce the rent as some large owners have done.

61,227. Still it is a great advantage to the farmer that the landlords should reside more upon their own properties and see what is going on?—Certainly.

"Statesmen."

61,228. (*Mr. Lambert.*) You say the statesmen there or the small freeholders are saddled with a large number of charges?—Yes, they are.

61,229. If their freehold was free from all encumbrances they would, I suppose, be in a far better position than the ordinary tenant farmer?—I have heard different opinions about that.

61,230. For one thing they would have no rent to pay?—They consider themselves in a better social position and they have the reputation of spending rather more. A good many people attribute their dying out to that state of affairs. I give a table on page 33 of the numbers for the last three centuries in one parish. You will see they have not died out because there has been depression in the last 30 years, but that they have been gradually dying out ever since 1648.

61,231. The real reason is that they live rather too luxuriously for their means?—I remember at a meeting

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that was stated as one of the causes. I do not say it is the only cause because a finer race of men never existed, I should think, than the Cumberland statesmen.

Encumbrances on small freeholds.

61,232. Still if a man has more money to spend that usually is the test of his happiness and prosperity in the world, is it not?—Of course if his estate was quite unencumbered it would be so, but it is almost impossible for these men to have their estates unencumbered, because if a man dies on a farm of 60 acres, freehold, and his son comes into it that son finds it charged in favour of his mother. It would be very difficult to find a freehold which was not encumbered for that reason, I think.

61,233. Would it not be to the number of encumbrances upon the small freehold farms that is due the fact of the gradual diminishing of the number of statesmen?—No; a great many of them were tempted in the seventies, when the land was selling well, to sell their land, and a great many of them have had to sell it in the bad times because they could not afford to reduce their rents.

Cumberland farmers.

61,234. Do you think that the Cumberland farmer, as a whole, is a very hard-working man?—Yes.

61,235. Who attends to his business, himself?—Certainly he does.

61,236. And sells his produce to the very best possible advantage?—Yes; generally speaking, he does, and the large farmers are practically working farmers there.

61,237. Do they differ from the farmers in the Southern Counties in that respect?—It is very difficult to draw any comparisons. For instance take Lincolnshire, the small farmers there work 12 or 14 hours a day; they could not work longer hours.

61,238. And they are not doing so well?—No, they are not doing so well; but then there is perhaps a different reason for that. They most of them got on to the land in the time of high prices, and borrowed a great deal of money. I do not know whether one can say it is because the North men are a finer set of men, physically, and more energetic—it would be rather difficult to say that, generally.

61,239. But they give more personal attention to their farms?—On the whole they do. What is true of the labourers possibly may be true of the farmers. The labourers are more energetic, and they are a finer race of men, and they do more work; possibly it may be so with the farmers; I do not wish to say so positively for the moment. All I can say is that the small farmers in Lincolnshire work just as long hours as the small farmers in the North.

"Statesmen."

61,240. (*Mr. Elton.*) You have spoken about these statesmen, and you have mentioned them as freeholders; are they all freeholders, or are some of them copyholders?—Some of them are the old copyholders.

61,241. They have got a particular tenure there called tenant-right, have they not?—Yes.

61,242. Did they mention to you any grievances they had connected with that?—No, I did not hear of any.

61,243. I recollect that when I was in Cumberland once as an Assistant-Commissioner, inquiring from one of these statesmen, he said they were troubled with some old feudal payment called "Sergeant Oats," that they had to pay; is that still alive?—No, I do not think there is any grievance about it, and I believe it has greatly died out. There was one witness—a large tenant farmer—who raised the question at the Carlisle meetings that the manorial fines, and so on, were rather heavy.

61,244. I could not find much more grievance than that of the "Sergeant Oats," when I was there?—I know as a matter of fact that many of these old customs have lapsed now.

61,245. And a great many have been enfranchised?—Yes. I know that a great many landlords would not like to try the experiment of enforcing their rights now, because I do not think they could prove them.

61,246. (*Lord Rendel.*) With regard to the agricultural labourer in Cumberland, have the statesman class, who have now become tenants, fallen at all into the labourer class?—A great many of the statesmen have become tenants on their original holdings. There are many instances of that. Statesmen have sold their holdings to a large landlord, and their families remain on the farm as tenants.

61,247. You speak of them as a very fine race?—Yes.

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61,248. Have they contributed to strengthen the labour element at all?—No; I should not think they have at all.

Cumberland labourers.

61,249. You, I think, said that the labourer was of a higher intelligence, and of better education, as a rule in Cumberland than in the South and East of England?—Than in some of the Eastern Counties, certainly.

61,250. But you also think, as I understood you, that the higher intelligence, and the better education, induced the better labourer to migrate into the towns, leaving the inferior labourer to agriculture?—Yes, that is so. Of course a great many of the labourers get on to the land; a large number of farmers have been labourers.

61,251. In comparing, as you have had so widely the opportunity of doing, the labour of the different areas of the country, have you formed any opinion as to the effect of improved education, of a higher intelligence, and of a better physical condition upon the agricultural industries of distinct areas?—Do you mean only with reference to the labourer when he is working?

61,252. Yes?—The more educated they are the more likely, if they remain on the land, are they to work well; but then where they are the most educated they will go to the towns.

61,253. Assuming that in other handicrafts there was a definite difference between the quality of, we will say, Clyde labour and Manchester labour and Tyne labour, and that the wages paid did not necessarily represent the value of the work, would you from your experience of agricultural labour, be prepared to suppose that there was some analogy, and that in some areas the higher intelligence and physical character of the labourer produced better value for wages?—Certainly a Northern man is worth much more than an Eastern Counties man; in fact, he is paid nearly twice as much.

61,254. Do you think that the labour of a Northumberland agricultural labourer on 18*s.* a week with many advantages is cheaper than the labour of a Hampshire labourer?—I should say it was; I have had a good deal of evidence about that, I have had evidence from men in Ireland who have had men from the North and Eastern Counties working in the same gang, drawn from agricultural districts, which supports that view.

61,255. Then you think it might be reasonably urged that an improvement and a general rise in the physical condition and in the educated condition of the agricultural labourer would pay the country economically, as rendering his work more worth the increased pay than the work given by the inferior labourer at a lower wage?—I cannot say why the Northern man is physically finer. It may be because of his better food and it may be through climatic reasons. I have never gone into that question.

61,256. I am merely on the point of whether you had formed any opinion as to whether the educated agricultural labourer was an economical gain to the country even at a higher price?—Yes, I should think he is an economical gain to the farmer in the North at a higher price. He is quite fit to become a farmer always when the time comes and very often a good farmer; and I doubt, if you take an ordinary Eastern Counties agricultural labourer, whether he would make a good farmer.

61,257. Then even so far as agriculture is concerned and the interests, so far as they are opposed, of the farmer and of the labourer, the high price of agricultural labour need not be an injury economically to the farmer?—No, certainly not.

Report upon Cambridgeshire.

61,258. (*Chairman.*) In your report upon Cambridgeshire I see you have drawn a great distinction between North Cambridgeshire and South Cambridgeshire?—Yes. It is rather a rough-and-ready line to draw, but it is really the difference between the Fen land, which is practically in the northern half, and the light land and the chalk land and the heavy land in the southern half.

61,259. The main portion of the heavy land in the county is in the south, I suppose?—Practically.

61,260. Is it very heavy clay?—Some of it is very heavy, and there is some very light land as well.

61,261. Did both of those districts suffer from the drought of 1893?—Yes, they all suffered to some extent—some less than others.

61,262. Did the Fen land suffer seriously in 1893?—I think the Fen land on clay subsoil suffered least.

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61,263. But generally should you say that the county has suffered as much as Essex and the South of England did from the drought?—The southern part certainly did, and some of the northern part did, but where there was Fen land on clay it did not suffer so much.

61,264. Then in the following year, 1894, did they suffer from the bad harvest?—Yes, they did. The cost of the harvest was very great, owing to the wet weather, and the sample was very much injured in some districts.

61,265. The promise was very great?—I suppose there never was a more promising year up to a certain time.

61,266. But it was almost blasted by the bad weather of the harvest?—Yes; owing to the prolonged wet the crops were very much beaten down, which increased the cost of getting the harvest, considerably.

Fall in prices.

61,267. When you were there the prices also had gone down abnormally?—Yes.

61,268. Especially for wheat?—Yes, very much.

61,269. I suppose that was partly due to the bad quality of the wheat?—I was there just before the harvest in 1894; I was there before they had begun to cut the harvest.

61,270. The price had not begun to fall then?—The price was very low. I was there just at the time of the Royal Show—that was, I think, in June or July 1894. The price was 22*s.* or 23*s.* a quarter then, speaking off hand.

61,271. And it ran down to something like 18*s.*, or even lower after the harvest, did it not?—I believe it did in some districts.

61,272. Generally?—Yes.

61,273. That was in great part due to the bad quality of the corn, was it not?—That I could not say, and I should not like to say it, because I was not in the district.

61,274. Were you again there this year?—I was in Cambridgeshire early this year—in January.

Bad seasons.

61,275. Not later, so as to know whether the county has suffered from drought this year?—No, I closed my report early this year—in February, I think.

61,276. At all events you were there in the worst period, namely that of the extraordinarily low prices of 1894?—Yes, they were lower then than they are now.

61,277. After the bad year of 1893 and the bad weather of the harvest of 1894?—I was there before the bad weather commenced. Things were looking favourable, if there had been a good harvest, when I was there—I mean, assuming the price kept up, the prospects of the crop looked favourable.

61,278. Then, comparing the whole district with others that you have visited, say where things are not so bad, compared with the Northumberland division one cause of the great difficulty in Cambridgeshire is the very bad seasons they have had, is it not?—The evidence in Cambridgeshire was that the land has practically recovered from the effects of the bad seasons.

61,279. From the bad season of 1879?—Yes.

61,280. But not from the bad seasons of 1893 and 1894, I mean there was that difference as compared with other districts?—They suffered very much from the drought in 1893. I was rather thinking of the wet.

61,281. 1893 brought the drought and the bad weather in the harvest?—Yes, they suffered from that I know.

Wages.

61,282. In the figures you give about the wages I observe that you do not go back beyond 1873 and you show the reduction that has taken place during late years?—I do not think I go back more than 20 years.

61,283. The great rise of wages took place in 1873, I think?—In 1874, I think, they were highest.

61,284. In 1873 and 1874?—They would be at their highest in those years, I think.

61,285. Have the wages gone down now to a point equal to, or below, what they were before 1873 or 1874?—In some parts of South Cambridgeshire last year they went down in some cases to 9*s.* a week for the ordinary labourers. That would not be the general average, but there were cases of that sort where wages went down so low as that.

61,286. Do you know what the average wages of the county were before the great rise in 1873 and 1874?—No; I could not say that off hand, but I think there had not been anything so low as 9*s.* a week in any part of Cambridgeshire since the early fifties.

61,287. The 9*s.* was exceptional and for only a time?—Yes.

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61,288. But taking the general average of wages of late what should you say?—I must say in the first place that the wages in Cambridgeshire vary more than in any other county I know, because when you get up to the North you get the men paid very nearly as much as they are in Lincolnshire, and when you get down South you get then paid very much on the same scale as they are paid in Suffolk. There is no county that I know of where the wages vary more than they do in Cambridgeshire.

61,289. The rate of wages in the South seems to be what we may call an abnormal rate due more to the necessities of the farmer than to be the true rate of wages, because they seem to have fallen very much more than in other places, but I gather from you that they have not fallen so much in North Cambridgeshire?—No, not so much. There is a farm in North Cambridgeshire which I mentioned on page 50 showing the wages in 1874, 1884 and 1894. You will see from that that wages of all classes have practically fallen.

61,290. On the other hand, I think, I observed that one of the farm accounts that you have given from North Cambridgeshire does not show any reduction in the labour bill?—Not in the labour bill, perhaps.

61,291. That would tend to show that the wages had not fallen if the wages bill is maintained. (*Mr. Little.*) Would it not rather tend to show that it required a greater number of labourers to do the same work?—That might be.

61,292-3. (*Chairman.*) That is not the experience generally, is it, that there is a greater number of labourers employed on a farm?—At page 51, I mention a farm near Caxton, which is on the south-western side of the county, and the ordinary labourers' wages are set out there from 1873 to 1895.

61,294. I think in one part of your report you calculate the reduction which has occurred at about 13 per cent., in ordinary labourers' wages?—Yes, I think that is on page 50. I took that from actual figures in the books.

61,295. Would you not say, from your experience generally of the country, that about the year 1873 they must have risen even more than 13 per cent.?—They were gradually rising in the seventies.

61,296. From 1870 to 1873?—Yes.

61,297. Therefore the question is whether they have fallen back on the average to the position they were in before the rise took place?—I think they have fallen now to the early fifties; they have fallen lower than they were in the sixties.

61,298. Are you quite certain of that, because the reduction of 13 per cent., one would suppose, is hardly so much as the rise in the year 1873?—They are lower than they were in the sixties; at least, I worked that out for the other eastern counties, and I should say it was the same in Cambridgeshire.

61,299. If the wages have fallen 13 per cent. for ordinary labourers, that is not, I suppose, so much as the benefit they have derived from the reduced prices?—Most certainly not. They certainly have derived a very great advantage from the decreased prices.

61,300. Much more than is represented by that reduction of 13 per cent. in the actual wages?—That i should not like to say without going into the thing; but, of course, they get their flour at a 1*s.* a stone now, and 20 years ago it used to be 2*s.*

61,301. I mean measured in bushels of wheat?—They get their flour 50 per cent. cheaper than they used to.

61,302. And all the main articles of consumption?—Yes; clothes and everything else.

Cambridgeshire farmers.

61,303. I gather from your report that there are four classes of farmers in the county. There are the very large farmers, the medium-sized farmers, the small farmers, who cultivate the land themselves, and the persons who have small holdings, but who have got other occupations?—It was in Cumberland I met with that division.

61,304. Are there those different classes in Cambridgeshire, too?—I think they might fairly be divided into three classes there—the large farmer; the farmer of, perhaps, 200 or 300 acres, who is a working farmer and employs some labour and his family do some work, and the smaller farmers who are wholly dependent on their families for labour.

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61,305. Then there would be another class of persons who hold land in small amounts and who make a part of their livelihood in other ways?—Yes, there are some of those. You mean village tradesmen and that stamp of men.

61,306. Yes, or men labouring elsewhere?—I do not think the labourers have much land, except allotments.

61,307. I rather gather from your report that the large farmers have done better than medium-class farmers?—It is a question of the reserve of capital in a long series of years of depression. The larger farmers have as a rule had more capital and the depression has been going on 15 years, and the man who has had the greater reserve of capital has held on longest.

61,308. Do you think the small farmers have done better than the class above them—the larger ones, not the very large farmers, but the medium-sized farmers?—No; I think that a great many of them did not start fair. It is the case so frequently that small men borrow money—that they are in too much of a hurry to get on and they borrow money to stock their land with.

Fruit cultivation.

61,309. You say that in some parts of the county there has been a very considerable extension of fruit cultivation?—Yes, there is, and I believe it is still extending.

61,310. Does land for that purpose let easily?—Yes.

61,311. Are rents maintained there?—Yes, I think that the fruit people were doing better than anybody else, but they were complaining of foreign competition.

61,312. Is that in the neighbourhood of Wisbech and March?—Yes; but I think the greater increase has taken place in the neighbourhood of Cambridge. There is a jam factory at Histon, and that has been the means of a considerable increase in the fruit cultivation.

61,313. Is that in South Cambridgeshire?—Yes, that is close to the town of Cambridge. I saw a lot of the people there who were growing fruit, and they seemed to say they were doing better than the ordinary farmer. They did not say they were doing well.

61,314. Did you make inquiries as to what portion of the fruit used in jam factories is foreign fruit?—The factory at Histon buys no foreign fruit.

61,315. None?—No.

61,316. When you speak of the competition of fruit, you mean the competition by other jam factories, do you not?—Yes, because these people send up some to London, and, I believe, some to Manchester, and it is there they come into competition with the foreign jam.

61,317. I have been given to understand that, even in London, the great bulk of the jam is made with English fruit; with the exception of plum jam, where the proportion of foreign fruit is about 25 per cent., almost the whole of the fruit used for jam purposes in London is English fruit?—Then, of course, foreign competition affects the Cambridge people in this way, because the jam factory would tell them they could get their fruit cheaper elsewhere, and they must accept the factory prices.

61,318. Have you reason to believe that these fruit gardens are capable of extension?—Yes, they seem to think so, and they have extended them considerably. I have given the figures as to the increase.

61,319. Some of them are on a very large scale, are they not, near Wisbech?—Yes, some of them are. They grow flowers there very largely for the London markets, and bulbs, and so on.

61,320. And special vegetables?—Yes, early vegetables.

61,321. They have farms of 500 or 600 acres devoted to that, have they not?—I do not think the farms are so big as that.

61,322. Not so big?—No.

61,323. I thought I had heard of farms even up to 1,000 acres?—I did not come across any of that size.

Dairying.

61,324. Then with regard to the extension of dairying, you make some strong observations in your report about the badness of the butter, and so forth?—I met a good many farmers who thought that the butter could be very greatly improved; that they were getting a very bad price for butter, and that, in fact, foreign butter was being sold in all the Cambridgeshire towns in preference to Cambridgeshire butter. I did not hear of any organisation on the part of the farmers to remedy that state of things; as I said before, I understand that abroad the organisations rather come from the merchants than from the farmers.

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61,325. Do you consider that it is quite possible to produce good butter in Cambridgeshire?—I saw two or three leading agriculturists who said that they thought it was quite possible to raise the quality of butter sufficiently to compete with the foreigner if it was done on a different system.

61,326. Has any effort been made in the direction of factories?—No, there has not, in Cambridgeshire. The Secretary of the Eastern Counties Dairy Factory, which is near Ipswich, told me that he thought the Isle of Ely would be a very suitable place for a trial.

61,327. But nothing has been done as yet?—No.

Changes in system of cultivation.

61,328. There has been less change of cultivation in Cambridgeshire than one would have expected in consequence of the great fall in prices?—A great deal of corn is grown there still; there is no doubt about that.

61,329. Still there has been less change there than in almost every other county, I think you state?—I give the figures. I do not think there has been very much change in the cultivation. A great deal of land in the south has gone down to rough grass lately, which is worthless for all practical purposes, but that is because it has not been sown down; I think it has simply tumbled down.

Uncultivated land.

61,330. Can you state at all what proportion of land has so fallen?—No, it would be a very difficult thing to do; I have tried to get some returns about that. There were only three abandoned farms in the county, but there is no doubt that there is a large area in South Cambridgeshire which is as good as abandoned.

61,331. It is very heavy land, I suppose?—You can drive from Cambridge to Huntingdon or St. Neots and see a deplorable state of things.

61,332. Is there any attempt to deal with it in the direction of laying it down to temporary grass, and of seeding it?—No, not with bad land; I think it has been just let to go. There is no doubt that a great deal of the land in that district could be sold at 5*l.* an acre if anybody would buy it. Several land agents told me they would be very glad to sell it at 5*l.* an acre if anyone would buy.

61,333. But there has been no attempt made to use it in that way by seeding it with grass, has there?—Not with land in that direction.

61,334. Has there in other parts of the county?—Some farmers go in for temporary grasses to some extent.

Poultry farming.

61,335. Then with regard to poultry; I rather gather from you that there is not very much done in that direction?—No. The small farmers in the fens keep a good deal of poultry, but I think they sell it very badly as far as I can understand from them. The hucksters come round to the fens and they are a long way from the markets, some of them, and I think they get very low prices.

61,336. Do you think that under better organisation the thing could be made more profitable?—Yes. I could not ascertain that there was anything like the organisation that there is in some parts of Ireland, where I was with reference to the purchase of eggs, and also of poultry. It is carried on there to a very large extent by large buyers.

61,337. And also in Sussex, as I dare say you are aware?—I have heard about that. I certainly think that in some parts of the fens, small farmers get rid of their poultry and ducks for a very small sum, and somebody else gets the profit.

Agricultural Holdings' Act.

61,338. (*Mr. Clay.*) I suppose, when you went to Cambridgeshire, you found the old original system of compensation was very liberal?—They have had a custom there for a great many years of compensation, and it is adhered to in many cases still in preference to the Agricultural Holdings Act.

61,339. I think one of the witnesses you examined said that the Agricultural Holdings Act was so inferior to that compensation that it was shelved?—Yes, that is the case; the Agricultural Holdings Act is not used generally in the county.

61,340. That shows that the Agricultural Holdings Act is not liberal enough in its compensation?—Or that the custom is better.

61,341. Should the Agricultural Holdings Act not be up to the custom, even in the old-fashioned times?—Yes, it should be; it was meant to be, I suppose.

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61,342. I suppose you would like to see the Agricultural Holdings Act amended?—It is the general opinion that it requires some amendment.

61,343. Greater compensation should be given for all kinds of improvements?—I do not know about all kinds.

61,344. Improvements which go to the increased value of the holding?—There was no suggestion that permanent improvements, such as buildings, should be included.

61,345. I do not mean that at all; I am saying that the general compensation for unexhausted improvements that are going to benefit the value of the holding should be included; I suppose that is their idea, and if they had that they would be satisfied?—If there was an increased letting value do you suggest to make that the basis of compensation?

61,346. Not increased value, but the value of the holding according to the time, because there may be an increase or decrease upon the rise and fall of farm produce outside the improvements, may there not?—They did not suggest that that should be a basis of compensation. I think they want to have the compensation rather more definite than it is, and that is why, on the large estates, the tenants prefer the schedules, in which the amount of compensation is distinctly stated. I think that on those large estates, where schedules of compensation were drawn out, the tenants prefer to make such private arrangements with the landlords rather than to have the compensation indefinite and left to valuers at the end of their lease when they quit.

61,347. How long does the calculation for that compensation go back in order to give them the benefit of these improvements?—That depends on the estate.

61,348. But as far as you gathered, what do you think was the general intention over the estates at different periods; what is the general idea of compensation, how far should it extend back?—For manure or cake?

61,349. For manures and cakes, and making old grass?—I could not say that off-hand. They do not take a very great deal of interest in such questions in the eastern counties as, perhaps, they do in the north.

61,350. You have been over Northumberland, I think, and no man should have a better idea than yourself; you have heard it discussed very freely in Northumberland and on the borders?—I heard they once gave a man 20 years for lime in Northumberland, but they would not ask for that in the eastern counties.

61,351. You know perfectly well yourself that some land keeps lime from being unexhausted longer than other land?—That is the case, but I do not think that the tenant farmers in the eastern counties make such a point about the Agricultural Holdings Act, or about the compensation generally, as they do in the north.

61,352. Do you think yourself, as you know Northumberland, and perhaps know that farm you refer to, that 20 years is too long to give compensation for?—No, I should not like to say anything of the sort, because it was given by one of the best valuers in the county; but the farmers at a large meeting in Lincolnshire said they would not like to pay that as incoming tenants.

61,353. Regarding compensation, is not the contracting party the outgoing tenant and the landlord, not the incoming tenant?—If the compensation is fairly assessed it ought to be assessed on what it is worth to the incoming tenant. It does not matter whether, in the first place, the landlord pays or the incoming tenant; the incoming tenant pays eventually.

61,354. Is the landlord not the contracting party with the outgoing tenant regarding the compensation?—Under some customs, no.

61,355. I am talking about under the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Under the Agricultural Holdings Act I suppose he is.

61,356. So the incoming tenant knows nothing and has nothing to do with it?—Excepting he has got to pay eventually.

61,357. But I say, in the meantime he has nothing to do with it?—No.

Depression in Cambridgeshire.

61,358. (*Mr. Everett.*) You found the condition of agriculture in Cambridgeshire as a whole very deplorable?—Very bad, indeed; in fact, you might put South Cambridgeshire on very much the same level as Suffolk.

61,359. You found that the effects of the depression were beginning to come upon the labourers?—Yes.

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61,360. Their employment is less?—Yes, certainly, it is.

Effects on labourers.

61,361. And their wages are coming down to the lowest level in this generation?—Yes; the wages in South Cambridgeshire are very much the same as they were in West Suffolk last year.

Characteristics of soil.

61,362. (*Mr. Little.*) I think you divide Cambridgeshire roughly into three separate districts, namely, the clay, the thin soils on the chalk, and the fen?—Yes.

61,363. Would you say that the depression has been most felt on the clays, the chalk lands, and the worst description of fen land?—Yes, certainly.

61,364. Where the margin between the costs of cultivation and the value of the produce is least there there is the greatest depression?—Yes, that certainly is the case.

61,365. Affecting both the landlord and the tenant?—Yes, certainly.

Course of depression.

61,366. Does not the depression begin with the depletion of the capital of the tenant, deterioration of the land follows, and then the sequel is ruin to landlord and tenant?—Yes, I think that is the order.

Causes of depression.

61,367. Is not this sequence of events due mainly to the reduction in the value of the produce?—Yes, most certainly.

61,368. Seasons have only a temporary effect?—Yes, that is all.

61,369. But the fall in the price of produce has been continuous?—Yes, for 15 years.

61,370. There were bad seasons before, and there have been very good seasons since, 1879, as you may have heard, probably?—Certainly.

61,371. You have seen that from the farm accounts?—Certainly.

61,372. There have been very good yields of corn, and the average produce has been as great on land equally well farmed in the last 10 years as in any 10 years before, notwithstanding one or two exceptional seasons?—Yes.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

61,373. You found a number of the farmers who were not only tenant farmers, but were also occupying owners?—Yes.

61,374. And actually landlords?—Yes, who were letting land and renting land.

61,375. Letting land and renting land, and occupying land of their own?—Yes.

61,376. You would consider men of that class, perhaps, well able to look at all questions as between landlord and tenant, from different points of view, and probably likely to take a fair view?—Yes, probably, the fairest view of anybody.

61,377. You found, generally, in the county, and amongst the farmers that you met with, a great dislike to the interference of the Legislature between landlord and tenant?—Yes, there was a very strong feeling against that everywhere.

The Agricultural Holdings' Act.

61,378. It is not that they are altogether satisfied with the Agricultural Holdings Act, but that they would prefer to be outside of it?—Yes, in many instances, that is so.

61,379. Mr. Clay asked you some questions tending to show that the custom of the county was better than the Agricultural Holdings Act to go by?—I did not understand that.

61,380. I understood Mr. Clay to ask whether the tenants did not resort to the custom because it gave them a better compensation than the Act?—I rather suggested that the procedure was so much better.

61,381. That is the point I want to urge; is it not the fact that the Agricultural Holdings Act does not lay down any scale whatever of compensation?—Yes; therefore, as I said, the farmer is uncertain as to what he is going to get.

Payment of compensation by agreement.

61,382. He prefers a particular agreement to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

61,383. The certainty to the uncertainty?—Yes, because he knows pretty well the amount he is going to get, he can add it up himself.

61,384. He distinctly prefers the certainty to the uncertainty?—Yes.

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61,385. Is it not the fact—probably it came under your notice—that a great many valuations are made now under custom, although they could not legally be made?—Yes, that is so, certainly.

61,386. No notice of claim is given?—No.

61,387. The landlord raises no objection to its informality?—Quite so.

61,388. And it is done by mutual agreement; the thing is settled by arbitration?—Yes, that is it.

61,389. What is the particular procedure under the Act that the tenants wish to avoid?—Farmers, as a rule, very frequently having to give notice and having to observe certain formalities, the first thing they do is to consult solicitors when they make a claim under the Act. That claim is often made a very large one and is sent in with the consequent solicitor's costs. It may be advised, and frequently is advised—necessarily, perhaps, or unnecessarily—that witnesses are to be called. Then the landlord gets an exorbitant claim. I do not say it is always the fault of the tenant, because he leaves the matter in the hands of his solicitor, who makes it very often, perhaps, in his interests, as large as possible; the agent thinks it is exorbitant, and goes over the estate and makes up the largest counterclaim he can. I do not say it is always done, but it has been done no doubt. Witnesses are called on both sides, and it becomes a two or three or four days' trial, as if it was in a court of law, and serious costs are incurred for witnesses and the arbitrator and solicitors. Whereas under the custom, the whole thing is frequently settled in the landlord's office, with the agent, there being a scale by which the farmer can add up for himself what he is entitled to, very nearly. All the evidence from the farmers went to show that under the custom the landlord never claimed so much, and that if he thought the farmer had farmed at all well, he never claimed anything at all for dilapidations. That was the evidence given by nearly every valuer in Cambridgeshire, and by all the leading tenant farmers.

61,390. When you speak about settling in the landlord's office with the agent that would be only upon large estates?—Yes.

61,391. Upon the smaller properties there would be probably no written agreement?—No.

61,392. That would be under a particular agreement?—Yes, on rather large estates.

61,393. Where there is no agreement, even at the present time, the valuers would settle the compensation to be paid without regard to the Agricultural Holdings Act?—Yes.

61,394. Generally?—Yes; and with very much less expense.

61,395. (*Chairman.*) Are not these claims generally settled as between the incoming and outgoing tenant rather than as between the outgoing tenant and the landlord?—They would be where there was not a large estate; but on a large estate the landlord may make a definite contract with the tenant, and then the landlord would pay.

61,396. Then does he recover from the incoming tenant?—Yes, he would, I suppose. He would arrange the rent according to what he paid.

61,397. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In what way will the procedure under an agreement differ from the procedure under the Act when a tenant under an agreement sends in an exorbitant claim and the landlord sends in an exorbitant counterclaim?—Under an agreement he could not send in an exorbitant claim, because he has agreed in the agreement to send in a certain claim. There is a schedule of compensation in the agreement, and he is bound by that.

61,398. But then he could send in, probably, more than he was entitled to claim for?—That has got to be proved.

61,399. Has it not to be proved under an agreement the same as it has under the Act, and *vice versâ?*—Yes, it would have to be proved. Of course, in the agreement he is only allowed so much for cake, and he has got to show how much cake he has bought, but if he has got no agreement he may make a very much larger claim.

61,400. How; in what way?—He may, perhaps, include a great many other items which are not included in the agreement which he has made.

61,401. That he thinks he is entitled to claim for?—Yes, under the Act.

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61,402. And which are not included in the agreement?—Which are not included in the agreement.

61,403. That would show that the agreement does not go far enough, I suppose?—Not necessarily, because the agreements may be fair ones and the solicitor's view of what he is entitled to may be exorbitant.

61,404. That is in the case of the agreement?—In the case of fighting under the Agricultural Holdings Act.

61,405. May it not be the same under the agreement?—As a rule the agreements are thought to be fair. They have generally been considered by both the landlords and the tenants. These scales have been going on for a good many years, and they have been arrived at practically by arbitration between landlord and tenant.

Scales of valuation.

61,406. Now, taking the question of the scale, do not the valuers value under the Agricultural Holdings Act according to a scale?—Certainly they do; at least, certain well-known experts have laid down what is a fair scale.

61,407. Are those fair scales embodied in most agreements?—They would differ very much, because it is impossible to lay down a fair scale for the whole country.

61,408. Would the scale that is applicable—and that would be laid down by experts in different parts of the country—be embodied in the different agreements in the different parts of the country?—There are several well-known experts in the country who have given their opinion as to the life of cake and manure; but that must vary very much in the different counties, and experts in the different counties must use their judgment with reference to the soil in those particular counties in dealing with these scales. It is impossible to lay down a hard-and-fast rule for the country. I understand, in Cambridgeshire, from the farmers, that they consider that their custom is a very fair one and quite as fair as the Agricultural Holdings Act, and cheaper.

Agreements and custom.

61,409. (*Mr. Little.*) Are we not getting rather confused between custom and a particular agreement—custom is one thing and a particular agreement is another?—Quite so.

61,410. A custom is well known; an agreement is an accurately defined scale of compensation to which the tenant has agreed?—Yes.

61,411. The Agricultural Holdings Act is indefinite?—Yes; it is indefinite.

61,412. It is left to the arbitration of two individuals, or their umpire?—Yes.

61,413. Who may bind themselves by a scale which others have agreed to, or who may not?—Yes.

61,414. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Is not the custom equally indefinite?—No.

61,415. (*Mr. Little.*) May I draw your attention to paragraph 27, on page 20, where you quote a report by a committee of the Wisbech Chamber of Agriculture on the subject of custom before the Duke of Richmond's Act was passed?—Yes; I have set it out there.

61,416. Would you read it?—Yes. "In a report "drawn up in 1873 by the Tenant Right Committee of "the Wisbech District Chamber of Agriculture it is "said:—'On the whole, the custom advances in a "'direction favourable to the tenant, and it may, "'perhaps, be fairly described as equity administered "'by arbitrators. The amount of the allowances to "'the outgoing tenant is invariably ascertained by two "'valuers or their umpire. One of these valuers is "'appointed by the outgoing tenant, and one by the "'incoming tenant; but where any claim for dilapi-"'dations or breach of covenants is made by the land-"'lord, the same valuer usually acts for both landlord "'and incoming tenant. The compensation awarded to "'the outgoing tenant is always paid by the incoming "'tenant.'"

61,417. Then you put a note to that?—Yes. "I do "not understand that this is the case in all parts of the "county. Several witnesses stated: 'We look to the "'landlord to pay the compensation.'"

61,418. That was written before the Duke of Richmond's Act of 1875?—Yes.

61,419. When no permanent improvements were recognised?—Quite so.

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61,420. And it referred entirely, or almost entirely, to crops and tillages and manures?—Yes, most certainly, before the Act raised other questions.

Restrictions on cultivation.

61,421. You found that generally there was considerable freedom in cultivation?—Yes.

61,422. Even on the large estates?—Yes; there was very little discussion about restrictions.

61,423. On page 22, on the question of compensation for mismanagement, you give a clause from an agreement in force on a large estate?—Yes.

61,424. The compensation is there limited to the actual damage to the landlord or to the incoming tenant?—Yes; calculated solely upon the basis of what it would cost to put the holding in a proper state, fit for the occupation of an incoming tenant.

61,425. Was that agreement thought to be a fair arrangement?—Yes. I saw a great many of the tenants on that property, and they thought that that particular clause was a very good one.

Rates.

61,426. Upon the question of rates; you have given some information showing how much more produce it requires to pay local rates now than it did?—Yes.

61,427. That is given on page 47, where you give the figures for a farm at Elsworth, near Caxton. The rates in 1881-82 were 88*l.* 11*s.* 11*d.*, which represented 39¼ quarters of wheat; in 1893-94, the rates were 86*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*, or 2*l.* 6*s.* less in cash; but that actually represented twice the number of quarters of wheat?—Yes; that is so.

61,428. Then, is the complaint of the farmers not so much that the rates have increased as that they have increased in ratio to their capacity to bear them?—Yes; the farmer has not got so much with which to pay them. He has got to grow twice the amount of produce to pay them.

61,429. I should like to draw your attention to one statement which seems to me a little open to correction. On page 37, you give the outgoings of the Littleport Town Lands Charity, and there is a seeming increase of the rates from 7*l.* 14*s.* 3*d.* to 33*l.* 11*s.* 9*d.* Is there not some explanation required there?—Yes.

61,430. Is it not probable that, in the former period, of the 38 tenants a number of them paid the rates, and that when it was afterwards let to 134 tenants the trustees had to pay the rates?—Yes, no doubt, because they were small holdings.

61,431. At the same time they come out of the gross rent, and the nett rent has declined from 474*l.* to 262*l.*?—Yes. Those are the accounts, so to speak, of the charity as landlord.

61,432. Just as they were sent to you?—Yes.

61,433. There has not been an increase in the amount of the outgoings?—No; this is from their point of view as landlord.

Farm accounts.

61,434. With regard to these farm accounts, I should like to point out a little ambiguity which might, perhaps, be misleading to some. In the first account, on page 59, I see the note:—"Any housekeeping expenses are charged in the account." What does that mean?—That means to say that any produce—bacon or fowls or milk, and so on—which has been taken off the farm and used in the house has been entered in these accounts.

61,435. Should it not be: "No housekeeping expenses are charged in the account?"—No. Is that not right as it stands—that where any housekeeping expenses have been incurred they are put in the account?

61,436. They are accounted for in the receipts?—Yes.

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61,437. But they are not charged in the account as housekeeping expenses; I do not see any column for housekeeping expenses. What it means is that anything that is drawn from the farm for the house is credited to the receipts?—Yes, that is so.

61,438. Now, if you will turn over to page 61 you will find, "any housekeeping expenses are charged in the account," and in the items of expenditure there is the housekeeping?—It would have been better there to put "all housekeeping expenses." I rather want to emphasise the fact that both of these men had very carefully kept an account, and entered into the account anything which they had taken off the farms. Of course, as you know, in some cases it is often open to criticism.

61,439. This second account does include housekeeping in the expenditure?—It does. It would have been better to put the word "all" instead of "any" there.

Fruit cultivation.

61,440. (*Lord Rendel.*) You speak of fruit farming as being fairly prosperous in Cambridgeshire?—I should say they are doing better than the other men, and it is increasing.

61,441. It is increasing, and is already on a substantial scale?—Yes.

61,442. In the neighbourhood of Cambridge and Wisbech?—Yes.

61,443. Is there, as far as you know, any considerable market for fresh fruit?—Chiefly, in that district of Cambridge, it goes to the jam factories; no doubt in the Wisbech district they send it away to London, and I think also to Manchester.

61,444. (*Mr. Little.*) It goes almost entirely to the Midland counties; very little comes to London?—I was not aware of that.

61,445. (*Lord Rendel.*) If there is that sale of fresh fruit, then to that extent they are independent of foreign competition, I suppose?—Yes. They complain that the rates have been lowered owing to foreign competition, and that it does not pay so well as it did; but there is the fact that it has increased in area.

61,446. And also that some of these fruit farmers can live solely upon jam making?—Yes, I think certainly that some of the farmers near Cambridge with small farms do exist entirely by that.

61,447. Therefore the fruit making, if it is supported by a jam factory, is comparatively independent of a market for fresh fruit?—Yes, except of course, that foreign competition must rule the prices paid by the jam factory, because the jam factory, of course, would buy abroad if it was cheaper for them to do so; they would have the power to do so.

61,448. Besides there being instances of fair success with fruit growing in Cambridgeshire, there is the fact that fruit growing succeeds where it relies mainly upon jam factories and not upon a fresh fruit market?—Yes, I think that certainly can be said in that district.

Wages.

61,449. (*Mr. Little.*) The Chairman asked you about wages, and you said that they varied very much in the different parts of the county?—Yes.

61,450. Is it not the fact that the best wages are paid on the best land?—Yes, that is so, certainly; the highest wages are paid in the north; the highest wages paid, I suppose, are in the Peterboro' district.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

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One Hundred and Twelfth Day.

Friday, 8th November 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.

JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq.
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*

Mr. C. Matthews. 8 Nov. 1895.

Mr. CHRISTOPHER MATTHEWS called and examined.

61,451. (*Chairman.*) I believe you are a tenant farmer, residing in the neighbourhood of Chelmsford?—Yes, 7 miles west of Chelmsford.

61,452. Have you farmed in that district for some time?—I have lived there all my life. I was born on the farm where I reside.

Condition of land in witness' district.

61,453. Would you state to the Commission what is the condition of the district in which you reside?—The district where I reside is farmed pretty well, and no farm is out of cultivation there.

61,454. What is the extent of the district you speak of?—I can speak of the district from Chelmsford to Bishop's Stortford principally, and all around by Dunmow. All the Roothings of Essex, I know, pretty well.

61,455. From Chelmsford to Bishop's Stortford on the one hand?—Yes, and all round by Dunmow and Stanstead, in Essex, on the other.

61,456. And northward, how far?—As far as Braintree, north, I might say.

61,457. How many miles should you say that district goes north and south?—I should think you might say about 15 miles square.

61,458. In that district you say that farms have not gone out of cultivation?—No, I think not.

61,459. Has much land been allowed to fall back into bad grass?—Certainly not; it is quite the exception, not the rule.

Labour.

61,460. It is only here and there?—Yes. It has been a severe testing time for all farmers, and any man who was negligent, or any man who was weak under certain conditions, as for instance, with a large family, and all that, has gone to ruin. It is very sad, but they have gone. Still, the farms are taken again at a lower rent. In the immediate district where I farm, I never knew more labourers employed on the land than are employed now. In several parishes around where I reside the population is kept up, and not decreased.

Reduction in rent.

61,461. Has there been much reduction in rent?—Yes, there has been a great reduction in rent.

61,462. What should you say has been the reduction in the rent?—I should say from about 25*s.* to 15*s.*, and under exceptional circumstances from 25*s.* to 10*s.* If a gentleman had had a bad tenant on a good farm, he would have to let it for 10*s.* an acre, but if it had been kept in fair cultivation, it would have been let at 15*s.*, although that land used to be let at 25*s.*

61,463. The reduction has been from 25*s.* per acre down to 15*s.*, where the land is in fairly good cultivation, and to 10*s.* where it has been left in bad condition?—Yes. Where it has been left in bad condition I think three-fifths of the value is gone.

The letting of farms.

61,464. With that reduction, the land has generally been let again?—Yes.

61,465. Has it been taken by substantial men?—Yes, in many instances. I have not known a really substantial man, who knew his business, and stuck to it close, who has gone to ruin. It has been a very severe testing time for us all, and we have been all frightened with it; but it is not possible in the district I live in to alter the system very much.

61,466. What is the general system of cultivation there; is it mainly arable?—It is mainly arable; there are only about 15 acres of grass to 100 of arable, and that very poor.

System of cultivation.

61,467. You have not found it possible to make much alteration?—No, and we do not desire it.

61,468. The land has continued to be cultivated as arable land?—Yes.

61,469. And has continued to employ the same number of labourers?—Quite as much labour.

61,470. How have you met the difficulty of prices?—By close application and economy; that is the only way we have met it. We meant to die as hard as we could, if we were to go. We have been frightened several times, but so far we have kept on the right side of the line. I have got a large family to bring up. I have four sons farming around me now, whom I am gradually bringing into my business. They have been trying to get a living at it, and they hope to do so.

Particulars of witness' farm.

61,471. Have your four sons entered into your farms?—I have farmed in conjunction with them, but now I am getting old, and I am letting my sons take the farms.

61,472. Have some of your sons taken the farms within the last 15 years?—Yes. I have one son that I began with 13 years ago—in 1882, on a farm that was very nearly out of cultivation, and very badly done. Since that time we have drained the whole farm of 500 acres. Though we showed a great loss for a year or two we have recovered, and he is now taking a fresh lease at a reduced rent.

61,473. When you say your son drained it, do you mean that your son paid for that, or the landowner?—I was joint tenant with him. The landlord found the pipes and we drained it.

System of cultivation.

61,474. You have not been able to effect much alteration in the system of cultivation; you have not laid down much land to grass, have you?—The system which I have pursued for many years has stood the test so far, pretty well. I have many times been frightened into thinking I should have to alter it, but so far it has stood pretty well. We do not keep sheep on my land. I do not say my system is the best; because others do keep a lot of sheep. Our system is to feed bullocks, but we cannot feed them on the land. We cart all our roots off, and we produce clover, hay, and straw, for the London market, and use artificial manures largely; our soil takes artificial manures well.

Freedom of sale.

61,475. I suppose you have got freedom of sale for your farm?—Yes.

61,476. And you can sell what you like?—I have always had that.

61,477. I presume you attribute great importance to that?—Very great importance, and to living all the time under a good landlord.

61,478. You have sold clover, hay, and straw, largely in the London markets, I understand?—Yes.

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61,479. I suppose all the farmers about you have done the same?—Some follow my system; indeed, they all do more or less, but they do not all produce so much.

System of cultivation.

61,480. Then you depend for your profits more upon that, and on the feeding of cattle, than upon the sale of corn, I suppose?—It is an auxiliary, you know; it helps a bit. We have taken to rearing poultry largely the last ten years, since the corn has been cheap, and to breeding more pigs and that sort of thing. We have made little variations as we go on, but there is no great alteration in our system of farming.

Price of hay and straw.

61,481. Have you found that the price of hay in the London markets has rather improved of late years?—No. We find in the district where I live that the clover hay is worth about 3*l.* a load. It used to be worth 5*l.* a load 30 years ago, but we find we can produce it as a paying crop now at 3*l.* a load.

61,482. What has happened to the price of straw?—The dry season would help us in the sale of straw. We clear out every year, if we can, but if we cannot, we hold over.

61,483. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Surely you would not get so much straw in the dry seasons?—No; but if we have a lot of old straw to sell, a dry season helps the price up; instead of selling it at 1*l.* we have made about two guineas.

Labour.

61,484. (*Chairman.*) As regards labour; have you kept the same number of labourers on your land?—We employ as much as ever we did. I have known that district for 50 years, and I know a large number of farms round where I live, and I can say that there are quite as many men employed there as have been employed at any one time during those years.

61,485. You say that in that district, at all events, there has been no reduction in the number of labourers?—The labourers were never so well off, and there is plenty of employment for them.

Wages.

61,486. As regards wages; do you pay the same rate of wages?—I began in 1852, and the wages in my district then were 7*s.* a week; now everything is much cheaper, but we pay them 11*s.*

61,487. In the year 1852 you say that the wages were 7*s.* a week?—Undoubtedly they were in the parish in which I lived when I commenced business in 1852.

61,488. When did they begin to rise?—After Joseph Arch made his agitation. That was the grand start of it, no doubt. They have never been down so low since. They rose in the Crimean War, but they were not permanently higher till the Labourers' Union was started.

61,489. Till 1873, in fact?—Somewhere about that time.

61,490. What did they rise to then?—We have never been higher than 13*s.*

61,491. Did they rise to 13*s.* about 1873 or 1874?—Soon after that; I really cannot quite say when.

61,492. Did they go down again after that?—Yes, to 12*s.*, and then to 11*s.* They had been 12*s.* in our district until about a year ago, when things were so very cheap they were put down to 11*s.*

61,493. Is that the rate at which they are now?—That is the rate at which they are now, and we find them beer besides.

61,494. I suppose that only represents the ordinary weekly wages, and besides that they have the harvest wage?—And task work, by which they often earn more.

61,495. And privileges of various kinds?—No; there are very few privileges now. A good many of my own labourers live in my own cottages. I give them a good cottage and a rood of ground for 5*l.* a year. That is a small privilege. There is a great want in many districts of labourers' cottages. The large landowners have not done their duty in this respect; they are very much lacking.

61,496. Taking into account what is made in the harvest time, what should you say their wages are—would they be 14*s.* a week?—Somewhere about 14*s.* a week all the year round, but the stockmen's wages would come to more.

61,497. I understand there has been a reduction during the last three or four years of about 2*s.* a week?—About that.

61,498. But with that reduction would you say that the labourers are still better off than they were on account of the low prices of everything?—Certainly. I have never known them so well off and to have such comfortable homes as they have in the district in which I live. You see everything is so very cheap that they have to buy.

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61,499. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Have they not got more wages than 11*s.* a week with no privileges?—That is the regular weekly wage in our district.

61,500. (*Chairman.*) They have, of course, the harvest wage, which brings the average up to 14*s.* a week for the year?—Yes.

61,501. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How much would the harvest wage be?—They would earn about 8*l.* each man.

61,502. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) In addition to the 11*s.* a week?—That would be for the five weeks of harvest time—they would get 8*l.* for those five weeks.

61,503. (*Mr. Lambert.*) That means that they would get about 5*l.* 5*s.* extra, and that would be about 2*s.* a week all the year round?—Yes. If a man is a stockman you would pay his weekly wages in the same way, and then give him 5*l.* extra.

61,504. (*Chairman.*) What is the size of your farm?—My sons and I, together, farm between 1,500 and 1,600 acres.

Rent of witness' farm.

61,505. What is the rent you pay on that?—The farm on which I live, and where I have lived all my life, is about 250 acres. I have always paid 1*l.* an acre for it up to this time. I have a very good homestead, and I have always lived under an excellent landlord.

61,506. Has a pound an acre been the rent you have always paid?—I have paid it up to this time. I am now re-hiring it at 17*s.*

61,507. (*Mr. Everett.*) Did you not pay more than the pound in the high times?—Yes, I did pay about 25*s.* at one time.

61,508. (*Chairman.*) Then it went down from 25*s.* to 1*l.*, and you took a lease of it?—I took a lease of it.

61,509. That lease has now expired, and you are negotiating for it at 17*s.*?—Yes; my landlord very kindly let the last few years of my lease go, and he allowed me off several pounds a year which brought it down to 1*l.* an acre.

61,510. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Did you pay the tithe for it?—It was tithe free, except a small portion which just equals the rent of cottages on the farms.

61,511. (*Chairman.*) You are now going to renew the lease at 17*s.*?—Yes.

61,512. (*Viscount Cobham.*) For 21 years?—No, for 14 years. It is in trust so they will only give me a lease for 14 years.

Result of witness' farming.

61,513. (*Chairman.*) I understand that by selling hay and straw in the London market, and by devoting yourself more to poultry, and so forth, and by strict economy, you have been able to make the two ends meet?—I have had a large family, and I have had nothing else to live upon, so I must.

61,514. You have been able to put your sons on other farms?—I have kept the right side of the line.

61,515. Would you say there are many other farmers in the district who have done as you have done?—Certainly; I am not an exception, Oh, dear no!

Mr. Hunter Pringle's report.

61,516. Then the description which Mr. Hunter Pringle has given of the district in the south-east of Essex does not apply to your district?—It does not apply to my district. I do not say it is exaggerated. I read it very carefully; I know something of that district, and I do not say Mr. Hunter Pringle's report was exaggerated. But I would not have a farm in that neighbourhood of 500 acres if they would give it me. If I were only 25 years of age and had got plenty of capital I would not go into that district if they gave me a farm.

61,517. You do not in the least dispute the accuracy of Mr. Pringle's account of the district he inquired into?—I do not think it is exaggerated.

61,518. All you say is that it must not be taken as typical of the whole of Essex?—No, it must not.

61,519. With reference to the district with which you are acquainted especially, namely, that between Chelmsford and Bishop's Stortford, and so forth, although they have suffered from the low prices, and although rents have been reduced, yet the general condition is very different from that described by Mr. Hunter Pringle? Very different.

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61,520. Do you know that other district in which the gentleman lives who came here with you a few days ago?—I know it very well, indeed.

Character of land near Chelmsford.

61,521. That is on the other side of Chelmsford, is it not?—That is very superior land near to Chelmsford, and he is a remarkably able man who farms it. He makes large returns from it.

61,522. We were unfortunately unable to persuade him to come with you to-day and give his evidence at the same time that you do. Do you know the district in which he lives?—I know it very well.

61,523. That differs somewhat from your district, I think, in regard to the quality of the soil?—It is just on the other side of Chelmsford.

61,524. It is somewhat different in the quality of the soil, is it not?—It is much lighter land, much richer, and naturally, is better soil altogether. It carries more stock. He deals very largely in stock.

61,525. Of what extent is that district?—It lies around Chelmsford for some miles; but it is very peculiar. The soils vary very materially in some places. I do not think this applies far off Chelmsford, only to 2 or 3 miles round Chelmsford, and to the land that that man is farming, who came with me the other day.

61,526. Then that light soil does not cover a very large district?—No. I think his case is exceptional, and he thinks so himself.

61,527. The few who are living round him appear to being doing well also?—A good deal of it about there is very capital grazing land.

System of cultivation in witness' district.

61,528. What is the quality of your soil, is it clay?—It is a chalky clay subsoil. It is porous. The land that Mr. Hunter Pringle went over is not porous, and supposing there comes a wet day, and a horse treads on it, it holds the water like a basin. Ours is not land like that. It pays well for draining, and we farm it without furrows.

61,529. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you farm it on the flat?—We farm it all on the flat; we use the steam plough.

61,530. (*Chairman.*) Have you seeded part of the land and grown temporary grasses or not?—We occasionally take a crop of sainfoin, but not more than that. I believe in the cultivation of our land the rotation of crops is a very great thing. I have a system of my own, which I work out as far as the rotation goes. We can only grow the red clover once in nine years.

61,531. Do you grow wheat mainly, or barley?—We have a proportion of wheat and barley, rather than rely on wheat generally; but of late years we have been careless about it, and have grown oats or anything like that, because the price of wheat has been so very low.

61,532. In fact, you have got, I suppose, complete freedom of cropping, and you can do what you like?—Yes, I have had that for years. A tenant cannot hurt his landlord without hurting himself; if he is a wise man he would soon find that he could not, by bad farming, hurt his landlord without hurting himself.

61,533. Have you fed much of the corn that you have produced yourself?—Yes. I have stones and a steam-engine of my own. Last year, when I could not sell it, and we were buying offal dearer per ton than we were making of the wheat, we set to work and ground the wheat up directly. In these days one must always have his eye open to an advantage or he cannot possibly think of living.

Labourers' cottages.

61,534. Then, with regard to the labourers' cottages; is there a great demand for them in your district?—I think the large landowners have not thought enough of them. I am a member of the Chelmsford Board of Guardians, and the medical officer there was complaining of the want of good cottages. We got a return from all the parishes in that union, which showed that it was the small owners who had got the cottages, and that there were large farms of 350 acres with no cottages on them.

61,535. Do you think they are much needed?—The labourers now will not go as far to work as they used 40 years ago; they expect to be nearer their work.

Tithe.

61,536. You said just now that your own farm was tithe free?—Yes.

61,537. I suppose that is the exception?—Yes.

61,538. Generally, the farms about you are subject to tithe?—Yes, unfortunately. I have 200 acres of my own which I bought for purposes of occupation in the years gone by; that is titheable, and pays a high tithe; that is, 6*s.* an acre.

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61,539. Then, besides the farm you hire, you have 200 acres of your own?—Yes, but that is included in the 1,500 or 1,600 acres.

61,540. Do you farm that 200 acres yourself?—I farm it myself.

61,541. That is subject to tithe, you say?—Yes, 6*s.* an acre. I have had to write my farm down 50 per cent. in my balance sheet, but my tithe has only gone down 25 per cent. I think that is a real grievance.

61,542. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the rent of that land, exclusive of the tithe?—When the tithe was assessed it was supposed to be——

61,543. No, now?—I farm it myself.

61,544. What do you consider to be the value?—If I wanted to let it, I should find a difficulty in making more than 10*s.* an acre from rent, and they take 4*s.* 6*d.* an acre for the tithe.

Land tax.

61,545. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What is the land tax on that farm?—The land tax would be 1*s.* 9*d.* in the pound for that parish, I think, but I am not quite sure. If a farm is kept in good cultivation—this is another grievance with a man who farms his land well—the farmer is always assessed higher; he has to pay more land tax. I know of a farm near to this one of mine that is not cultivated half so well, although it is just the same sort of land; it has gone down in the rate book to about 10*s.* an acre, and possibly mine stands at 17*s.*, and so I pay more land tax, more school board rates, and the school board rates are very heavy in my district. But the tithe I do feel an especial grievance. I have been obliged to write my land down in my balance sheet 50 per cent. I am upon the best of terms with every tithe owner in the district, and I have never had a halfpenny reduction from any one of them; but I do feel it a grievance that my tithe has only gone down 25 per cent., when my land has gone down the 50 per cent.

Tithe.

61,546. (*Mr. Lambert.*) When did you buy the land?—I bought it in pieces for the purposes of occupation.

61,547. When?—30 or 40 years ago. I bought it in pieces; I bought the last in 1870.

61,548. I do not wish to press you, but would you care to state the price you gave for it per acre?—I am not at all ashamed to. I have had 200 acres of this land, and it stood on my balance sheet at 7,600*l.* for a long time, and I thought it was worth 8,000*l.*, but now I have got it down to 3,500*l.*

Land tax.

61,549. (*Chairman.*) What is the union you live in; is it the Chelmsford union?—Yes.

61,550. Is the rate in the pound of the land tax increased?—It has increased.

61,551. Because the valuation of the land has fallen? Yes; some land is not kept in so good a state of cultivation as other land. There are large farms in this parish which are only rated at 10*s.* I know of a big farm of 340 acres near to mine, and it is rated at about 10*s.*, but mine is rated at 17*s.*; consequently I am assessed higher for the land tax.

61,552. I suppose, in order to levy the quota within the hundred, they have had to raise the rate in the pound?—Yes, and it falls heavily upon cottagers and small owners.

61,553. What is the lowest rate in the pound of the land tax that you recollect?—I think about 15*d.*; I think it has gone up 6*d.* in the pound.

61,554. In consequence of the fall in the value of land generally?—Yes; in consequence of the lower rateable value of a good deal of the land.

61,555. That constitutes an especial hardship, does it not; the rateable value of your land is kept up in order to pay for the deficiency of other land, and the rate in the pound has been raised, and, therefore, the charge upon your farm is higher?—Yes, it falls very heavily upon those who do their duty and keep the land in cultivation.

School board rate.

61,556. Is there a school board in the parish?—Yes, I pay to two school boards a very high rate; it is 1*s.* 4*d.* in the pound in the parish in which I live, because there we had to build.

61,557. What are the poor rates in your parish?—We have 2*s.* this half year; that includes the school board rate, and in fact it includes all the rates.

61,558. Then your rates are 4*s.* in the pound, of which 1*s.* 4*d.* is the school board rate?—Yes; they have not exceeded 4*s.* in the pound, and that includes the highway rate, the sanitary rate, and all of them.

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61,559. But for the school board rate it would be 2*s.* 8*d.* ?—I think the school board rate has been 1*s.* 2*d.*, but we had to borrow money, and the inspector came down the other day and said we had not room enough. I like to see the children educated; I am quite in favour of education, but we had to build a class-rooms, and that puts another 2*d.* rate on.

61,560. On your farm, of which you are the owner, you have a 4*s.* rate; you have a tithe of 4*s.* 6*d.*, and land tax of 1*s.* 9*d.* ?—I think it is about that. I am not quite certain of the figures of that. I know it is 1*s.* 9*d.* in the pound for that parish, but I am not quite sure that I am rated at 1*l.* on that farm; I think I am rated at 17*s.*

Poultry farming.

61,561. Do you breed poultry on a large scale?—Yes.

61,562. What profit do you consider you make?—We do not keep quite correct accounts with regard to poultry, but off 500 acres of land, I sold last year 185*l.* worth of poultry. I think they were the most profitable of anything we had.

61,563. The most profitable of anything you produced?—Yes; but they are a very great deal of trouble, and they want a great deal of supervision.

61,564. Still they give a greater profit than other things?—I think they were the most profitable things we had, perhaps.

61,565. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Were there many turkeys among them?—No, they were all chickens. We adopt this system: when they get to be as large as pigeons, we have houses to take them into—about 200 or 300 to each house, and move them into the fields.

Butter making.

61,566. (*Chairman.*) Do you make any butter?—No.

61,567. Is any butter made in that district?—Very little, indeed.

61,568. Do you think it is a district where butter could be made with advantage?—All things are possible to very shrewd practical men, but it is a great deal of trouble and bother, and I am too old a man to think about it.

Dairying.

61,569. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You do not think there could be more arable dairying in Essex than there is?—I do not think ours is a district where it could be done much; the pasture is very poor.

Thaxted district.

61,570. Do you include in your area the district about Thaxted?—I should say that is about the same sort of land, but I do not know much about Thaxted.

61,571. We have heard some very strong evidence from the Guy's Hospital people about the depreciation of land in that neighbourhood; they must be near your district—it is Great Bardfield and about there?—That is about the same sort of land, but I am not very well acquainted with that district.

61,572. There is one large farm there that is let for only the amount of the tithe; but you say you are not very well acquainted with it?—That has been in the hands of a Cornishman. There is one at Stebbing, I heard, of 560 acres, just now let for 100*l.*, but then it had been allowed to get into a bad state of cultivation.

61,573. You do not wish to speak particularly of that district?—No, I do not think I can.

Particulars of witness' farming.

61,574. You and your sons, I understand, are farming 1,500 or 1,600 acres?—Between 1,500 and 1,600 acres, I and my sons are.

61,575. Have you started them all in business then?—I have.

61,576. Have you started them from what you have made in farming?—I have. I started in 1852 on a small farm.

61,577. You have been a farmer and nothing else all your life?—I have never had any money left me; I have had to make it up somewhere.

61,578. You have reared all your sons in the same business?—Yes; I took care when the times were good, you know.

61,579. Are these 1,500 or 1,600 acres nearly all arable?—Yes, exactly the same sort of land as I farm. One son has 340 acres nearer Chelmsford than I am, but the other is a little farther off, up in Good Easter.

Farming capital.

61,580. What do you consider a proper amount of capital to embark a young man on a farm with?—You cannot do with less than 10*l.* an acre, and you can put more into it.

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61,581. You think that 10*l.* is the minimum with which it is prudent to start?—I do not think you ought to start with less. Capital is not everything; it is the man who uses the capital that is the main thing Some men will go into a farm and do it well on much less capital than another man who may have great capital and yet go to ruin.

Farming by witness' son.

61,582. When did your first son start in farming?—20 years ago. I took a farm in conjunction with him at Chignel Hall, near Chelmsford.

61,583. Before the depression set in?—I took it in a frightfully high year, and lost a lot of money on it for one year or two.

61,584. On a lease?—No; we took it on a two years' notice to quit.

61,585. I presume there has been a large reduction of rent there?—I had a clause in the agreement which protected me with regard to the draining. It is on Colonel Bramston's estate, and it fell into the hands of trustees, and they had got no money. It was a wet farm, so I bought all the pipes to drain it, and I had, as I say, a clause which protected me; so if they turned me out within a certain time, I had to be paid for the pipes according to valuation.

61,586. You have no complaint to make as to the want of security, have you?—It was a little bit of a risk, but they have been very good to sink the rent as it went along. It was a very tough time for my son at first.

Agricultural Holdings' Act.

61,587. Is there any feeling against the Agricultural Holdings Act; do you think there is an inadequate amount of security provided under it?—We should be glad of more security, perhaps, but I think if good feeling exists between landlord and tenant that is much better. I should like to see more in the Act, perhaps, but if a good landlord had a rogue as tenant, he would be robbed; a good honest tenant ought to be protected. It is a very difficult question to answer. I have had no difficulty with the landlords at all.

Rent.

61,588. I suppose the rent of the farm your son took 20 years ago has been largely reduced?—We took it at a high time, and it has come down nearly 50 per cent.

61,589. What from?—I think, at first, he paid tithe on that, and it came to something like over 32*s.* or 33*s.* an acre; now he hires it at 17*s.* tithe free. We drained the farm at our own expense, and I ventured 1,000*l.* in the draining of it.

61,590. Do you consider that at the rent you and your sons are holding these 1,500 or 1,600 acres, that you can get on?—We hope that as we have got on so far we shall weather it now. I have got a young son at home, about 23, who is taking my own farm. He is going in with me this Michaelmas, and I am just having the lease prepared.

61,591. Do you think we have touched the bottom?—I hope we have.

Carriage of produce.

61,592. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Is where you live, or where your farms are, within what you call driving distance of London? Do you send your produce up to London and bring back manure with your own waggons and carts?—No, it is too far for that.

61,593. Do you send your produce by rail?—Until recently I used to sell all to a dealer who carried it up by carts; but of late years we have put it all on to the railway. The freights are less than they were. We generally take it all to Chelmsford, and put it on to the railway there.

Market-gardening.

61,594. Do you do a little of what may be called market gardening; I mean growing early greens, or anything of that sort?—Nothing of that sort at all. We are too far off; and as we cannot get the extra labour when we want it, we are precluded from going into that. There are a good many peas grown where I live; but my own farm is too far off, and I cannot grow picking peas because it is so very inconvenient to put them on to the railway at night.

61,595. You farm, then, according to what I may call common agriculture?—Yes; I have a system of my own.

Dairying.

61,596. Have any of your neighbours tried dairying upon the arable farms?—It has not been tried in the district where I live at all, only here and there a little—not much; I do not think it could be made to pay in my district.

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61,597. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) What is the nature of your soil, is it light or heavy?—It is a clay subsoil. The district that I am speaking of is nearly all on a chalky clay subsoil.

Character of soil.

61,598. Is it what they call four-horse land?—No, we plough with two or three horses. We use the steam plough after a harvest.

Price of hay and straw.

61,599. Can you say what has been the reason that hay has so depreciated in price?—It is the foreign competition, no doubt.

61,600. That does not apply to straw, I think?—They get the peat moss, which competes with straw; and I think they do get importations of foreign straw also.

Price of poultry.

61,601. What price do you get for your poultry?—We begin to sell them early to people in the neighbourhood who buy them, and perhaps the first lot would make about 3*s*. Then we get half-a-crown each; we never sell them under half-a-crown. At Christmas they make a little more, and after that again a little more.

61,602. Does the poulterer to whom you sell send them to London or Chelmsford?—They all go to London.

61,603. Is the nearness to Chelmsford any advantage to you?—Not other than that we draw supplies from there; it is, of course, an advantage to be near a town. We do not sell many things there.

Position of farmers.

61,604. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Are the farmers in your district saving money now?—I do not see how they can; I should say decidedly not.

61,605. But in former years they did?—They had an opportunity of doing so.

61,606. Some of them who kept on like yourself, I presume, did?—I certainly saved money in former years, or I should not have been where I am now.

61,607. You find a considerable difference in the amount you can save now and what you could save formerly?—I do not say that I can save at all. I never said that, I said I keep on the right side of the line.

Mr. Hunter Pringle's report.

61,608. None of this district of which you have spoken is included in Mr. Hunter Pringle's map I think, is it?—No, he did not come into our district at all. He came to Chelmsford, but he did not come to my side of Chelmsford.

61,609. I think he reported on your district. He says: "Although there can be no doubt that under "liberal treatment and well-timed cultivation the mixed "soils of Ongar, Chelmsford, Maldon and Braintree, "have hitherto produced admirable crops, still I wish "it to be understood that in the most favourable "seasons they are expensive to work, and that in the "great majority of cases success or failure is decided "by the character of the season." Do you think that is a fair description of it?—Yes, I think it is. Of course the seasons do vary exceedingly, and a man that cannot stand one bad season will go to ruin.

61,610. You do not disagree with what he has said of the Chelmsford district, so far as he has referred to it in his report?—No; I read it carefully, and I did not disagree with much that he said.

61,611. Do you consider that in the district which he speaks of as being in such a deplorable condition there is any hope of a revival?—I can see no hope at all.

61,612. You would not farm it yourself on any consideration?—I would not be compelled to farm there if I were 25 years of age and they gave me a farm. I have always taken a great dislike to it. I had a friend who farmed down at Woodham Ferris at one time, and I know something of the land.

Assessment to rates.

61,613. Then, on the question of the rates; have the assessments in your union been reduced in proportion to the reduction in the rents?—The land pays even now more than its annual value. I was on the assessment committee of the Chelmsford union for a long time.

61,614. What do you precisely mean by the annual value?—Above the actual letting value—above the rent.

61,615. The rateable value is above the rent, you say?—Yes, above the letting value. I went about a farm only the other day, and I could not get it put down to my rent.

61,616. Then the 4*s*. in the £ that you now pay in rates on your rateable value is considerably more than 4*s*. on your rent?—It is more, but not considerably more; and I did not say considerably more.

61,617. It is more than 4*s*. on the rent?—Yes, it is more.

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61,618. If you had a fair rateable value, what would it come to, that is to say, to what extent do you consider you are over-assessed?—I think the land, taking it as a whole, from what I know of it, is all assessed above its real annual value at the present time.

61,619. Above its gross value?—Yes.

61,620. Of course, the rateable value ought to be considerably less than the gross?—Certainly.

61,621. About what per-centage do you consider it is over assessed? Can you form any estimate?—The general complaint of persons in the towns is that the land does not pay enough; but if the Act of Parliament is to be interpreted as meaning at the present annual value, it all pays too much. I am not prepared to give the figures; but I am quite certain that in every instance it pays too much in many parishes. On my son's farm we consented, for the sake of living peaceably with our neighbours, to be rated a little above the rent, because others could not get their's down.

61,622. You mean the rateable value is above the rent?—The gross.

61,623. I mean the nett?—The gross value in the rate book is certainly above the rent, and the rateable value is above the rent.

61,624. (*Chairman.*) Take your own farm that you hire, which is 1*l*. an acre, what is that assessed at?—I think that is pretty fairly assessed.

61,625. What is it assessed at?—It is as much as my rent, about 1*l*. an acre.

61,626. I suppose when you renew your lease and get it reduced to 17*s*., the assessment will be reduced in proportion?—Yes; but I could not get the assessment reduced enough. I have got a very good homestead where I live; but I have got a hundred acres of that farm without the homestead, lying in another parish; and they would not put the assessment on that land down. The homestead is rated with my other land, but they would not put these hundred acres with no homestead on it down at less than I hire all my land. I went before the assessment committee the other day, and I got a paper the other morning in which they take it at just the same value as my whole farm.

61,627. That is obviously unjust; the part of the farm which has got a homestead upon it is rated in one parish, and the bit of land in the other parish which has got no homestead upon it, is rated at the same?—Yes, equal to my rent.

61,628. That is obviously unjust?—Yes.

61,629. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Why does this practice prevail; whose doing is it?—It is very difficult to say. There are members of the assessment committee who have large interests in the towns, and they are continually kicking against the reduction of the land assessment.

61,630. Are not the rural guardians in the Chelmsford union more numerous than the urban guardians?—Yes, but on the assessment committee the proportion is about equal, I think.

61,631. You think it is a question as between town and country?—I think it is.

Rotation of crops.

61,632–3. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What rotation of crops do you follow?—Mine is a peculiar rotation of my own.

61,634. Would you mind giving it to us?—I grow barley after wheat. I always take all my barley the next year after wheat. I do not mind a restriction of not more than two white straw crops, but I will not be restricted more than that.

61,635. Do you let your land down to seeds for several years?—Certainly not, never any except a bit of sainfoin.

61,636. Would you mind giving us the rotation?—On 500 acres of land? Mine is a nine years' system, and I do not know the proportion.

61,637. I do not want the proportion; I only want you to take a given acre of land, and to tell us what crops succeed one another?—I should start with clover, then wheat, barley, beans, wheat, barley, then mangolds.

61,638. So you would take what they call five straw crops in succession, would you not, like that?—No, that is not taking more than two.

61,639. (*Mr. Everett.*) Beans are not a white straw crop are they?—Beans are not a white straw crop.

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After the mangolds it gets a bit foul. I did not for a long time use a fallow, but I take a fallow now after mangolds—it is a very peculiar way of fallowing, and then I grow wheat again, and clover.

61,640. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Can you get clover unless you have a crop of roots preceding the corn crop?—Yes, we can get clover if we do not take it more than once in nine years.

61,641. Sown in after two or three straw crops?—Clover is a splendid preparation for crops following if the land is clean; in the district where I live we are pestered with wild oats and charlock, which are held in check by growing roots and then fallow. When the land goes down to roots it is getting foul, and the next year we give it a long fallow. I have only adopted that system within the last 10 years, because labour has got dear.

61,642. You give it a summer fallowing in order to clean it?—Yes.

61,643. After the mangolds?—Yes.

61,644. My question is, that you could not let land down to clover without a previous preparation—a previous cleaning, either by roots or fallow?—That is the preparation we give it. There is this long fallow after the roots, and then we put it into wheat, and then clover.

61,645. (*Mr. Everett.*) You sow the clover in the wheat in the spring?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farm.

61,646. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Coming back to your own farm; you say it is about 200 acres, and some years ago it was worth about 8,000*l.*?—Yes.

61,647. That, at 25 years' purchase, would be 32*s.* an acre?—Yes.

61,648. Now it has gone down to 10*s.* an acre?—It has not a good residence on it, as I am farming it off-hand, but there are good buildings for stock, and so I dare say I should not make more than 10*s.* an acre if I wanted to let it.

61,649. So that land has gone down considerably more than 50 per cent.?—I have written it down in my balance sheet at 50 per cent. I would not take 10*s.* for it. I think it would be worth perhaps 15*s.*, but it would certainly not let for more than 15*s.* an acre.

Cattle breeding.

61,650. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) What kind of live stock do you keep on your farm?—We keep a few cows and bullocks, generally. We are buying them now, and we feed them in the winter.

61,650*a*. I suppose you do not breed any cattle?—No, we breed pigs.

61,651. At what age do you buy your store cattle?—We are buying them from 10*l.* to 12*l.*, or 13*l.* to 14*l.* each.

61,652. What breed of cattle are they?—We go down to St. Ives' market. My son went down last week and bought 50. We do not profess to do without farmyard manure.

61,653. Are they mostly Irish cattle?—Or the better bred home-bred sometimes; but you cannot get them always.

Production of wheat.

61,654. How many quarters of wheat per acre do you reckon your land will produce?—I think we have got five quarters of wheat this year; we like to see six better, and we often get it.

61,655. Can you tell us what it costs to produce five quarters of wheat per acre?—No, I cannot go into that. I do not think any man in business can tell where his profits come from, if he makes any. If he finds his system pays he values it by his past experience and goes on.

61,656. But you can strike some kind of average; how much would be the average?—We do not know. When wheat does not make more than 6*l.* an acre, or 5*l.* an acre, we cannot get much out of it. Last year I was very much frightened; I thought we had not had such an experience. We found the compensation help us a good bit, we were buying everything we fed our stock on so much cheaper that we found at the end that the compensation did help us more than we expected.

Character of Essex soils.

61,657. What is the difference between the land in your district and the land described by Mr. Hunter Pringle?—There is a vast difference. One has a nasty, soapy, loamy subsoil, and ours is a calcareous clay. Ours is tolerably porous, though we cannot go on to it in the wet. If we do not poach our land it is always porous. We have to be careful what way we cultivate it, otherwise the wet would not get into the drains, and we can do nothing without draining; that is the beginning of all good farming in our neighbourhood.

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Drainage.

61,658. Of course, the land Mr. Hunter Pringle describes cannot be drained?—No; and in the wet season, in that soil, it will not get into the drains, because the land is not porous. I farm all my land on the flat, and I never make any water furrows at all; but if they were to attempt that on the land that Mr. Hunter Pringle went over, it would be worth nothing at all.

61,659. (*Mr. Everett.*) At what depth do you drain the land?—About 30 inches from the surface, and 27 feet from each drain, we dig them 2 feet.

61,660. In the neighbourhood of Chelmsford there is a great deal of cow-keeping, is there not?—Yes.

Milk selling.

61,661. Have you observed that the men who keep cows and sell milk, do much better than those who farm on other systems?—We have not many cow-keepers just near me; the gentleman who was with me the other day keeps 100 cows and bullocks too—he is near to the station—and a great many others do about there. But there are a great many Scotchmen who have taken farms near me, and they do not employ as many men as we do under the old system. I have looked out to see if I could get any idea from them to improve upon, but I really cannot say that I have, so far as I have seen them.

61,662. They do not produce nearly so much out of the land, do they?—They have set us a very good example by the way they live and work; they have set us a splendid example in that way.

61,663. That is, if it is to be desired that our life should be a life of hard toil and hard pinching?—You cannot starve a Scotchman, I think, that is my experience.

Poultry farming.

61,664. What kind of labour do you use for the fowls where you keep them extensively—women, lads, or men?—We generally have one or two cottagers who rear them, and then when they get a certain size they are taken away. We make a bargain with the cottagers, and then we have stock-men, or the lads about the farm who feed them and see after them. They require great attention. Unfortunately they rear foxes in the district where I live, so we have to have everything fox-proof. I would tax fox hunters; I wish they were taxed in my neighbourhood if they want to tax anything.

61,665. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Do you cram your chickens?—No.

Result of witness' farming.

61,666. (*Mr. Everett.*) If you had been sold off 15 years ago would you not have been worth more than if you were sold off to-day?—No, I do not think I should.

61,667. You think you have succeeded in keeping your capital intact?—Yes.

61,668. In spite of the depreciation of your estate and of the stock on your farm?—Yes, I know I have done so. I take an accurate balance sheet every year of my life.

61,669. I must say that I heartily congratulate you. Do you know the Tendring Hundred of Essex, at all?—No, I do not know much of that except by report; I have never been in that district.

61,670. It is supposed to be the most fertile part of the county, is it not?—The Tendring Hundred would apply to Hedingham, and that way.

61,671. Near Harwich?—I know very little of that at all.

Value of land.

61,672. Your own land, which you own, has depreciated something like half in value, I think?—Quite that, I believe. I did not wish to own land, but 40 years ago you could not get it. I bought it for purposes of occupation.

61,673. Everybody at that time thought land was the securest investment in England, I believe?—Yes, they did.

61,674. And that nothing could put it down?—I have had to write it off in my balance sheet, and I know many sad instances where persons did that and have been utterly ruined.

61,675. Of course, really the depreciation of the selling value of land is about the most fearful testimony that we can have of the bad state of agriculture in the county?—It sells very badly in the district in which I live, there is no demand for it at all.

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61,676. It sells so badly because no one can see their way to buying it at more and making interest on their money?—I think one great thing that operates there is, that they do not know how to farm it. They would be glad to invest their money in land if they knew how to keep it in cultivation; but they do not know how to do that without losing money.

Assessment to rates.

61,677. (*Chairman.*) Are your farmhouse and farm buildings assessed separately from the land?—The house is, but I think the buildings go with the land.

61,678. The house is separate?—Yes, the house and the appurtenances belonging to the house are separately assessed.

61,679. I suppose there is a sanitary rate?—The sanitary rate comes out of that.

61,680. Therefore, the land in regard to the sanitary rate, gets assessed at one-fourth its value?—That is it.

61,681. For that purpose the house must be rated separately?—It is done so in our union.

61,682. What is your house rated at?—I cannot exactly say what it is rated at. It is not very high, because I am 7 miles from the railway, and it would not let for anything. I dare say I am, perhaps, rated at 20*l.* or 25*l.* for my house.

61,683. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do they make you pay house tax?—Yes, I think I pay house tax; but it would not let, no one would hire it.

Judicial rents.

61,684. (*Chairman.*) Is there any feeling in your district among the farmers in favour of judicial rents—that is, of having rents determined by an independent authority?—I do not think there is at all.

61,685. You are not yourself in favour of that?—I am not; I like a good feeling to exist between landlord and tenant. I have lived upon the best of terms with my landlord all my life, and I like that good feeling to exist between landlord and tenant. I do not want any hard-and-fast lines for this.

61,686. You do not wish it to be left to someone else?—No.

61,687. You and your landlord can settle the matter?—I think the landlords have got such a lesson from this through bad tenants that they will not want any laws to protect the tenants for the next generation. I think a good tenant now is valued if they get him.

61,688. There has been a consequent clearing off of weak men?—No doubt there has been everywhere. No doubt the farms would not have gone down in rent and everything else if it had not been so.

61,689. The weak men have gone?—Yes.

61,690. The bad farmers, and so forth?—The sporting characters and those who neglected their business have all gone.

61,691. Those who are left are the practical men?—Yes, it has done that, undoubtedly.

Assessment to income tax.

61,692. (*Mr. Everett.*) You told the Chairman that agricultural land, in your union, is assessed at above its rentable value as a whole?—That is my experience.

61,693. Do you know whether that is the case generally in Essex, and in the eastern counties?—I cannot speak for anything beyond my own union; I know it is in my own union.

61,694. It is the case there?—Yes.

61,695. And the assessment which the surveyor of taxes makes of the land; is that, do you consider, reliable evidence of the real value of the land, or is that considerably above it?—It is no reliable evidence at all, I think. The land tax is assessed on the poor rate.

61,696. I am not speaking of the land tax, I am speaking of the income tax, under Schedule A.?—They often take it above its value; I should say they all take it above its value.

61,697. That is your opinion?—That is my opinion.

61,698. (*Chairman.*) Have you paid income tax upon your land?—I have paid it every year of my life; I have never appealed off.

61,699. You have never claimed exemption?—Never; my son did on the 500 acres of land when he took it in the first two years. We had to drain it, and at the end of two years we showed a very heavy loss.

61,700. I suppose, up to this year, you have paid upon one-half of your rent?—Yes, I have paid whatever I have been charged.

61,701. I suppose you are aware that now you are entitled to claim exemption, if you do not make that profit?—I was quite aware of it, but I could not conscientiously do it.

61,702. You could not conscientiously do it?—I could not.

61,703. Therefore, we may assume that up to this year your profit on the average has always been one-half of the rent?—I hope so; there would not be much to live for if that were not so.

61,704. I mean that is a fair deduction?—I have never appealed off.

61,705. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you said the assessment of your farmhouse was 25*l.*?—Yes.

61,706. Can you tell me what the rest of the farm is, so that I may see what proportion the one bears to the other?—No, I cannot give you the figures, I am sorry to say. I am under the impression that the gross is more than my rent.

61,707. What I mean is, what proportion does the farmhouse bear to the whole farm?—There are 250 acres of land. The gross would be about 250*l.*, and it is 25*l.* for the house.

61,708. That is about a tenth?—Yes.

Scotch farmers in Essex.

61,709. (*Chairman.*) Do you know anything of the Scotch farmers?—Yes, there are a great number near me, who are very respectable.

61,710. (*Mr. Clay.*) How have they done?—They set us a splendid example, because they work hard and spend little, but I do not think we can see much improvement from following their system at all.

61,711. (*Chairman.*) As compared with yourself, that is to say?—And with several of my neighbours. I am not alone in the district in which I farm.

61,712. You yourself appear not to have followed the four-course system rigidly?—No, I do not believe in it.

61,713. Do the Scotch farmers do the same?—They do the same.

61,714. (*Mr. Clay.*) Are the Scotch farmers keeping more stock than the English farmers?—Certainly not; and they do not employ half the labour, as far as I know.

61,715. But they work hard?—They work hard.

61,716. And are very economical?—Very economical; they are very respectable in that way; they set a splendid example to all our young people.

61,717. That is often the true root of success in farming is it not, economy and hard working?—Yes, I think it is.

Light railways.

61,718. (*Chairman.*) Do they seem to be doing well?—No, I can hardly say that.

61,719. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Do you say your house is 7 miles from a railway station?—Yes.

61,720. Is most of your land equally badly situated in that respect?—Yes; all the land I farm is. Some is a mile nearer the railway, but that is all.

61,721. Yet you find it pays you to send most of your stuff up to London?—Yes, we have got no other market for it.

61,722. Would light railways benefit you very much?—I cannot think they would. We draw our supplies from Chelmsford, and we manage to load back sometimes. I hardly know about the light railways; I am not much in favour of them. I think, perhaps, they would improve the value of the land; but whether they would assist the tenant farmer much I cannot quite say.

61,723. (*Mr. Everett.*) I feel tempted to ask you whether you would consider it a worthy ideal of life which consists in working hard and living hard?—No, but I say it is the best way of tiding over a difficulty. I should just like to say that I did not wish to come up to-day to give evidence; but after I had been here in a private way I thought it would look cowardly not to come again and say in public what I had said in private.

61,724. (*Chairman.*) I hope it will be known that I especially asked you to come?—Thank you.

The witness withdrew.

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MR. JOHN POWELL called and examined.

61,725. (*Chairman.*) You reside at Upper Wick in Worcestershire, I believe?—Yes.

61,726. You have been farming there for the last 21 years, I believe?—Yes.

61,727. You have also considerable experience as an agricultural valuer?—I have had a good deal of valuing on changes of tenancies.

61,728. (*Viscount Cobham.*) How far from Worcester is your farm?—About two miles.

System of farming in witness' districts.

61,729. (*Chairman.*) What is the system of farming in that district?—Mixed farming, as a rule—half arable and half grass and a good proportion of hop land.

61,730. Are there many hops grown in that immediate district?—Yes, a great many. I should like to give my evidence for the West of Worcestershire, and the East of Herefordshire. I am practically on the Herefordshire side of Worcestershire.

61,731. That is the district you know most of?—Yes, where the hops and fruit are chiefly grown. Arable farming in that immediate district is not the general basis of farming.

Position of farmers.

61,732. What has been the general condition in that district—have the farmers there suffered much from the fall of prices?—Yes; unless it is in special farms where a farm has been specially adapted for growing hops and has good fruit plantations and where they are closer to Worcester or closer to Malvern, and situated so that they can deliver milk daily or sell milk to retailers. Outside that area the farms are in a very bad state. A good deal of the land has been laid down especially in the stiffer portions of the land within four miles of Worcester. It is practically useless to cultivate that; I have myself been over a farm at 4*s.* an acre, tithe free, within 4½ miles of Worcester.

Character of soil.

61,733. What is the nature of the soil?—Very strong heavy clay.

61,734. Is there a good deal of this heavy clay land in that district?—There is a vein of it a mile wide, I dare say, running a good way from Worcester.

61,735. What is the better land?—Gravelly loam and gravelly subsoil, the bulk of it.

Value of land.

61,736. The value of that has not gone down so much?—Not so much, but of course it has all depreciated.

61,737. And where there is any specialty such as hops and fruit, or where the land is situated near the towns then the rent, I suppose, has kept up?—It has kept up to a certain extent, but it has not kept up to the rate it was 20 years ago.

Large and small farms compared.

61,738. Do you observe any distinction between the small farms and the large ones?—The small farms are more freely let. The farms of 500 acres take a good deal of capital, and men hesitate before they embark on these farms now.

61,739. Would you call that a large farm?—Yes, we do, with us.

61,740. What would you call small farms—up to what acreage?—Farms of 100 to 150 acres would be smallish farms. The farms run, generally, to about 300 acres.

Competition for small farms.

61,741. Where the farms are under 150 acres do you find they let pretty freely?—Yes, if there are a hop yard and fruit plantations on them.

61,742. Anything additional to the ordinary farming, in fact?—Yes.

61,743. And for those farms is there a good competition?—There are tenants.

61,744. At reduced rents?—At rents reduced quite 30 per cent.

61,745. Where a good farm of that kind is vacant, would there be many applicants?—There are sure to be ten or a dozen applicants for that farm.

Tenants' capital.

Immigrant farmers.

61,746. I suppose the number of men with capital sufficient and able to farm a small farm is much greater than the number of such men for larger farms?—Yes.

61,747. That is partly the reason?—Yes. Then the farmers' sons, too, are started on the smaller farms.

61,748. Are there men with sufficient capital to come into them?—Yes, they appear to let.

61,749. I mean men strong enough for the purpose?—Of course, I cannot speak to that; but we get a good many men taking farms from a distance. Somersetshire men and Cheshire men come down a good deal and take farms—not hop farms; they have not touched hop farms, as they are outside their knowledge.

61,750. Do you get many west-countrymen—Cornishmen?—Yes; and a great many Welshmen have come, too. North Wales men have come very considerably into the north-west part of Worcestershire.

61,751. Have these immigrants done fairly well?—I cannot say they are doing well, but they are making a living. They have brought their black cattle with them, and they farm as they farmed in Wales, I suppose—not in a very broad way.

Position of labourers.

61,752. What has been the position of the labourers in the district?—The labourers are, apparently, very well off. I should say the labourers are as well off as ever they were; indeed, my experience is that they are better.

Wages.

61,753. What has been the course of wages?—We are paying now 12*s.* and 13*s.* a week; 13*s.* in my immediate neighbourhood, and 12*s.* a little farther out from the town for the ordinary day labourer.

63,754. Has there been a fall in the rate?—We pay 15*s.* all the summer.

61,755. I suppose there is generally a fall in the autumn or winter?—Yes; as soon as the hop harvest is completed they generally come down 2*s.* a week.

61,756. Comparing the wage with that of a few years past, what would you say is the difference?—I paid 13*s.* for ordinary labourers when I came, 21 years ago, to Wick.

61,757. You paid 13*s.* then?—Yes, and gave cider then.

61,758. And you pay the same now?—I pay the same now without the cider.

61,759. Then they have lost the cider?—In my case they have, and in my parish—St. John's parish—too.

61,760. That is the difference—that you gave them cider in addition to the 13*s.*, and now they get the 13*s.* without it?—That is the only difference.

61,761. Then there has been a slight reduction?—Yes, but very slight.

61,762. I suppose, considering the price of food, they are better off?—I should say they are, very much.

Limited ownership of land.

61,763. Is there much difficulty in your district arising from the limited ownership of land?—I do not know that there is any difficulty; I only know one or two instances.

61,764. You say in your brief that it is a check to the development of agriculture?—Naturally it is so. I do not know that I have much evidence about that from the neighbourhood.

61,765. Are there any small owners of land who cultivate their own land?—Very few.

Average rents.

61,766. What is the general average of rent in the district now?—Farms are let in my parish at as low as 1*l.* an acre, and they are let as high as 47*s.* 6*d.* I pay 47*s.* 6*d.* myself.

61,767. (*Viscount Cobham.*) That is close to Worcester?—Yes.

61,768. I think the chairman meant the district generally, that you are speaking for?—Generally, I think it is, perhaps, 25*s.* to 32*s.*

61,769. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Does that include a certain amount of hop land?—Yes, I am speaking for hop farms.

61,770. And fruit?—And fruit. All these farms at that rent have hops and fruit. On the other side of Worcester, where hops are not grown, the land is being let at from 10*s.* to 22*s.* lately; I know of some as low as 10*s.*, and some at 22*s.*, which has been let this Michaelmas; probably there has been a drop there of 4*s.* or 5*s.* an acre—perhaps more.

Results of witness' farming.

61,771. (*Chairman.*) The farmers generally have not been making money, I suppose?—I do not think so. In my case I lost 700*l.* last year, farming—according to my balance sheet.

Hop farming.

61,772. That is on account of the low range of prices?—Yes. I felt it, of course, in the hops. Hops are the mainstay of the farms there.

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61,773. How have they done in hops of late years?—Fairly well, up to last year.

61,774. Up to last year they did fairly well?—Yes.

61,775. That is for four or five years previously?—Yes.

61,776. Last year there was a large crop but very low prices?—Prices were very low, indeed, and we had not the large crop in the Worcester district that they had in Kent. That brought the prices down very much.

61,777. Generally throughout the country there was a large crop?—Very.

61,778. But of rather poor quality?—Yes.

61,779. Therefore the prices were very low?—Very low, but they are lower this year.

61,780. What pays best in hops?—Half a crop and fair prices.

61,781. A small crop of good quality?—Yes.

61,782. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Are Worcestershire hops of equal value to Kentish or any other hops?—I am afraid they are not. These Kentish hops make more money now than the Worcesters.

61,783. (*Chairman.*) This season again has been a bad one for the hops, I believe?—We have grown a good crop—a superabundance; but last year's crop being so heavy, the brewers stocked up last year, and they are very slow buyers now, and buy at very low prices. I myself sold hops a fortnight ago, at 30*s.* a hundredweight—quite good hops.

61,784. Is the quality good this year?—Very fair.

61,785. In Kent, I am told, the average quality is not good?—I believe so, but our hops are very good.

61,786. An experienced hop grower told me that only one-tenth of the hops in Kent are good this year, but that there was a very abundant crop; and he explained that the great fall in prices was due to that?—The Worcestershire and Herefordshire soil is more retentive of moisture than the Kentish soil, and when the Kentish hops were suffering from the sunshine we were rather benefiting from that condition, as the bulk of our hops this year were very good, but, of course, there were exceptions.

Importation of hops.

61,787. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has the importation of hops this year been much checked?—It is checked a little; prices have prevented them coming in. I think there has been 18,000 cwt. less according to the returns of yesterday morning, or something like that, in the last three months. I am not quite sure as to my figures, however.

Low prices.

61,788. (*Chairman.*) I suppose you would say the principal cause of the depression has been the fall in the price of products of all kinds?—Yes, unquestionably, it is the prices and prices alone that have done it; we have had good seasons and good crops.

67,789. Is there much dairying in your district?—Very little beyond the selling of milk.

Butter making.

61,790. Is there no butter making?—Very little, indeed. People make a little, but not very much. On the eastern side of Worcestershire dairying is carried on more and a great deal of benefit perhaps has accrued by the lessons in darying that have been given.

Bad seasons.

61,791. Has your district suffered much from the seasons during the last three or four years including the drought of 1893 and the drought of this year?—Yes, we have had short crops of hay and straw but the quality has been very good in the two seasons and we have had higher prices when we wanted to sell it. Store stock suffered very much from the effects of the drought. This year the corn crop is very light owing to the drought; all the corn crops are very light—beans, wheat and oats especially.

Rates.

61,792. What has been the course with regard to the rates in your district?—The rates are gradually creeping up. They get a little higher every year.

Assessment to rates.

61,795. Have you had the benefit of reduced assessment; have your assessments been reduced in proportion to the rents?—The assessment is based generally on the rent; as a rule I think the assessment is taken to the income tax assessment.

61,794. What should you say has been the reduction of rent in your district, generally—what per-centage?—I should say it would average about 30 per cent. from 20 years ago.

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61,795. Have the assessments been reduced in proportion?—Yes, the assessment committee are very fair in that way. If you bring proof that your rent has been reduced to a certain sum the assessment is put down at once without further cavil.

61,796. What is the union in which you live?—Worcester Union. At Martley Union and the Union of Upton-on-Severn they have the same system.

61,797. Are the rates heavy there?—The rates just run about 4*s.* in the £.

61,798. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the Worcester Union?—The Worcester Rural Union, I think; that is including everything.

61,799. (*Chairman.*) Is it within the borough of Worcester?—No, my farm really is on the boundary. There is very little land in the Worcester Union, and very few farms in the Worcester Union. Martley Union comes close up, and the Upton-on-Severn Union comes within three miles. Indeed, so does the Martley Union.

Tenure.

61,800. Are they yearly tenancies as a rule?—Yes, they are.

61,801. And leases are not asked for?—Not now.

Judicial rents.

61,802. Is there any desire in the district for judicial rents?—I never heard so.

61,803. Has the matter been discussed in the farmers' associations?—I do not think it has ever been brought forward. It is a question of supply and demand, I should say.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

61,804. Have you anything to say about the Agricultural Holdings Act?—It secures us very well for our feeding stuffs, all except what is home grown, which should be included in the Schedule as well as purchased foods. But as far as regards permanent improvements, you have to get written permission, and sometimes that is not forthcoming. I do not think there is very much benefit so far as permanent improvements are concerned.

Import duty.

61,805. What are the general remedies that you suggest?—To raise the prices.

61,806. How do you think that ought to be brought about?—I have put down my idea how I think it may be helped. Of course, it is fighting against a strong feeling. I think that a duty of half-a-crown a hundredweight—I only put it at half-a-crown a hundredweight just to show the figures, but you may put more, if you like—on the importation of all what we call Lent corn and maize would be a good thing. It would not affect the price of bread stuffs the least in the world; it would only affect the brewers and the horse keepers, and it would bring a good deal of money which may be given again to reducing local taxation. Of course, that is protection, but it is a small item.

Loans to landowners.

61,807. Have you considered it important that money should be lent to landowners to effect improvements?—No doubt it is desirable where landlords cannot spare any from their yearly income, and it is probable that it would be beneficial if such means were given.

Co-operation.

61,808. Do you think anything has been done in the way of co-operation?—I know that co-operation is thought a very great deal of, but I really cannot see where the benefit will accrue.

Agricultural education.

61,809. I think you consider that agricultural education should be carried out by the Board of Agriculture instead of by the County Councils?—I do. I think if the Board of Agriculture for instance, were to take a farm and set down there someone well qualified to teach dairying and the different operations carried on on a farm in the way of sheep shearing, thatching, and what not—if they had qualified men there and let people go there periodically or for a few weeks at a time and have lessons, I think it would be a better idea than to have migratory lecturers and people who attend at various places, and so on. Those people come and give a lecture, but the lecture is not thought very much of, and after they have gone out of the room it is never spoken of, perhaps.

61,810. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has the County Council dairying instruction done good?—Yes, I think that is an exception. It has done a great deal of good I should say in several instances.

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61,811. Is there much land going down to grass in your district?—There is on the other side of the county—on the eastern side and on the western side in the strong land districts.

Land laid down to grass.

61,812. Is it being laid down well?—I cannot say it is. It produces thistles and docks in abundance.

61,813. Do you think, if well laid down, it is a profitable thing for farmers to do?—It is very slow indeed coming to turf—very slow.

61,814. It requires more capital, in fact, than the farmers have got?—It is a long time; until after the first two or three years it produces very little; the clovers die out, and the natural grasses do not grow to fill up their places.

61,815. Do you find that these lands are carrying less stock than they did before?—Yes, no doubt of it.

Cattle breeding

61,816. Is there much breeding and rearing of stock in Worcestershire?—There is a good deal; cattle are reared pretty generally. In the southern part of the county, and in the northern part, too, there is a good deal of sheep breeding on the lighter sheep lands, but in my immediate district there are very few sheep bred; they are generally bought to feed and graze.

61,817. Have you much knowledge of Worcestershire outside the special hop and fruit district?—Not very much.

61,818. Does your business take you into the north-east and east of the county?—I go there sometimes but my knowledge of it is, of course, limited.

Position of farmers.

61,819. What do you think the position of farmers generally is in the county?—I have been on that side two or three times this year and it is not at all satisfactory. They appear to me to be getting lower every year.

61,820. Do you think that they have shared to the full in the prevalent depression?—Yes, they have, indeed.

Vacant farms and land in hand.

61,821. Are there many farms vacant in Worcestershire?—I cannot say they are altogether vacant. The farms seem to be taken up and when one tenant goes away, from one cause or another, the farm is generally taken.

61,822. Then there is no land that is out of cultivation altogether?—No; there are several farms in hand but not out of cultivation,—not lying absolutely idle.

61,823. Is there an increasing amount of land in hand?—I think there is in certain districts.

Sale by live weight.

61,824. I see that you are strongly in favour of the sale of meat by live weight?—Yes, I think it would help the farmers, who do not all know the value of their beasts, very considerably, if they had the weight put up for them. Of course every farmer cannot have a machine, as these machines are very expensive articles to put in. If there was a machine put in the pen previous to the animal being offered by auction and the weight was put up as the auctioneer offers the beast it would be a great criterion to the farmer to know what the beast is worth.

61,825. But the farmers could get that done, could they not, if they wished it?—It is a very awkward matter; if a man takes six beasts and he has got to weigh them one at a time it is a great deal of trouble if every body wants to weigh their beasts. I do not think it could be done.

61,826. It would require more combination than you are likely to get among farmers?—Yes, it is done in Scotland, I think, beasts are all weighed at the large auction marts in a good many cases and the weight is indicated.

61,827. Would there be opposition from the salesmen or the butchers?—Yes, from the butchers, probably. They would be a little sore over it at first, but ultimately I think the system would work very well.

Allotments.

61,828. There has been a considerable amount of land devoted to allotments in recent years in Worcestershire, has there not?—Yes, there has, and they seem to be doing fairly well. I am Chairman of the Parish Council myself, and I have had a good bit to do with them. The men seem fairly well satisfied. They have paid their rent so far and I do not hear of any complaints from them.

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61,829. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I gather from your brief that you think that since County Councils have been established, your rates are very much increased?—Not so much; they have increased, and they are on the rise.

Rates.

61,830. Do you attribute it to these councils, or what do you attribute it to?—I think all the establishment charges of the councils have a tendency to increase the rates—as a matter of fact they do.

61,831. Do you think they are more expensive?—Certainly, they adopt more expensive methods of procedure than were adopted under the old system.

61,832. Do you think the establishment is more expensively worked?—I think so. At any rate we have raised rates since the formation of the councils.

61,833. What rates in particular? Take the highway rate—has that increased much?—I can scarcely say that it has very much. Without figures I could not say which rate has increased, but I know that the rates altogether have increased, we have a higher total rate to pay—that I know.

Assessment to rates.

61,834. Do you consider that the mode of assessment is unfair at present?—Yes, I do.

61,835. How would you illustrate that? You, farming 500 acres of land say, pay upon that land 500*l.* a year and do not use the roads so much as your neighbour, who perhaps is, we will say, a corn miller or a timber merchant and who is continually using the roads and not paying above 60*l.* or 70*l.* a year; is that the way you would illustrate it?—Yes; that is my argument. I am paying over a thousand a year in rent and I am rated up to the last shilling; my neighbours who have every advantage of using the roads and so on are rated simply upon their residence.

61,836. You think this wants adjustment?—I think it wants altering; I am sure it does.

61,837. You also think, I see, that the maintenance of all highways should be paid from the Imperial exchequer?—I think it would relieve the rates very materially, and it would assist agriculture.

Hop farming.

61,838. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I think, until this year, the profit on hop growing in Worcestershire had been considerable, had it not?—Until last year.

61,839. In 1893, I think, the hop growers had a very good year, and made large profits?—Yes, they had a very good time.

61,840. Take an average of seven years, do you think there has been a profit or a loss upon hop growing in Worcestershire?—Without this year, the seven years would show a good profit, but if this year were included it would, I am afraid, bring the balance down.

61,841. I think the acreage has largely increased in Worcestershire?—It has, but the grubbing is going on very fast now.

61,842. Has there not been a great deal of plantation of common sorts of hops?—Yes; there has, I am sorry to say.

61,843. Is that not wrong?—It is quite wrong. I have advocated the contrary always, but the commonest sorts of hops have been planted in Worcestershire, much to the detriment of the growth, and that has destroyed the reputation of the growth.

61,844. Such sorts as the Fuggles?—Yes, but there are a lot worse than the Fuggles. I mean the Meophams, which are the hop that has been largely grown, but they are being grubbed now very much.

61,845. The object being to get a large crop?—Yes.

61,846. Which, according to your brief, is wrong. You think a farmer should go in for the best?—He should go in for the best of everything. The only possible way to compete on the markets is to go in for the best; you can always sell a good article. If you have a good beast in the market you can always sell it.

61,847. Do you think that the reason why the hop market is in a bad state as was pointed out by the Chairman just now, is that great complaints are being made of the quality of this year's growth?—It has a tendency that way. I have sold hops this year at 72*s.*, and I have sold them at 30*s.* The one was a good, really choice hop, and the other was the common Fuggle that you were speaking of.

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61,848. Is it not the fact that the range is very much higher, and that fine hops are fetching five guineas?—Not in Worcestershire; 72*s.* is the highest price there.

61,849. Hops, generally, I am speaking of?—The East Kents have reached 90*s.*, I know.

61,850. Choice East Kents have made five guineas this year, and the lowest quality of Kent hops have made as low as 30*s.*, which you say is your minimum?—Yes. I have seen the Sussex hops offered at less than 30*s.* in the Worcester market.

61,851. (*Chairman.*) Is it not the fact that the great increase in washing hops, and the extent to which everybody now washes hops, has led to a greater certainty in getting a crop?—Yes.

61,852. But the crops are of an inferior quality very often?—As a rule, when you have got to wash hops five or six times in a season that does materially reduce the quality of them; it depreciates the quality.

61,853. A very experienced grower told me a short time ago that up to a few years ago they had every now and then bad seasons, which completely cleared off all the hops and cleared all the bad hops out of the market; but nowadays when everybody washes their hops, perhaps three or four times, they always secure a crop of some kind, although it may be an inferior crop?—Yes, that is so.

61,854. The consequence is that there is a great quantity of inferior hops in the market which reduces the price?—Yes, that is so.

61,855. Do you think that is a fair statement?—Yes, it is quite correct.

61,856. The increased cultivation, and the better cultivation of the hops in the sense of washing them has resulted in these enormous crops of inferior hops?—Not so much the cultivation as the process of washing, which destroys the aphis blight. If you persist in washing with soft soap and quassia it destroys the aphis blight and your hops are marketable.

61,857. Although you can make a certainty of getting a crop it is very often of an inferior quality?—Yes. And it is inferior elsewhere, too. As a rule, when there is a good deal of aphis blight about there is not so much sunshine, and it is a worse season for the production of hops in every way, and the quality is deteriorated, accordingly.

61,858. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) That has had a certain influence; but the tendency of planters to plant common hops has had a greater influence I take it this year?—You could not sell any common hops scarcely at any price—best only were wanted.

61,859. Do you think farmers have the remedy in their own hands by grubbing up their common sorts and sticking to the better ones?—Yes. If they grub up the common sorts and do not plant any more, and reduce the production.

Fruit cultivation.

61,860. With regard to fruit, you say that has been unprofitable this year?—Yes, there has been an enormous crop, and it scarcely pays for marketing.

61,861. Is that because the distribution of it is so unsatisfactory?—I do not know that it is. It is a very difficult matter to know how it is to be distributed otherwise than it is now. We have to send it to the large towns, and we are dependent entirely on the salesmen there to send us the market price.

61,862. You are speaking of what is called soft fruit, I gather?—Of apples and plums, and that sort of thing.

Marketing of apples.

61,863. Have you not a way of disposing of apples in your county by making cider?—Yes, we have; but those are specially grown for cider-making; those are really unmarketable for any other purpose.

61,864. You are speaking of the better sorts?—I am speaking of the apples which are grown for profit now, which are mostly culinary apples.

61,865. Are you aware that Canadian apples are fetching from 6*s.* to 8*s.* or 9*s.* a bushel?—I dare say they are.

61,866. Must there not be something wrong in the means of distribution if that is the case?—Yes.

61,867. Can you suggest any remedy for that?—I do not know what the remedy is, I am sure. If I were to advertise my apples to sell them in bushels, I should want a clerk to do nothing else but attend to that business; supposing I got a trade to sell them all in bushels I should want a good staff to distribute them.

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61,868. Still, I think fruit growing has increased in Worcestershire and Herefordshire?—Unquestionably in Worcestershire, but not in Herefordshire, I think, so much. The smaller fruits have increased in Herefordshire; strawberries and gooseberries certainly are increasing in Herefordshire, but the apple plantation does not increase much.

Fruit cultivation.

61,869. Until this year the profits have been fairly good, have they not?—Last year we sold fairly well.

Experimental farms.

61,870. You spoke of the Board of Agriculture instituting a farm, do you mean a farm in every district or one central farm?—One in a county or one for two or three counties—one in a district would probably meet the difficulty.

61,871. When you spoke of a farm I thought you meant one central farm, but you would advocate the establishment of a farm in every county?—In every district that is suitable.

61,872. What is called an experimental farm?—Yes, I think a good deal might be learnt in that way.

61,873. On the lines of the American experimental farms, perhaps?—I do not know; I have not had any experience of them. You speak of the Board of Agriculture, I may mention that the Board of Agriculture may get us better information as regards the crops abroad so that we may regulate the putting of our produce on to the market more easily than we do now. For instance, as regards the fruit crops, we have all of us got a lot of fruit packed up in the rooms and as a rule we keep these apples till nearer Christmas when they make more money. But the price entirely depends upon the Canadian and American crop, and we have no means at all of knowing what the crop is. One salesmen will tell you there is a big one and another will tell you there is a small one, and you see a report in the paper one way and a report in another paper another way, and we have no means at all of ascertaining what the crop is. Of course we do not know which way to dispose of the apples, whether to sell them on the trees or off the trees, or to keep them till Christmas.

61,874. I think the particulars of the crops are given in the Journal of the Board of Agriculture, are they not. Do you know that publication?—No, I do not.

61,875. I think the crop of apples was mentioned in the last number of the September Journal?—It has not been disseminated in the Agricultural Journals, as a rule.

Hop farming and labour.

61,876. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say that hop cultivation is increasing in your district?—It has increased, but this year they are grubbing up a good deal of ground; probably 10 per cent. is being grubbed now.

61,877. Can you say what the labour bill is per acre of hops in your part of the country when they are under cultivation—it is very large, I suppose?—Yes, it is large. I could give you the exact figures with a little trouble. Do you mean the picking, and all?

61,878. Everything?—That depends on the extent of the crop. If you include the picking, it would cost more to pick a crop of a ton an acre than it does one of 6 or 7 cwt.

61,879. Can you give me any maximum or minimum? The purpose for which I ask the question is to see to what extent the result of hops going out of cultivation in your district diminishes the amount of money that goes to the labouring classes. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) Would it not be safe to say that the average cost of cultivating an acre of hops would be about 34*l.*?—We reckon from 26*l.* to 30*l.*, with us.

61,880. In Kent it is about 34*l.*?—You dig in Kent, where we plough. That figure includes all the expenses, not merely the manual labour, and it varies, as I say, from 26*l.* to 30*l.*

61,881. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If you get any considerable diminution in the amount of land under hop cultivation in a district, then the amount that goes in wages to the working classes in that district must be very largely decreased?—Very largely decreased, indeed; because it goes into corn or seeds or roots, and the expenditure on that, per acre, is very small as compared with hops.

61,882. That being the case, can you tell us at all the number of acres that have gone out of cultivation in your district; I think you say 10 per cent. is being grubbed up?—About 10 per cent. is being grubbed now, as near as I can ascertain and guess.

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61,883. What does that mean; how many acres?—I think there are 8,000 or 9,000 acres in Worcestershire and Herefordshire, but I am not quite sure.

61,884. (*Chairmn.*) You mean to say that 10 per cent. of those are being grubbed?—Yes, people are grubbing now.

61,885. Within the last few years there has been an increase?—There has been an increase, but that increase will be reduced enormously this year.

61,886. And it will go back to what it was six or seven years ago?—Yes, unquestionably it will.

61,887. There is always a change going on, either rising or falling, is there not?—Yes, perhaps there is.

61,888. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the whole of England, I gather from figures we had the other day, there has been a very great reduction?—Yes, in the acreage.

61,889. Amounting to some thousands of acres in the country?—Yes.

61,890. The result, therefore, is that every one of those acres going out of cultivation means the loss of 26*l.* a year to the working classes, and this must in the aggregate come to a very considerable diminution of the labour bill?—Of course it does; and not only that, but it decreases the value of the land.

61,891. Have you seen any perceptible effect in your district from the increase in the labour bill by bringing hops under cultivation?—Yes.

61,892. And of the result when they go out of cultivation? Have you observed any difference in pauperism or in the condition of the working classes?—We have had an immense influx of people from the black country, which is the manufacturing parts of Staffordshire and north-east Worcestershire, at all the busy times, and they have very materially benefited both in pocket and in health. Some will come in the early season and stay the whole of the summer, beginning with the tying of the hops and stringing, and going on with the fruit, and staying till the hop-picking is completed. We certainly should not require so many of these people by one tenth if we grubbed up a tenth of the acreage of hops, and they would suffer in addition to our own people in the immediate district.

61,893. Do you have an influx of that kind in the fruit season as well?—Yes; they come down early in the summer, and they stay all the summer through. There are lots of instances.

61,894. From the black country?—Yes, all over the district; all the way from Worcester to Hereford.

Condition of land.

61,895. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Has the land in your district deteriorated in quality and fertility?—I do not know that it has in quality except where a farm is on the stiffer lands and where the land has been laid down within the last six or ten years. A good deal of land has been laid down and some of it what we call tumbled down where the natural weeds and so on are in a mass, and in some districts—in the district of which I am speaking just now—there is field after field worse than useless and which grows nothing but weeds.

Farmers' capital.

61,896. Do you think the farmers in your district have sufficient capital to work out their farms?—I think so. It takes a good deal of capital, of course, to take a hop farm—very considerably more than is required for an ordinary farm.

61,897. What does it take to stock an ordinary farm per acre?—Not 10*l.* per acre as the first witness said just now; I should think it would be nearer 5*l.*; 6*l.* an acre would stock an ordinary farm now very well.

61,898. Would that be a mixed farm?—Yes; where a a man goes in for breeding sheep and cattle.

61,899. Is there any difficulty in getting men with capital to take farms in your county?—Beyond a certain sized farm there is.

Immigrant Welshmen.

61,900. I think you said something about Welshmen taking farms in that district?—Yes, in the outside part of the county and in the adjoining part of Herefordshire, a great many Welshmen have come.

61,901. Do they, as a rule, bring sufficient capital with them?—I cannot say they do. They are very hard-working, very thrifty people, but they farm in a very second-rate way to our thinking. They spend no money.

61,902. Do they take these farms at a reduced rent?—Yes. It is on the worst districts that these men have put in an appearance more than anywhere else. Where the farmers in the neighbourhood have refused to take up the land, the Welshmen come and take it; the farms are advertised in the papers and they come and take them.

61,903. I suppose they come from the hill districts?—From North Wales chiefly and some from Cheshire. In the southern part of the county a good many men have come from Somersetshire, and one or two from Cornwall.

61,904. I suppose they and their families work very hard, and their standard of comfort is very different from that of their English neighbours?—Yes, but they are very good people.

Law of distraint.

61,905. I do not know whether you have said something about the law of distraint in answer to the Chairman?—No. Occasionally you will hear of a tradesman grumbling very much if he is left out in the cold. The landlord comes in and takes the first sweep and takes the biggest part. I am speaking of the case of a farmer who is in a state of bankruptcy. The law of distraint would operate against the ordinary creditors, insomuch that the landlord would take his first call for the whole year's rent, and probably take half the assets. Tradesmen do complain; for myself I do not know that it is detrimental; in fact, I think it is to a certain extent a benefit to a tenant farmer to have the law of distraint as it is.

61,906. His credit is not so good outside, is it?—Quite so; his credit is not so good.

61,907. Then he has to pay really a higher price?—I should say he has.

Game laws.

61,908. Have you anything to say about the game laws?—No, the game laws are working very well. There is a scarcity of hares; but I do not think it is desirable that they should become extinct altogether.

Position of farmers.

61,909. You heard the last witness say that he was able to make ends meet?—Yes.

61,910. Would you say that the farmers in your county would be able to make the same statement?—Not in the last two years, certainly.

61,911. They are really losing?—They have been losing money fast for the last two years.

Reduction of rents.

61,912. If prices do not improve, I suppose, the present rents will not be maintained?—They will not. All the farms that have been let this Michaelmas have been let at a reduced rent.

61,913. How long do you think the farmers will go on paying the rents they are paying now?—One after another is continually agitating, and writing and trying to get the rents reduced; some succeed, and some have to go on.

Relations between landlords and tenants.

61,914. The estates, I think you say, are very well managed in your district?—I think they are.

61,915. And there is a good feeling existing between landlords and tenants?—Yes.

Security of tenure.

61,916. Is there a desire for a better security of tenure?—I do not know that there is; everyone seems pretty well satisfied on that point. The landlords have been very free in meeting the tenants, in putting up new hop kilns when the hop industry was pretty flourishing. Up to the last year or two, if a tenant wanted to plant more ground, the landlord as a rule came forward and put the kilns up for him, and met the tenant in every way that was desirable.

Fall in prices.

61,917. (*Mr. Everett.*) I gather from your brief that there is a considerable depression in the part that you come from?—Yes, there is.

61,918. And it is so serious that, in your opinion, unless there is an improvement, a very swift ending to the tillage farming of England is at hand?—As far as that district is concerned, the tillage farming is getting very considerably less every year, and this spring perhaps there will be more laid down than ever.

61,919. The cause of this trouble is the fall of prices, in your opinion?—Unquestionably.

61,920. Your opinion is that the only real remedy is something that would enhance prices?—Quite so.

Import duties.

61,921. And the enhancement that you propose takes the form of restricting the supply of these different commodities that are so depreciated?—Yes.

61,922. You would admit, I am sure, that in itself the restriction of a supply of any good thing is not desirable?—I am speaking from a tenant farmer's point of view.

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61,923. You would reluctantly pursue that as a remedy; you might think that what would happen without it would be worse than that?—I should not like to injure my neighbour by benefiting myself, but at the same time I think number one is the first law of nature.

The currency.

61,924. The real disease with you is that you do not get enough shillings a quarter for your corn, or shillings a hundredweight for your hops, or shillings a tod for your wool: that is the real complaint. Does it not strike you that a much simpler way of getting what you want would be to take the restriction off the manufacture of shillings instead of restricting the supply of all these other good things?—That is going beyond my province. I really cannot venture an opinion as to the price of silver.

61,925. An ounce of silver will coin into 5s. of the old English standard, and if there were a free supply, if there were no restriction at this moment, a bushel of wheat would change for something over 6s., and all other things in proportion?—That is the Argentine and Indian wheat; it is not so with American wheat.

61,926. If our shillings were in as free supply as the oats and the barley, and all those other things, if there were no limitation to the coining of them at the Mint, a bushel of wheat to-day would be changing for more than 6s., and all your other products in proportion; therefore, is it not a very much simpler plan to take off that restriction upon the manufacture of shillings rather than to put a restriction on the supply of things which we exchange for shillings?—Probably it is the simpler method if it would have the same effect, but I really cannot say whether it would or not.

61,927. (*Chairman.*) Have you entered into the currency question yourself?—No, I have not; it is far beyond my understanding.

61,928. (*Mr. Everett.*) It does not require any special gift to see that if we could, by taking off the restriction on the manufacture of shillings, get considerably more shillings in exchange for our produce, we should arrive at the result of what you want—we should get more shillings for our produce?—Possibly; but I really could not follow you in that argument, for I have not studied the question.

Quality of produce.

61,929. (*Lord Rendel.*) I think you referred to the disadvantage that the farmer is under in your neighbourhood as being due to the comparative inferiority of the produce?—Not in particular in my own neighbourhood, but I maintain that one of the chief points that we have to act up to now with the competition that we have to meet with from abroad is to produce the best, and the best only, of every article—whether it is produced from the land or whether it is stock; the best only is to be desired.

61,930. Then, do you attribute, so far, the bulk of the losses of agriculture to the unsuitability of the produce brought to market?—To a certain extent; low-class produce always brings down prices.

61,931. Is that inferiority in your opinion essential to the condition of farming?—It is not essential. People as a rule can grow more of any kind of produce that is of a rougher and coarser quality than they can of a superior article. They can grow more bushels of whea per acre of Rivet's corn or some of the roughersortst than they can of white wheat for instance.

61,932. If that experience is recognised by the farmers generally, do you consider that the remedy is within their own power?—It is an assistant remedy.

61,933. So far as the improvement of produce, leading to a more secure market is concerned, the remedy is within their own province?—As far as that is concerned, yes.

61,934. You illustrated that, I think, in reference to hops, did you not?—Yes, but every product is the same—fruit is the same and cattle are the same.

61,935. An increase in the quality of the produce being within the controlling power of the farmer will have of itself a substantial remedial effect on the industry?—It will have an effect; it will have a very considerable effect in assisting him to make a better market for his produce if he has got a very good article to dispose of.

Experimental farms.

61,936. I think I understood you to recommend that experimental farms would be of value as raising the standard of farming in the country?—Yes I do think so I have an idea that an experimental farm in a district say for two counties—farmed up to the standard of farming, that is necessary in that immediate district, and managed by well qualified people—where young farmers, or old ones for the matter of that, can look over the hedge and see what is being done and go and ascertain details if they feel so inclined,—would be a great assistance to the neighbourhood and to farming generally.

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Quality of farming.

61,937. Then without charging upon farming the responsibility for some of its failure would you consider that increased skill, experience and energy, in farming would materially improve the position?—It would assist; it would be one point there is no question.

61,938. Not of great importance?—It is of great importance.

61,939. But of first rate importance?—I cannot say first-rate; I will not say that all my brother farmers are bad farmers but there is room for improvement in the majority of instances. There is no doubt that lessons can be learnt; you can always learn farming. A farmer never learns his business. I have been at it 25 years and I do not know it now. I learn something fresh every year.

Distribution of produce.

61,940. One other point: you speak of the disadvantage you are under with regard to the subsidiary produce such as fruit, when there is any glut in the market, and I understand you to see no means of improving the distribution of what is at present surplus produce in the way of fruits?—I really do not see how we are to improve the distribution of it. We have to send to the salesmen. If we send to the shop-keepers who are the people who buy from the salesmen as a rule the probability is that we should occasionally get let in by the shop-keepers and lose in consequence, and although we might make a little more money we should not make much.

61,941. At the same time I gather you to be of opinion that at a time when fruit is unsaleable, the consumer is gaining very little benefit in regard to prices?—It is very seldom he does gain as a rule.

61,942. Do you attribute that to the interest the retailer has in keeping up a uniform price?—Retailers do keep up uniform prices in most towns, I believe.

61,943. Would you consider that it was an interest to the consumer to gain the benefit?—Yes. If there is a benefit to be gained after a fair margin for profit is taken by the middleman the consumer ought to have the benefit; I do not say that he does—I do not think he does.

61,944. Is this a large question in your view?—Yes, I think so.

61,945. Therefore, though from the grower's point of view you see no remedy, would you consider that the consumer and the farmer might together devise some remedy?—If they would devise some remedy it would probably be better for us, but I really do not see what the remedy is.

Bad seasons.

61,946. (*Chairman.*) Did your district suffer much from the drought of 1893?—It did, but not very materially.

61,947. Not so much as the East of England and the South?—No.

61,948. But still a great deal?—It did a good deal—more this year probably than in 1893. I think the crops were worse this year than they were in 1893.

61,949. From drought again?—Yes.

61,950. As a rule a dry season is favourable to England but these two droughts were exceptional. In that case and with a great deal of sunshine and a long drought you had inferior crops?—When I was speaking of the inferior crops of this year I meant simply corn and hay crops—all our other crops were abundant. A fairly dry and warm summer suits Worcestershire and Herefordshire very much better than a moist summer.

61,951. You have the exception that in these two years with a dry season you had a great failure of crops in 1893 and 1895?—A great failure of the straw and hay crops; our root crops this year with a dry summer were as good as they need be.

61,952. In 1894 did you suffer from the bad weather in the harvest?—A little but not very much.

Hop farming.

61,953. What extent of Worcestershire is the hop district?—In Worcestershire and Herefordshire combined there are between 8,000 and 9,000 acres.

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Fruit growing.

61,954. How much of Worcestershire; one third?—I should think it is about one third.

61,955. Is the fruit district a separate one—round Evesham say?—Between Evesham and Pershore there is more of the bush fruit and market-gardening done, and plums are grown more freely there.

61,956. Is that a separate district from the hop district?—Yes, although hops are being grown round there now, and one or two growers are increasing their acreages.

61,957. What extent of Worcestershire is the fruit district?—The old orchard plantations are distributed all over the county.

61,958. I mean especially the small bush fruit?—That is in favoured localities close to a station or close to a town. The Evesham district is increasing very largely in that way.

61,959. Is it a large district?—Yes, there is a good deal of fruit.

61,960. Is it a fourth or a fifth of the county, or what?—It is not a fourth.

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61,961. Is it a tenth?—It is a twentieth possibly.

61,962. I suppose up in the North of Worcestershire there is a district very near to Birmingham which is favoured from its being near that great city?—Yes; there is a good deal of bush fruit and plums grown round there.

61,963. And also for every sort of produce, I suppose, there is a very good market in Birmingham?—Yes, a pretty fair market.

61,964. I suppose the price of land there is fairly well maintained?—I dare say it is but I really do not know. When, as I say, the market is within reach of the milk carts I think the prices are pretty well maintained.

61,965. It is poor land in North Worcestershire?—Yes.

61,966. Light land?—Yes.

The witness withdrew.

Mr. R. H. Rew.

Mr. R. Henry Rew recalled and further examined.

(For previous evidence, *see* page 82.)

Mr. R. H. Rew.

Report on Norfolk.

61,967. (*Chairman.*) I have very few questions to put to you, because if you will permit me to say so, I think your report on Norfolk is a thoroughly exhaustive one, and puts all the points with great ability; you have gone most thoroughly into the whole matter so that really it leaves very little for anybody to ask you about. There is a great variety of soil in Norfolk, is there not?—Yes.

Characteristics of soil.

61,968. And a variety of conditions in the county?—Yes.

61,969. There is the chalk district with loamy clay above it in one part, and there is the light heathland in another, and there is the fen district in a third?—Yes, and there is the heavy clay in some parts.

61,970. So that it is very difficult to generalise about the county?—Quite.

61,971. The light land which formerly was heathland and a kind of game preserve was broken up about 40 years ago, and it was then cultivated for some years and gradually exhausted?—Yes.

61,972. A great deal of its bad condition now arises from the thorough exhaustion of the land, as I understand it?—I think it is so in some cases, but it is also because it is expensive to keep in cultivation; therefore under the present conditions and with present prices it does not pay to expend the labour and manure and so forth upon it to keep it in cultivation. That would be the main cause, I think.

61,973. It is not so exhausted but that it could still be cultivated if prices could be maintained?—I do not think exhaustion would be the primary cause of its going out of cultivation, I think it rather is the expense of work.

61,974. It is land that it was almost a pity to break up—at least a good deal of it?—Quite so.

61,975. (*Mr. Everett.*) I should like to know whether that land did not pay for cultivation in the good times. You say it was a pity to have broken it up, but was it not broken up in order to its profitable cultivation, and did it not continue in profitable cultivation till the fall in prices?—Yes; I take it the cause of its being broken up was because at that time the prices of corn were sufficient to pay for its cultivation.

61,976. (*Chairman*) They were exceptionally high then?—They were exceptionally high at one time.

Lord Leicester's estates.

61,977. The district where Lord Leicester's estate lies, I think, is in the north?—Holkham is in the north, but Lord Leicester's estates go almost through the county, they do not all lie in a ring fence, they lie in different lots but mainly in the middle of the county and the north.

61,978. In the chalk district with the clay upon it, I suppose—or what is the district?—The greater part of his estates I should think would be on the light and sandy lands.

61,979–80. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Holkham and the estate adjoining were reclaimed from the heathland, were they not?—Yes.

Lord Leicester's system of cultivation.

61,981. (*Chairman.*) You call attention to the change that is made in the cultivation of his own farm, the farm in hand, and to his having given up the four-course system and having seeded down a great deal of it?—Yes.

61,982. Did you go over that farm?—Yes, I went with Lord Leicester over a good deal of the land which had been so dealt with. I saw it in different stages.

61,983. Did you make any inquiries as to the financial result of it?—No, I did not have particulars as to the financial result, except in so far as Lord Leicester said it was satisfactory to him, and that it would not pay to keep under the four-course system, and that he was able to deal with it profitably under the system which he had adopted.

61,984. Did you see any of the land that had been let down for six, seven, or eight years in grass?—I think eight years was the oldest that I saw.

61,985. Did you see some of it?—Yes, I went on to it.

61,986. Was it in good condition?—Yes; as I have said in my report, it struck me as looking very well, indeed. It formed a good turf.

61,987. His example apparently has not been followed by any of the farmers in the neighbourhood?—Not to any very large extent; it has been adopted in some cases.

61,988. To some extent, but not largely?—Not to any large extent.

Reduced labour.

61,989. Apparently it involves a considerable reduction in the number of labourers and in the number of horses?—That is so.

61,990. If, therefore, it extended largely there would be a greatly reduced employment for labour?—Undoubtedly.

61,991. Apparently the reduction in the number of labourers in Norfolk has not been proportionally so large as in other counties?—No, I give the figures which show that is so.

61,992. I was very much struck by your figures in that respect?—On page 39 you will see the figures are given.

61,993. You show that the total reduction between 1871 and 1891 has been 10 per cent.; but of that 7 per cent. was in the first decade, and only 3 per cent. in the second?—Quite so.

61,994. You can hardly say that in the first decade the reduction was due to depression, because the depression had hardly begun in that decade; it was only in the autumn of 1879 that the depression began?—Yes.

61,995. Therefore, you can hardly say that the reduction in that decade was due to depression; it must have been due to the labourers being drawn off into the manufacturing districts?—Yes, probably, that would be so. Of course, the agricultural depression had begun to make itself felt before the census of 1881 was taken.

61,996. But only for a year or two?—Yes.

61,997. It is hardly likely that during that year or two there would have been that large reduction—one would imagine not, at all events?—That is so.

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61,998. Then the small reduction between 1881 and 1891 seems very curious?—Yes. With regard to the decade 1871–81, I do not know how it would be, but it is quite possible that there was rather a general clearing out, so to say, and that a great many labourers were thrown out of employment owing to the season of 1879.

61,999. I should rather imagine that that reduction in that decade was mainly due to the great commercial prosperity in the towns between 1871 and 1875, which drew the labourers away and caused a rise of wages?—Then, again, there was a great rise of wages about 1872 and 1873—coming within that decade.

62,000. That has been due to the labourers being drawn away to the towns and the farmers finding it necessary to increase the wages in order to keep the men they had?—Yes, and they got rid of as many as they possibly could in consequence of the wages going up.

62,001. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Due to the agitation of Mr. Arch?—No doubt that was one of the reasons.

62,002. (*Chairman.*) That was successful, I presume, because of the drawing of so many men into the towns at that time attracted by the higher wages?—That may have been one of the causes but I take it that it acted in this way, that the labourers demanded a higher wage, the demand was granted, but the farmers at the same time having to pay a higher wage reduced the number of labourers on the farms, as far as it was possible to do so.

62,003. The two things acted together, the great rise in wages was an inducement to farmers to economise in the number of men?—Yes.

62,004. How do you account for the reduction being so small between 1881 and 1891?—I should say, generally speaking, it is because the features of the farming of Norfolk has not really undergone any great or sweeping change. The four-course system, generally speaking, has been adhered to.

62,005. The four-course system seems to have been maintained there to a greater extent than in other parts of the country?—Yes.

62,006. Consequently there has been very little reduction in the number of the labourers?—Yes.

62,007. Compare that with Dorsetshire which you inquired into also, if I recollect aright; there the reduction of labourers during 20 years has been between 22 and 23 per cent. although it is in the main a grass country?—I have not got my Dorsetshire report before me, but I have no doubt it is so.

62,008. (*Mr. Everett.*) Do you know whether the definition of "Agricultural labourer" in the different censuses has always been the same or whether it has at one time included thatchers and men following specialities as labourers, and that at other times excluded them?—It has been changed especially at the last census, but I am not sure that I can give you the exact change without reference.

The "four-course" system.

62,009. (*Chairman.*) Would you attribute the small reduction in Norfolk mainly to the fact that there has been a smaller change of the system of cultivation there than elsewhere?—Yes, I think so.

62,010. And that they have maintained there the four-course system?—Yes,

Losses of farmers.

62,011. That experience has proved to be a system which results in loss, apparently—from what Lord Leicester says?—Yes.

62,012. From what you have heard have you come to the same conclusion?—Yes; undoubtedly within the last two years, especially, I should say that farmers generally have lost heavily. They have been losing money within the last decade to a considerable extent.

Bad seasons.

62,013. I suppose the county suffered very considerably from the drought in 1893?—Yes.

62,014. Then again the losses by the bad harvest of 1894 were very serious?—Yes.

62,015. The barley crop generally was entirely destroyed, was it not? At least the quality of the barley?—It was very bad in quality and the price was ruinous, as they expressed it.

62,016. Largely though, on account of the bad quality of the barley?—Yes, very largely.

62,017. This year again they have suffered from drought?—Yes.

62,018. Not so much, but at all events they had two bad years, the drought of 1893 and the bad harvest of 1894?—I have been told that since I was in the county things have not certainly improved, and I have been informed of further reductions of rent and so forth.

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Position of farmers.

62,019. Did you hear whether a considerable number of farmers up to 1893 had been doing well?—No, I should say that up to 1893 and for some years before 1893 the effect of the depression had been felt.

62,020. But some farmers had done well at all events?—Some farmers had done well. You may still find cases now where, no doubt, farmers are making farming pay, but there are usually exceptional circumstances which account for that.

Change in system of cultivation.

62,021. Do you think things point to an alteration of the system of cultivation there and to an abandonment, to some extent, of the four-course system?—Yes, I think there is a tendency to leave the seeds down certainly for one or two years. That tendency has already, I think, been displayed although it has hardly been long enough displayed to show very great effects.

62,022. Has there been any extension of dairying hitherto in the county?—Yes, the number of cows has increased certainly, and in some parts there has been greater attention paid to dairying. Of course the typical Norfolk farming is still the four-course system, and the winter feeding of bullocks. They are obliged to have a large acreage of roots for the winter feeding and that has really been the reason which has induced them to adhere very largely to the four-course system.

62,023. (*Mr. Everett.*) You noticed the speech of Mr. Clare Sewell Read last Saturday, I dare say, at Norwich?—Yes.

62,024. In it he stated that though Lord Leicester had given you his own experience about the unprofitableness of the four-course system, he had within the last year or two had tenants admitted on his estate who were required to pledge themselves to keep to the four-course system?—Yes, that is stated in my report.

62,025. I suppose probably, though tied verbally in that way, they are not tied rigidly as a matter of practice?—As a matter of fact, of course, the conditions are relaxed wherever the landlord has sufficient confidence in the tenant to do so.

Extent of the depression.

62,026. You found on the whole very great depression, I think, in Norfolk?—Yes, on the whole I found a great deal more depression than I expected to find when I went.

62,027. And a fearful looking forward to still worse things to come?—Yes.

62,028. That was the general prevailing feeling?—Yes.

Suggested remedies.

62,029. What remedies did you find most prominently brought to the front there?—The remedies I set out in my report. On page 66 I refer to two or three subjects, especially such questions as the question of tithe the question of the Agricultural Holdings Act, and the subjects coming under those heads, and then under the head of "remedies," the first subject stated is that of bimetallism which was put foremost by the Norfolk Chamber of Agriculture, and next to that the redress of the grievance as regards the burdens on land.

The currency.

62,030. You found a strong feeling among many intelligent representatives of agriculture in Norfolk that the alteration in the value of money has been closely connected with the great fall in prices?—That opinion was expressed. The recommendation of the Norfolk Chamber only went so far as to urge a reconsideration of the question, but it did not put forward any specific remedy.

62,031. They expressed the opinion that the two things had some close connexion together?—Yes.

62,032. The change in monetary law, and the depression of agriculture?—Quite so.

Sugar-beet culture.

62,033. (*Mr. Whitehead.*) I only want to ask you one or two questions about sugar-beet culture; did you hear anything about sugar-beet culture, specially? I think you allude to it in your report?—Yes. I am bound to say though, that I think I only heard of it from two witnesses in the south of the county—in the neighbourhood of Diss if I remember rightly, where there had been at one time a considerable amount of sugar-beet grown. In the same part I also heard of flax being cultivated, but that is the only part of the county in which I really heard much about it.

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62,034. Was not the sugar-beet growing near Diss successful?—Yes, I understood it had been successful at the time.

62,035. There was a factory started, I think, at Lavenham in Suffolk, was there not?—I believe there was.

62,036. For the purpose of taking the sugar-beets grown by the farmers?—Yes. I know that as a matter of fact.

62,037. It would require a sugar-beet factory to send the sugar-beet to if it were grown, would it not?—Yes, certainly.

62,038. Without such a factory it would be useless to attempt to cultivate it?—Quite. Those people, I believe, had been sending actually to the Lavenham factory. They were just on the borders of Suffolk.

62,039. Do you know why the factory was discontinued?—I think it was mainly the reduction of the price of sugar, if I remember rightly.

62,040. Not because the supply of sugar-beets failed?—Oh, dear no! I think it has been conclusively proved that sugar-beet can be grown in this country with a high per-centage of sugar in it.

62,041. And that farmers are willing to grow it if it pays?—Certainly.

Flax cultivation.

62,042. Will you tell us what you heard about the flax cultivation?—I found near Diss, also in that district, that flax had at one time been largely cultivated. The witness who told me most about it was quite enthusiastic on the subject, and said that he saw no reason at all why it should not be re-introduced. I think he said that, if he were 20 years younger, he would take it up again himself.

62,043. But the same difficulty exists there as to getting rid of the fibre?—Quite so.

62,044. It requires factories or places to take it to?—Yes, there was a factory in which this witness was interested, but, as I gathered, it came to an end rather from accidental causes as it were. The crops failed for two years following, that disheartened them, and they turned their attention to other things, and the factory was shut up, and so the growth died out.

62,045. But flax could be grown very well in Norfolk, as in many other parts of England?—Yes, I think that seemed to be proved conclusively by their past experience.

Assessment of land.

62,046. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) In your report, I think, you say that you found there was very great criticism upon the manner in which assessment committees value the land—was that universal, or did it only apply to one or two things?—There are a considerable number of assessment committees in Norfolk who do not adopt rent as a basis. I had a good deal of evidence on the point, as to whether it was better to take rent as a basis, or not to take rent as a basis.

62,047. Then there is a great difference of opinion?—Yes. Many farmers still believe that the practice of those assessment committees who do not take rent as the basis is right, but I should say that the preponderating opinion is in favour of taking rent as a basis.

62,048. But there is a variation in the different unions in the way in which it is assessed?—Yes, undoubtedly.

62,049. Could you tell us what you think the majority favour?—I think the majority of the assessment committees do take rent as a basis, but it is not very much more than a majority I should fancy. I have not the exact details for each assessment committee unfortunately.

Tax on barley.

62,050. As one remedy—a partial remedy—I think you found in Norfolk, which is a great barley-growing county, that they wanted a tax on foreign barley?—Yes.

62,051. Did you find that pretty universal?—Yes. I think a very large portion, at any rate, of the farmers are in favour of it—a large majority.

65,052. One word as to Lord Leicester keeping land down. That was not so much discussed, I suppose, when you were going through the county as it has been since?—No. As a matter of fact I went to Lord Leicester only a day or two before I left the county; Holkham happened to come almost last in my list.

62,053. Therefore you hardly know the prevailing opinion about it?—No; I did not have an opportunity of gathering other people's opinions upon it, because I did not know of it until I went there.

62,054. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Did you gather that the object of that modification of the four-course system was mainly the reduction of the labour bill? The production, I suppose, would be diminished to some extent, would it not?—I think the main object was the reduction of expenditure.

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62,055. There would be a greater reduction of expenses than there would be reduction of production?—Quite so.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

62,056. (*Chairman.*) I think you say that the Agricultural Holdings Act has been almost neglected by the farmers in cases of arbitrations?—I do not think that it has been neglected; but it is certainly very unpopular in Norfolk.

62,057. I thought you said that arbitrations and arrangements between in-coming and out-going tenants took place independently of it?—No. I think there are a good many cases that do come under the Act at the present time in Norfolk.

62,058. They do?—Yes; certainly.

Procedure under the Act.

62,059. Did they suggest any alteration in procedure?—Yes; that was a subject which was very considerably discussed in Norfolk. The main points which they suggested were, first of all, that each party should have an equal right to claim, and that claims should be delivered on the same day. Perhaps I may be allowed to point out that in paragraph 97 of the Report I refer to the case of Holmes *v.* Formby. I do not know whether the Commissioners have had the case formally before them from other witnesses, but it seems to me to bear rather closely upon this point.

62,060. I think, from that paragraph, you rather doubt whether it is in the interest of the tenant that the claim of the landlord should be made at the same time?—Yes; if Holmes *v.* Formby is good law and is to be the interpretation of the Act, then it lays down that a landlord can never recover a balance in an arbitration.

62,061. Moreover, as the law now is, a landlord cannot present his claim under the Act and avail himself of the procedure until the tenant himself has initiated the proceedings?—Quite so.

62,062. Whereas if both presented claims at the same time, proceedings could take place on the part of the landlord even although the tenant should afterwards abandon his?—Quite so.

62,063. That would be giving, apparently, a certain advantage to the landlord?—Certainly. That is recognised; but, of course, the contention is now that those cases where a tenant does not claim are just those cases where it would be most just for the landlord to claim.

62,064. Of course, one has to look at it from the point of view that this claim for an alteration has been put forward on the part of the tenants. Would it really be their interest to make that change?—Taken by itself, it would tell rather in the interest of the landlord than in the interest of the tenant, if that were the only suggestion made; but I think it is quite recognised by the tenants who put that forward that it would only be a part of the amendment of the Act; and therefore they are willing to accept the consequences of it.

Small holdings.

62,065. You have given an account in some part of your report of small holdings by men who have got 30 or 40 acres, and I think you say that although they have a very hard life of it yet in the main they have made the two ends meet?—Yes, the few small holders that I came personally in contact with seemed to be just making ends meet.

62,066. Were they men living wholly out of the land?—Yes.

62,067. Not using the land only as an adjunct to other things?—No, those I speak of were men living simply on their land.

62,068. Are there many cases of small holders of the other kind; I mean men who are labourers or do carting and small jobs of that kind, and who also have from 1 to 10 or 15 acres which they cultivate in their spare time?—No, of course there are cases, but I did not come across any particularly, and I do not think they would be a large class.

62,069. Has there been any experiment made in Norfolk in the same direction as you describe in Dorsetshire and other counties of creating small holdings of that kind?—I did come across one or two instances in which landowners had cut up land into small holdings, but only quite recently, and it was too soon really to speak with any certainty as to the results.

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62,070. What sized holdings were they?—About 20 or 30 acres.

62,071. To be occupied by men who were also enguged upon other things?—Yes. In one case, in West Norfolk, there was an instance of a landowner—a rather small landowner—who had just cut up a farm into small holdings and in connexion with it had formed a common, in order to give the men common rights, because it has been found in cases where small holdings exist that they take them much more readily if there is a common right attached to them. Therefore this landowner had deliberately made a new common, which struck me as being rather a new departure.

62,072. That is a very interesting feature?—Yes.

62,073. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is not a common in law, is it?—I suppose not.

62,074. (*Chairman.*) What size common had he made?—I forget now; it was only for about four or five small holdings, just to give a cow-run for them—something like 20 or 25 acres.

62,075. Four or five small holdings of about 20 acres each with a common right?—Yes, the right to run cows over it.

62,076. It was a large field, I suppose?—Yes, that is what it was.

62,077. Of course it is hardly time to see whether it has answered or not?—No, not in that case at all. It had hardly got into working order.

62,078. Was that done by a landlord or through the County Council?—It was done simply by a landlord.

Definition of "Agricultural labourer."

62,079. (*Mr. Everett.*) With regard to the definition of the term "Agricultural labourer" in the census, could you put in information on that point? It might account for a good deal of the disparity if men like thatchers, for instance, are put as tradesmen in one census and as agricultural labourers in another?—I could find out the exact differences that have been made and put them before the Commission.

62,080. It would be rather interesting if you were to do so?—Certainly, and I will do so if you wish.*

Report on Wiltshire small holdings.

62,081. (*Chairman.*) Now there is your report on Wiltshire. On page 32 of that I see you speak of small holdings; how did you find that those small holders were doing?—At West Wellow they are doing at the present time pretty well. They were nearly all the owners of the land, but in only one case is the original owner, so far as I could find, in occupation at the present time. All those who had originally taken up the land had disposed of it. It had been a piece of heathland which had been sold in small lots and no doubt improved very much by the first owners, who had probably been able to make a good bargain by selling it, and most of them got out.

62,082. What were the type of men who had come in, were they labourers?—No, not the majority; many of them were persons who had a small income, and just bought a little piece of land to live on.

62,083. Treated it all in a residential way?—Quite so.

62,084. But still interested in making a profit out of the land?—Yes, they were endeavouring to do what they could out of the land. I visited two or three cases of men who were really occupying it in a commercial way, and making it pay.

62,085. But not, I suppose, making a livelihood wholly out of it?—Yes; in one case a man had a number of glass houses, and was growing strawberries and cucumbers in particular, and doing very well in that way. He was a skilled gardener before he took the place, and no doubt was doing very well out of the holding.

Major Poore's scheme.

62,086. But on the other hand, in the Winterslow case, at the present time the men in occupation of the land, are entirely labourers and nothing else, I think?—Yes, they are labourers.

62,087. I was there myself not very long ago, and was very much struck with it. One would have said there could not be a more rural parish than that is. It is one of the most out-of-the-way rural villages I ever came across, with nothing but labouring men of the ordinary type in it; yet somehow those labouring men appear to have found money to build houses upon that land?—Yes; of course there were circumstances which favoured it in that locality, because of the amount of woodland about. The men got work at fairly high wages in the woods during the winter.

62,088. I do not think it amounted to more than 13*s.* a week even in the winter, if I recollect aright?—My recollection is that it was about 15*s.*

62,089. It was 13*s.* or 15*s.*; but it was quite true that those men in the winter time got work in the woods?—Yes.

62,090. None of them were permanent labourers on any farms?—No.

62,091. But they worked when they could, and in the winter they worked in the woods?—Yes. Then in the summer they got the piece-work—in the hay harvest and the corn harvest, which of course paid fairly well, and they did the work on their own holdings in the spring and the autumn. They worked through the year in that way.

62,092. What struck me as extraordinary was, that in a purely labourers' village of that kind there should be so many men who were able to produce money enough to build their houses; 13 of them had, within the last few years, built houses at a cost of 100*l.* to 150*l.* each, and all apparently had produced money to some extent, and some had no doubt borrowed part of the money?—They were paying for it on the 15 years principle.

62,093. That is for the land only; they bought the land from Major Poore upon the terms that they were to repay the purchase-money by equal instalments spread over 14 years; but besides that they had produced money enough—at all events 13 of them—to build cottages?—Yes.

62,094. The village showed great activity in that respect?—Yes, and, so far as I came in contact with them all seemed to be truly satisfied with the prospect.

62,095. The question of what they call the Land Court is outside the question of the financial arrangement?—Quite.

62,096. Apparently they had got a very long leasehold from the owner, which was equivalent to a freehold, and they were not bound to be members of the Land Court, and they could assign their interest to anybody else?—Yes.

62,097. So that Major Poore's idea of constituting a kind of village land court is quite independent of the ownership of the land?—Yes; it only comes into the arrangement because they undertake, through the land court, I think, the collection of the rents.

62,098. They do, no doubt?—I think they do that; that is the only way in which it comes into the arrangement.

62,099. There is no obligation on the part of anyone to remain a member of the court?—No.

62,100. Or that the persons they sell it to should be members of the court?—No.

62,101. You have seen in the various counties you have visited several experiments of this kind, I think?—Yes, I saw one by Sir Robert Edgcumbe, near Dorchester.

Extension of small holdings.

62,102. Do you not think that those experiments might be tried in a great many other parts of the country with advantage?—Yes; my impression from those certainly is that there must be many other parts of the kingdom where similar experiments might be tried. So far as I have been able to judge, they appear to be likely to be successful. I do not say that in all cases it is possible to judge, because in most cases, in point of fact, they have been going on for too short a time to really judge with certainty.

62,103. These men were giving very fair and good prices for the land?—Yes.

62,104. In the case of Winterslow, they were actually paying Major Poore double what he had given for the land himself?—Yes, I think it would work out that way, that he would eventually get a good return.

62,105. Of course he had entered into some kind of arrangement that the profit would be devoted to public purposes?—Yes.

62,106. But still these men, financially, so far as they were concerned, were buying land at a very full price compared with the value of land in the district?—Yes.

62,107. Therefore the operation could be carried out by the landlords generally without any loss to themselves; they would get from the purchasers a full price for the land, judging by these cases?—In these cases,

* The witness subsequently referred to Vol. II. of Evidence, Appendix C., where the differences between the Census Returns of 1891, 1881, and 1871 are clearly set forth.

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no doubt, the land had been sold to the holders by the owners at its market price.

62,108. In these cases something above the market prices they were giving in Winterslow—they were giving nearly double?—Yes, certainly. Of course the total amount which would be paid for it in small holdings would very much exceed what the amount would be for the whole as one farm.

62,109. The only point I am trying to draw out is whether this operation could not be carried out by landowners, not only without loss to themselves, but even if they chose to ask the price, with some profit beyond the ordinary value of the land—beyond the very low present value of the land?—Yes.

62,110. It seems to indicate that there is a market for land in that direction?—I think that is so, but I think it is only fair to say that in all these cases it seems to me there are local circumstances which favour the experiment. I do not say that it would be possible to adopt such a plan universally, and you would have to consider beforehand in making the experiment whether the local circumstances favoured it.

62,111. What would the local circumstances be? The possibility of these men getting employment other than as permanent labours?—That would be one element certainly. I think, as I said just now, that is the element which mainly favours it in the case of Winterslow.

62,112. It might not be desirable everywhere to establish whole colonies of them, but at all events in most districts there would be an opportunity for a certain number of them?—Yes.

62,113. And it might be very desirable to have in every part of the country a certain number of men of this kind who are partly cultivating their own holdings and also ready to work casually upon anything which offers?—Yes. In the case of the experiment about three miles from Dorchester, I think the element there is mainly the nearness to a large town. In that case, too, the persons who have taken up the land are only, I think, in about six cases, agricultural labourers. There are other persons, I mean to say, besides agricultural labourers.

Major Poore's scheme.

62,114. Your interest in this case of Winterslow was that they are purely agricultural labourers?—Yes, almost, I think without exception; in one or two cases they might be small village shopkeepers.

62,115. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) But they work in the coppices and woods?—They work in the woods in the winter and get piecework from the farmers in the summer. That is how they make their year's income.

62,116. (*Chairman.*) Do you recollect what is the total number of men who bought land at Winterslow under that scheme? I know there were 13 of them who built houses, but there are a good many others who had already got cottages?—There were 112 acres let out into different sized plots.

62,117. Varying from one acre or even a quarter of an acre up to 20 acres?—Yes.

62,118. Some of the smaller purchasers paid the money down, I think?—Yes; I was going to say that nine men, taking altogether 80 acres, paid the money down.

62,119. (*Lord Rendel.*) Is it, do you think, one condition of the success of the system that they should take the cream of the land in a district?—No, I do not think there was anything exceptional about this farm; it was an ordinary farm of the district which was cut up.

62,120. (*Chairman.*) In this case the labourers themselves had divided it among themselves and had apportioned the value according to the nearness of the land to the village and to its special quality apparently with very great care and minuteness?—Yes.

62,121. (*Lord Rendel.*) Is there any hostility on the part of the larger holders to the system, on the ground that it takes off the more valuable portions of the land?—No, there had not been in that case; in fact a local farmer, the chief farmer of the parish, I think, was acting as secretary to these men's organisation, so that there seemed to be no feeling of that sort.

Land laid down to grass.

62,122. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) With reference to a case that you mention at page 16, where you state that a whole farm has been laid down to grass, and give the amount of the rent, labour, tithes, rates, taxes, tradesmen, houses, and sundries for 1874 and 1893; do I understand that that was properly laid down to grass, I mean that it was cultivated first, and seeds regularly sown, or did it tumble down?—I think that had been properly laid down, in fact I feel sure of it.

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62,123. So there had been considerable expense in laying it down?—Yes.

62,124. And that made a still greater contrast for the rent that is now being paid for it?—Yes, in fact it was farmed by one of the best known farmers in the kingdom, and therefore I am sure that it was properly laid down.

62,125. I only want to get whether it had tumbled down, or whether it had been laid down?—It was laid down.

Form of agreement.

62,126. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) In the appendix on page 57 you give a copy of an agreement; is that the usual agreement in that part of the country?—It is an estate agreement—one that I found in force on a particular estate. I should say, generally speaking, it is fairly representative of the agreements in the district.

62,127. Are the farmers satisfied with an agreement of this kind?—Yes; I do not remember any special complaint being made as to the terms of that agreement.

Ground game

62,128. Do they not take advantage of the Ground Game Act?—Yes; on the game question there certainly was some dissatisfaction expressed in South Wilts. I refer to that. I remember that the view was expressed in South Wilts, that although there were advantages in farming under a large landowner and a wealthy landowner, yet that one disadvantage was, that if he was very much interested in the preservation of game, he occupied a position in which it was much more difficult for the tenant to deal with him. That is to say, that any complaints as to the over-preservation of game, or damage from game, would not be attended to by the landowner, because the landowner would prefer to maintain the game.

62,129. I see that the tenants have to kill all the moles at their own expense, and to preserve the game, rabbits, hares, and everything else for the landlord?—Yes. I think you asked just now was that agreement typical; that agreement was in an estate where game is made, perhaps, rather a special object. I do not think as regards game they would be quite so stringent on all the estates in South Wilts.

Farm of 14,000 acres.

62,130. (*Lord Rendel.*) With reference to that case of the 14,000 acres held by one tenant in large blocks, I gather that you consider it wholly exceptional?—Quite.

62,131. The size of the holding was largely due to the physical character of the land, I think?—It is hardly fair to speak of it as a holding, it was really a number of different holdings. In one way it was not exceptional because it was only a number of typical farms in a district thrown together and farmed as one occupation, or substantially as one occupation.

62,132. Was the size of the different blocks unusual?—No, not very.

62,133. Not for the district?—No. A thousand acre farm is not an uncommon thing in the Salisbury Plain district.

62,134. That being so the conditions which favour cultivation economically were dependant, mainly, I think you say, on the command of capital and the exceptional advantages of the holder in that respect?—Yes.

62,135. Even so, do I understand you to think that in all probability the rent recovered by the owner did not much exceed the interest on the value of the buildings?—I do not think I had particulars in that case which would enable me to express an opinion. This holding, as a matter of fact, I think, was held under different landowners, and I had no particulars of the 14,000 acre holding from the landowners' point of view.

62,136. In that district did you form an opinion that occasionally the rent for these very large runs did not probably exceed the interest on the value of the owners' plant upon them?—Yes; I should think that almost certainly would be the case and must be the case in many instances, because there has been a large outlay in forming water meadows and putting up extensive buildings.

62,137. I gather you would regard this case as very exceptional, economically?—Certainly as regards the size of the holding, as a single farming occupation.

62,138. And as not furnishing any example of value generally?—No.

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Mr. R. H. Rew. — 8 Nov. 1895. — Law of distraint.

62,139. With regard to distraint, I think you refer to the opinion of an important witness upon the question of distraint; you speak of a Mr. Farmer as pointing to an objection he had against distress, that it placed the tenant and the owner on an unequal footing in cases where the tenant might legitimately withhold rent?—Yes.

62,140. Did you regard that as an objection likely to be seriously, or generally, entertained?—I was rather struck with the point as affording certainly an argument in favour of the abolition of the law of distress.

62,141. You thought it worth reporting?—I am bound to say I was struck with the point as being, if I may say so, the best argument I have yet met with in favour of the abolition of the law of distress.

62,142. I think the same witness objected rather to the view that the law of distress favoured the smaller tenant?—Yes.

62,143. On the ground that it was not to the interest of the tenant, or of the community, or of agriculture, that the small tenant should be encouraged to run up arrears of rent?—Yes. I have no doubt he did put it in that way, but I have forgotten.

62,144. I only wanted to know whether, having regard to this, you had had your attention directed to it by the evidence of the farmers that you saw on the subject?—I do not remember that the same witness had expressed those views that you mention.

62,145. I am speaking only from memory?—He referred to small holdings, but I do not remember that he mentioned them in that way, or that he made any special reference to the law of distress in connexion with them.

62,146. I gather that the opinion is entertained by some farmers, and others connected with agriculture, that the maintenance in a modified manner of the law of distress is favourable to the smaller tenant?—Undoubtedly that is very largely held.

62,147. I want to know whether you ever found that the contrary opinion was largely held, namely, that it was against the interest of the small tenant and of the farmer that he should enter his farm with, as it were, a mortgage on his floating capital held by his landlord?—No; I cannot say that that view is so widely held as the other one, which certainly is very widely held, so far as my experience goes, namely, that the existence of the law of distress is in favour of the small farmer.

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62,148. Your mentioning the opinion in this report must be taken as no more than recording an opinion you had come across?—Quite so.

Farm of 14,000 acres.

62,149. (*Chairman.*) In the case of the gentleman who has taken in hand 14,000 acres, what has become of all the farmhouses on the different farms?—I should say, as I have explained in my report, that he is not alone absolutely in the undertaking. He himself is, I may say, the guiding spirit of the concern, but he has a partner. In fact, I think, he has one or two partners who are not all of them partners in respect of the whole of the undertaking, but are partners in respect of part of it. Therefore, to some extent, the farmhouses are occupied by his partners, and in other cases by his bailiffs.

62,150. (*Lord Rendel.*) But it is one business economically?—It is one business economically, and it is dealt with as one business.

62,151. (*Chairman.*) Then it is like a large partnership or joint stock affair?—Yes; but really he does all the marketing and runs the business.

62,152. And probably effects great economy in that way?—Undoubtedly.

62,153. Because he is always ready with a large sum in his hands, and can buy on very good terms?—Yes; he is able to buy in the best markets, of course.

62,154. Has there been very much economy in labour and horses in consequence of so many farms being worked together?—I have not the details of it. There must have been, of course, a certain amount of economy. There is certainly economy in regard to implements; they use steam machinery very largely, for instance, and that is available for the whole of the undertaking very much more cheaply than it could be if each holding had to have a different set.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to Thursday next, at 12 o'clock.

One Hundred and Thirteenth Day.

Thursday, 14th November 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. WALTER HUME LONG, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN-THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

Mr. EDWARD BROWN, F.L.S., called and examined.

Mr. E. Brown, F.L.S. — 14 Nov. 1895. — Witness' experiences.

62,155. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I believe you are a lecturer on aviculture at the University of Edinburgh, at the Reading College, and also to the Yorkshire College?—Yes.

62,156. Also to various county councils?—Yes.

62,157. Have you had considerable experience in poultry breeding and management?—I have.

62,158. For how long a time?—For about 25 years from the practical point of view.

62,159. I believe you have also written several books on the subject of poultry?—I have.

62,160. From the practical standpoint?—Yes.

62,161. You were editor of the poultry department of the "Live Stock Journal," I believe?—Yes, I was for several years.

62,162. Now do you write for any other paper?—Yes, I write for several papers. I write for the "Live Stock Journal" still, but I do not occupy an editorial position.

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Mr. E. Brown, F.L.S.
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62,163. Have you acted as judge of poultry at any shows besides the Royal Agricultural Society's shows?—I have acted at the Royal Dublin show and one or two others.

62,164. I believe that in 1888, you made a very extensive inquiry into the poultry industry of Ireland?—Yes, I did.

62,165. On whose behalf was that?—It was for the "Weekly Freeman."

62,166. Have you also made similar reports on certain counties in England?—Yes, for the "Yorkshire Post," the "Manchester Guardian," and the "Western Morning News" of Plymouth.

62,167. Have those inquiries been confined to certain counties?—Yes.

62,168. Could you tell us which counties?—The "Manchester Guardian" had Lancashire and Cheshire, the "Yorkshire Post" had Yorkshire and Lincolnshire, and the "Western Morning News" took Devon and Cornwall.

62,169. Have you had any experience of poultry-farming or rearing in other counties?—I have lectured in a great many counties.

62,170. I do not care so much about the lecturing. I want to know if you have had experience there?—I have not made the same general observations; individual inquiries I have made, but not general ones.

62,171. Have you inquired into the question of poultry rearing in foreign countries?—Yes, chiefly in France and Denmark, but also in Belgium and Germany.

Demand for eggs and table poultry.

62,172. I believe you would like to give your evidence under certain heads, and we will take first the demand for eggs and poultry in various parts of the country. What would you wish to say on that?—The first point that I desired to bring before the Commission was that the demand for both eggs and table poultry is steadily upon the increase in every part of the country. This is evidenced to some extent by the imports from foreign countries, which have risen since the last Royal Commission from about 2,335,000*l.* to 4,267,000*l.* last year.

Supplies from Ireland.

62,173. All eggs?—Eggs and poultry, but chiefly eggs. During the same period there has been a considerable increase in Irish supplies, though we cannot give the same statistics. I have never been able to obtain from the Irish authorities particulars as to the quantities of eggs and poultry sent to this country. Some seven years ago I obtained figures from every port in Ireland as to the amount of their exports, and have repeated the same once or twice since, but they are not official figures, as of course they are only what were obtained from the port authorities. During that time the quantities of poultry kept in Ireland have advanced by one-third, that is within the last seven or eight years.

62,174. How is that shown—by the agricultural statistics?—Yes. In the Irish agricultural statistics are given the number of poultry. Therefore whilst I think that it is true that in some districts in Britain there has been a slight falling off in poultry production, due to a large extent to economic changes in these counties, still at the same time the evidence is that there is an increased home supply, taking it as a whole.

62,175. Are you speaking of Great Britain altogether?—Of Britain, not Ireland, because Ireland is a producing country. I do not think that the advance, however, has been nearly so great as the increased imports.

Consumption of eggs.

62,176. (*Mr. Channing.*) There has been and advance in Great Britain itself apart from Ireland, I think?—I think there has been an advance in Great Britain itself apart from Ireland, taking it as a whole. My own calculation is that during the last 15 years, taking foreign imports and home production, there has been an increased consumption of eggs equal to a 100 per cent. per annum.

Home supplies.

62,177. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you met with any complaints as to the difficulty of getting any supplies of eggs and poultry—I am asking now as to Great Britain and not as to foreign imports?—These complaints are almost universal as to the uncertainty of supply at certain seasons. Three years ago I made an exhaustive inquiry of traders in every part of Britain as to the supplies, and complaints were universal; whilst lately I have been making further inquiries and find the same thing. It is true that in the country markets eggs can be sold readily during the winter months at from six to nine for a shilling, and yet comparatively few can be obtained. Only last week at Settle in Yorkshire I found that they were bringing in foreign eggs because they could not get any locally.

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Foreign supplies.

62,178. Is that because the foreign eggs are cheaper?—No, it is simply due to the failure of the home supply. They can sell the eggs if obtainable. Some time ago I was informed by a dealer in Sheffield that 70 per cent. of the eggs sold in that town were foreign. In Norwich it was estimated that 75 per cent. were from abroad, and in Colchester for eight months of the year foreign eggs form the bulk, and in Newcastle and the district round there, probably nine out of every ten eggs sold are Danish.

62,179. May I ask how, what we may call the retail dealers in these places you have named and in other places, obtain their supply? are the eggs consigned to them from abroad, or do they pass through the London or any other market first?—They pass in many cases through the hands of Danish and French merchants who have established businesses in England. For instance, there are two or three Danish firms in Newcastle who bring the goods over and sell them to the retailer. I do not know whether that was just the point you wished to draw out.

62,180. I wanted to know if there was one middle man or two middle men between the producer of the eggs that come from abroad before they are retailed here?—It would depend entirely upon the place where the retailer was living; for instance, if the retailer was living, say, in Essex or in Kent and he was obtaining foreign eggs, the probabilities are that he would only have one middle man, but if he was living further inland, say in the Birmingham district, he would have the middle man in London and probably another middle man in Birmingham.

62,181. Does that apply to poultry?—Not to so great an extent. The quantity of poultry imported in this country is only about one-seventh the quantity of eggs in value.

Quality of English and foreign poultry and ducks.

62,182. From what you have gathered by your experience in travelling about, do you find that there is a better quality of table poultry and ducks produced in this country in certain quantities and sold all over the country or not?—Undoubtedly our own are a great deal better than those which are imported. Some foreign countries produce better table poultry, but they do not send them here.

62,183. Where do they go to?—To Paris and other great markets. They can get higher prices in their own country than they could possibly get here.

62,184. Are you of opinion that those who produce the best quality of poultry here in Great Britain can compete with the foreign market as regards the quality?—There is no doubt about that. We can produce quite as good poultry as is produced anywhere, and some of the English fatted poultry is as good as you can buy abroad.

62,185. But it does not fetch the same price here as in Paris?—No, and, therefore, the very finest qualities of French poultry would go to Paris and would not come to England.

62,186. Therefore, speaking generally, the English poultry grower competes on the same terms with the foreigner?—Yes, just on the same terms. The only thing is that the Englishman has entirely the market for the better qualities of table poultry in this country; he has no competitor for the better qualities; it is only when he competes against the poorer qualities that he has to face his rivals abroad.

Rearing and fattening establishments.

62,187. Where should you say that the best establishments for rearing and fattening poultry are at home?—In Sussex, undoubtedly; around Uckfield and Heathfield.

Irish lean poultry.

62,188. Is it not a fact that a great quantity of lean poultry is brought from Ireland and also from some other places in Great Britain, taken to Surrey and Sussex and some other poultry-fattening places and there fattened?—Yes, that is so. The railway company gave me an estimate some time ago—I think that was in 1892—which stated that there were about 300,000 chickens brought over to Sussex.

62,189. Where from?—From Ireland; but I think the number has been reduced somewhat since.

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62,190. What do you think is the cause of that?—I think the cause is that there have been more produced locally.

Extension of fattening establishments.

62,191. Do you think that the system of fattening chickens and ducks could be advantageously spread over different parts of the country and not confined to those one or two places, or whatever the number is?—I have no doubt of that, because the fattening to a large extent is independent of either soil or climate. At certain periods of the year it is conducted indoors, and can be conducted indoors altogether.

62,192. Would you apply that to ducks and geese, and turkeys, besides chickens?—Yes; of course the system of fattening ducklings is different. I should like to call the attention of the Commission to a fact that I have recently come across, namely, that a farmer named Walsh, living about four miles from Fleetwood, in North Lancashire——

62,193. That is very near the coast, is it not?—Yes, just on the southern side of Morecambe Bay.

62,194. What is the nature of the soil?—It is a heavyish soil. He has gone in for duck-rearing, and this year has himself marketed upwards of 4,000. Only a fortnight ago I was told by one of the largest retailers in Manchester that this man was sending better ducklings to Manchester than they had been obtaining from Aylesbury. Mr. Walsh told me that he had found it very profitable indeed. I should like, if I might, a little later on, to say a word with regard to his arrangements for marketing in the direction of carriage, which, I think, is a very important part of the question.

62,195. (*Mr. Channing.*) Might I ask whether he gets the same prices as the Aylesbury people?—He has been getting sometimes rather more.

62,196. (*Sir Nigel King cole.*) Will you say where he gets his young from?—He breeds them.

62,197. Breeds them and fattens them?—Yes, he has a farm of about 150 acres, I think it is.

62,198. From your experience do you think that this system could be also carried out as regards geese and turkeys?—I do. I think with regard to geese that there are very many parts of the country where the industry might be re-introduced. At one time it was more prevalent; for instance, take Northumberland and Cumberland, there were more geese bred nearly 100 years ago, I believe, in these two counties than there are to-day. Certain economic changes have led to this; still there are great tracts of country there that might be used for geese-breeding. With regard to turkeys all that you want for them is a dry soil; they can stand cold, but they cannot resist damp.

Marketing of foreign eggs.

62,199. I should like to ask you with regard to the methods adopted abroad, in what respect are they better than what are adopted in England, judging from what you have seen?—With regard to eggs the chief difference is that, of course, poultry are kept to a larger extent by farmers abroad. There are no great poultry farms there, but still at the same time they do keep larger numbers of poultry, and, I think, that there is greater unity in marketing the produce. They seem to fall together to a greater extent than our people do in this country. One important remark with regard to eggs is that the trade is thoroughly organised. I am not now speaking of Russian eggs, which are very cheap eggs, or even of Austrian eggs, but in France, the best eggs that come to this country, are collected from the producers, and they do not wait for the producers to bring them into the market.

62,200. You mean to say that there is a middleman who goes round and collects the eggs?—Day by day he goes round a given area and brings them into a centre, where they are sorted and packed, and then forwarded to the London markets. Just to bear out the point as to the French eggs being the best of the foreign, I have taken out the average values of eggs from abroad from the Board of Trade returns; and I find that the average for the Russian was only 5*s.* 8*d.* per long 100, that is 120; of Danish, 6*s.* 9*d.*; of German, 5*s.* 7*d.*; and of Belgian, 6*s.* I may say that Belgium has the credit because the eggs come through Belgium, and are recorded as coming through the last country through which they pass.

62,201. Then a great many of the Belgian eggs are really Italian?—And Hungarian; and the German eggs are largely Austrian and Hungarian. The French eggs average 8*s.* per long 100. You see they are the highest of all. The Canadians were 7*s.* 2*d.*, and other countries 6*s.* 10*d.*

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62,202. What would be the English?—The English would be from 10*s.* to 11*s.* on the average.

62,203. Why should the French egg be better than the others?—Because it is fresher. You see we are within short touch with France. According to those figures taken from the Board of Trade returns the French stands first and the Danish come just about second, with the exception of Canadian, showing that where we have the nearer countries we can get the fresher eggs. In France they collect them and forward them rapidly.

Poultry farming in France.

62,204. I suppose you would say that the climate in France, generally, is better adapted to the rearing of poultry than the climate in England?—I do not think so. I believe that many people who have formed that idea travel in France in the warmer months of the year. My observations in France are chiefly made in the winter months, and I find that the climate then over the greater part of the country is certainly by no means better, and is sometimes a little worse than it is in this country.

62,205. I suppose one thing is that there is not so much corn grown in France, and, therefore, the poultry do not spoil the crops so much as they do where they are kept to a large extent in England?—They do not keep them to a large extent in France—at least not in sufficient numbers to injure the crops. Last December I was down in the La Bresse country, and asked some of the farmers there whether the fowls ever did any harm. They said no, they never did any harm, at least, if they did it was only very small.

62,206. They keep a large quantity of poultry in the vineyards, do they not?—Yes, very extensively.

62,207. They do more good than harm there?—Yes, they do no harm whatever there, and they are allowed to remain on the vineyards for ten months, simply taking them off just when the grapes are ripening.

Encouragement of poultry farming in France.

62,208. Is there much encouragement given in France and other countries abroad as regards prizes for poultry at the shows or markets?—Some of the large shows are directly under the control of the Ministry of Agriculture there, of course differing in that respect from our own country. I find that they have a series of smaller shows held at different seasons of the year. I attended one at Bourg in the Ain Department last December. That is entirely promoted by the Ministry of Agriculture. Prizes are given; there is no charge for entry, and it is really a show sale; that is the object of it. I am sure it has the effect of stimulating the quantity of production, and also the character of the birds.

62,209. Is that given in connexion with any cattle show or any other show?—No, this was an individual show. There was in addition butter and cheese, but these were all.

Encouragement of the home poultry industry.

62,210. Now as to your own experience as regards Great Britain, having judged at shows, do you think that shows have tended to increase the production and to get a better quality of all sorts of poultry?—Yes, when they have been conducted upon right lines, they have. I believe that the development of poultry in Ulster is almost entirely due to the shows. They had a number of shows over Ulster, which have had a wonderful educational effect upon the farmers of the district.

62,211. Do you attach much importance to different breeds suiting different soils or different districts?—I do. That is one of the points on which I believe there is a great field for inquiry. Hitherto it has been left pretty much to individuals to find out, and sometimes they have not had the opportunity of doing so.

62,212. How would you like to see that experiment carried out?—That can only be done by experimental work in different parts of the country. The difficulty with regard to that is whilst in one or two directions there are attempts being made on those lines by different county councils, I am afraid that the work is rather too great to expect any individual county to take up, except you induce large counties like Yorkshire and Lancashire to do so.

Distribution of English poultry and eggs.

62,213. Do you see any mode by which the producer could get at the central markets easier than he does at present, as regards railway communication. I mean?—That really opens out a very large and a very serious question. I may just give an example which,

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perhaps, may throw some light upon the matter. Doubtless the Commissioners have read that in Sussex the work is carried out by middlemen, who collect from the producers the fatted poultry, bring them to the station, and forward them. Their charge is 1*d.* per bird, which includes the cost of collection and cartage, and also delivery to London by the railway companies. At Aylesbury the railway company's agent acts the part of the middleman, and he collects from the producers either by the company's own carts, or arranges with local carriers to bring them in, and then they are all forwarded in bulk to London. In that case also it is done at the charge of 1*d.* per bird. Mr. Walsh, to whom I referred as living near Fleetwood, has made an arrangement with the London and North-Western Railway Company, and they supply him with the baskets, and carry the birds to Manchester at 1*d.* per bird, bringing back the hampers free of charge. Where you can get quantities I do not think that the question of railway rates has ever been a great trouble.

62,214. Are you alluding to poultry dead or alive now?—Dead. It is when you have to deal with small quantities that there is any great difficulty in this matter, so far as my own experience goes. I have found that the railway companies are ready, as long as they see some chance of trade, to meet the producers.

62,215. You think that if in different districts there was a collector who was paid a small sum, such a sum as you have mentioned, it would be both for the benefit of the producer and the consumer that he should collect the poultry and send it to the market?—It is undoubtedly so, and that applies to eggs equally well. I believe that the chief difficulty, so far as marketing is concerned, is that the trade is not organised except in certain districts, such as Sussex and Buckinghamshire.

62,216. But it is increasing there?—It is increasing considerably. When we can secure organisation in other districts so that the eggs especially can be marketed very rapidly, I think that the difficulty of railway rates would not be a great one, and I believe that the enhancement of prices would be very important indeed.

62,217. You think if the consumer felt that he was really getting fairly fresh home eggs or home-grown poultry he would give the best price for it—a better price than for foreign produce?—That is so.

62,218. And that it would be remunerative to the producer?—There is no doubt about that, because there are many examples which can be given as instances in proof. There is no difficulty in selling eggs if you can get them to market while they are fresh.

62,219. You must get a certain quantity, that is, there must be a regular supply, and that supply can only be obtained by the collector?—By the concentration of several producers.

62,220. The individual producer would be put at a disadvantage by sending up uncertain and small quantities?—That is so.

62,221. (*Mr. Channing.*) Does the want of organisation lead to any waste of English eggs?—It leads to waste in price, but I do not know that it leads to the actual waste of eggs. There is a great loss of price. For instance, the Army and Navy Stores have attempted several times to deal almost entirely in English eggs, but found they could not do so, and they have had to depend on foreign eggs which were more regular; the stores can have them just when wanted; they come fresh and properly packed, and instead of people, as they do here at this time of the year, holding them for a week or two for a rising market, the foreigners send them off whilst they are in their best condition, and the result is that the stores are now selling 70,000 per week principally foreign eggs, showing that the lack of organisation has had a very serious result.

Poultry farming in France.

62,222. (*Lord Rendel.*) Taking the question of poultry first, you have studied the question of rearing and fattening poultry in France itself, I gather?—Yes, I have.

62,223. You have visited La Bresse and Bourg?—Yes.

62,224. I understand you to say that the French keep for home consumption the best of their fatted poultry?—The very best.

62,225. The reason being that they obtain a better price in France?—That is so.

Consumption of poultry in

62,226. Would you say that the poultry was relatively a more important article of diet in France to the upper middle classes than it is in England?—Undoubtedly you would find more consumed there than in this country. At the same time there is no doubt it is rapidly growing here—very rapidly; but at the present time I believe it is more important in France than it is here.

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England and France.

62,227. The fact is that in France there is a demand more general and more lucrative for poultry relatively to the means of the population than there is at the present moment in England?—I think so far as the ordinary type of fowls are concerned we have as great a demand and as good prices in this country as in France. When I made that observation I was referring only to the very finest qualities, such as La Bresse and Le Mans birds, for which they get very high prices; it is only the picked birds, and the very few picked birds, that they sell at those prices. We can to some extent do the same in this country, but not to the same degree as abroad.

62,228. Still you would regard with satisfaction an increase in the demand at home for the improved quality of poultry?—Undoubtedly so; it has considerably increased.

62,229. What I wanted to gather from your experience in France is, whether in your opinion, there is a prospect of a steadily increasing demand in this country for an improved character of poultry, if the poultry were to be procured?—I think there is no doubt about that. As an instance, 8 or 10 years ago it was scarcely possible to sell a good fatted fowl in Manchester. To-day they are selling very largely, the birds being brought up from Sussex. The same applies to a smaller extent in Leeds. There are different parts of the country where a demand is growing up for the better qualities of poultry.

62,230. Then you would agree that there is approaching a certain change in the habit in this country, of the middle and upper classes tending to assimilate the English habit to the French habit?—I think so. I think it is a very marked change.

62,231. And to that extent the rearing and fattening of poultry is likely to have a growing importance in this country?—Undoubtedly so.

62,232. You would regard it as an extremely favourable field for effort?—I do.

62,233. There being no reason why the habits of the country should give to the comparatively poorer households in France a readiness to outbid the comparatively richer households in England for the article of poultry?—I do not think it would be so.

62,234. I understand you to say that it is the fact that at present in France, higher prices are given for the very best poultry than could be obtained here?—That is undoubtedly so. I was asked in Bourg, by a woman standing in the market place, last December, 20 francs for a fatted fowl—a capon.

62,235. (*Mr. Channing.*) Of what weight?—It would run about 10½lbs.; she sold it for the money.

62,236. (*Lord Rendel.*) Would you cousider that the reason for that was to be found not in the greater table luxury of France, but in the greater importance which attaches relatively to poultry as an article of diet?—Not only so, but I think the bird was worth it. It does not make any matter what is the size of the bird; it is how much can you eat of it. People are coming to realize in this country, as they have already realized in France, that the fatted fowl pays them better to buy, because they are getting ordinarily a much greater amount of edible food.

62,237. Then whether simply as an article of food or as an article of luxury, poultry has greater relative importance in France than in England at the present day?—I think so.

62,238. And there is no reason why in England, the condition of things should not be assimilated to that of France?—Not at all.

62,239. Except for the absence of sufficient effort and skill in the production of poultry itself?—That is the only hindrance at the present time, I believe.

62,240. You would regard poultry as having in that respect also, a very great importance as an agricultural product?—I believe so.

Distribution of poultry and eggs.

62,241. Then with reference to the distribution, you see already means which would leave little to be desired in regard to distribution; a penny a bird dead you think, would not be a heavy tax upon the cost of delivering to the consumer in the great cities?—No. That, of course, is no hindrance in itself, because the

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actual cost to-day for carriage, for market tolls, and for salesman's fees, does not mean more than 3*d.* per bird to the producer. The only difficulty that one meets with is how to induce the people in the various districts of the country, to commence upon similar lines in order to organise the trade.

62,242. That is where the difficulty comes in?—In my judgment there is no difficulty if you can only get them to that point.

62,243. You have mentioned examples where the difficulty has been dealt with which have only to be followed?—That is all.

62,244. I understand you to attribute much more importance to this question of the economical and regular and ready distribution in the case of eggs than in the case of poultry, ducks, and geese?—The only reason why it is of greater importance is that the egg business is of greater importance than the poultry trade. The consumption of eggs is very much greater in value than the consumption of poultry.

62,245. There is far more room, I gather, for the recovery of our natural supply therefore?—There is bound to be a certain amount of foreign supply because a great many eggs are used for manufacturing purposes, and such eggs as come from Russia and Turkey, and other distant places would be used for manufacturing purposes. But so far as the better qualities are concerned there is abundance of room for development in every direction, and I believe that the consumption would increase as the supply came forward.

Eggs for manufacturing purposes.

62,246. Have you formed any estimate of the percentage of eggs employed for manufacturing purposes?—Some time ago I tried to get at it. It is very difficult to obtain. I do not think it is more at the present time than about one-sixth. so far as I can learn.

62,247. That would be 15 per cent.?—About 15 per cent.

62,248. But 75 per cent. of the eggs consumed in this country come from abroad I gather?—No, I would not put it at much more than 50 per cent.

62,249. I beg your pardon, I thought you said 75 per cent.?—No. I said that at Norwich 75 per cent. came from abroad; but then we have to take into account the rural districts which do to a certain extent provide for some of their needs.

62,250. Taking the foreign eggs at 50 per cent. of the whole and that 15 per cent. of them is used for manufacture, that would still leave 35 per cent. of eggs consumed as coming from abroad?—Yes, that would be so.

Poultry farming in France and England.

62,251. With reference to the apparent advantage abroad in the production of eggs, do you regard that, from your knowledge of the question derived in France, as due in France itself to the efficiency of the women's work?—Undoubtedly so to a large extent. In France the poultry, as in some parts of this country, is especially under the care of the women, but there is a very marked difference in one respect, and that is that the men there do not hinder as in some cases here.

62,252. Then an alteration in the social habit here is wanted?—We do not want an alteration so much in the social habit as in the prejudice. We have in many parts of this country a very strong prejudice on the part of the farmers against poultry. They do not believe that poultry are worth anything, and they never include them in their balance sheets; at least, when I say never, I mean that in some parts of the country they do not do so at all. It is the women's business and they think it is unprofitable; but in France they look upon poultry as being profitable, and give proper attention to it, but in France there is no doubt that the women are most skilful poultry keepers. For instance, in that country they do not depend nearly so much upon the middle man for the fattening as we do here. In many cases, on farms the whole work of breeding, rearing, feeding, and fattening is carried out upon the one farm, and, even when they sell the poultry alive to the fattening establishments, the probabilities are that there is only to be the final work for a week of finishing off, whereas here they are sold to the fattening establishments lean, and require three weeks to finish off.

62,253. So far as the production of eggs is concerned, and the singular fact that this country imports 35 per cent. of the eggs used for actual food do you regard the social habit of the people and the prejudice against women's labour in that direction as a material factor in the present situation?—I do.

62,254. But you do not look to legislation as a remedy?—Legislation could not affect the social habits of the people.

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62,255. Nor do you look to any other remedy than that of a return to good sense?—A return to good sense is the first important point. There is another direction in which I have always felt that we have a grave disadvantage. We compel the importer of boxes of foreign eggs to have boxes labelled with the country of their origin. That is a protection to the retailer, but it is no protection whatever to the consumer. He may open a box of foreign eggs and sell them as English, or anything that he likes. I have known foreign eggs sold in Birmingham, for instance, as Irish. It seems to me that there ought to be some measure of protection for the consumer, he requires it as much as the retailer.

Marking of foreign eggs.

62,256. You would not go to the extent of encouraging a prejudice against the foreign egg if it was good, but you would wish to discourage the prejudice against the employment of women in the producing of eggs?—Certainly. It is hardly a question of prejudice against the foreign egg, it is a question of value. An egg very speedily loses its quality. It has a porous shell for one thing, and it very soon loses its first quality. If I sell an egg as a French egg, and it is a French egg, the consumer knows that it has at any rate had a chance of reaching here within a few days; but if I sell a Russian egg he knows that that must have taken three or four weeks to come, and consequently it is necessary, it seems to me, for his protection, if the law as carried out with regard to whole cases of eggs is a just one, that it should be carried out to its legitimate issue and should protect the consumer as well.

Poultry farming abroad.

62,257. (*Mr. Everett.*) The countries from which the eggs and poultry are imported here are chiefly countries where there are a great many small farmers, are they not; and it is from the small farming districts that the bulk of the poultry comes?—That is so.

62,258. The labour of tending the hens is not paid for in the shape of wages, it is the labour of the farmer's wife or his daughter, or somebody of that kind?—That is so.

Rearing and fattening establishments.

62,259. We have, I believe, in England a few large establishments where poultry raising and fattening is carried on as a business by paid labour?—Yes.

62,260. Do you happen to know whether those establishments are paying their way?—Undoubtedly they are paying their way, and very well in Sussex; but I may explain that abroad, where you have fattening establishments, as you have in France, that there they pay the wages just identically the same as is done in Sussex. It is only where the work is carried out upon the farm that it is done by the farmer and his wife and daughter.

62,261. But by far the greater part of the work I think I understand you to say is done upon the farm abroad?—That is so.

62,262. I know you have a very great acquaintance with what is going on with regard to poultry in England; there are establishments on a considerable scale where the whole process from rearing to fattening is carried on and all by paid labour?—That is so.

62,263. I believe you are of the opinion that where it is skilfully managed there is a paying element in it?—As a rule the fattening establishments do not rear anything like the whole of their supply; they could not do so. A fattening establishment to turn out 50 dozen of chickens per week—I am saying 50 dozen referring to the busy season—would require to rear several thousand chickens. That would hardly be within its power. Therefore though they may rear a few they buy from farmers and cottagers to make up for the deficiencies.

62,264. There is a certain amount of division of labour in the process?—Yes, a considerable division.

62,265. I had the pleasure of visiting one or two large places with you; are they still going on?—Yes.

62,266. And you think to the satisfaction of the proprietors?—Yes. Down in the Uckfield and Heathfield districts, which you did not go to, there are still greater numbers, and others are commencing, showing that the industry is undoubtedly profitable—you have all the signs of success in them.

Witness' experiences.

62,267. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Have you had any practical experience yourself in poultry farming?—I have not had any practical experience personally in

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poultry farming, but I have been a considerable poultry keeper, though not so now. Perhaps it would be desirable to explain why. From 16 or 17 years ago to 25 years ago I bred very largely indeed, but 16 years ago I was appointed one of the editors of the "Live-Stock Journal," and thought it was an unadvisable thing for one in that capacity to enter into competition with the readers of the paper in selling, or anything of the kind, so I reduced my stock, and although I have always kept a number I have not since then done so on a large scale. Then since I have been acting for county councils I have felt that these bodies would justly object to my selling birds or anything of that kind, so I have kept my numbers down. But I have had experiments going on all the time, and have always been making experiments.

62,268. Do you think it possible to make a poultry farm a profitable occupation?—No, I do not.

Poultry farming as a profitable industry.

62,269. You do not?—Not a poultry farm. What I understand by a poultry farm as commonly accepted, is that you shall take a portion of land and divide it into runs and keep it purely for poultry, but it seems to me that there is a great natural law against that. If you put ammonia by manure into the soil and do not grow it out again, you speedily have your land foul, and it is only in relation with some other form of culture that I recommend poultry farming so-called.

62,270. What is the average retail price of foreign poultry now?—That depends upon the county entirely.

Prices of chickens.

62,271. When sold here I mean?—You can buy Russian chickens at 17*s.* a dozen. That is what they give here at the railway stations in the luncheon baskets at certain seasons of the year, I am afraid; but you can buy the better qualities of French chickens, and they will run up in the dearer months of the year to 3*s.* and 3*s* 6*d.* each. We do not get many of those good chickens from abroad; in fact there are no good chickens, not first-class chickens, practically, that come from abroad.

62,272. What would the price of our best chickens be?—The best Surrey and Sussex chickens in the spring months of the year will run up to an average of from 6*s.* to 7*s.* each, and for better specimens higher than that.

62,273. How do those prices compare with prices obtained say 10 or 15 years ago?—I think they are 10 to 15 per cent. higher than they were then. I am speaking now of the average, not of the picked specimens.

Prices of eggs.

62,274. Are eggs selling better now than they used to before?—Undoubtedly they are higher than ever they were. I believe that the average price of home eggs in this country, where you give them a fair chance, must be something like one-sixth higher than they were at the time of the last Commission.

62,275. (*Mr. Channing.*) And yet the supply has enormously increased?—The supply has enormously increased, and you cannot get as many as required; this complaint is met with on all sides.

62,276. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) Of course all feeding stuff is much cheaper now?—It is half the value of what it was 20 years ago, at any rate.

62,277. Certainly there is a better chance now for poultry than there was formerly?—Undoubtedly.

62,278. (*Mr. Channing.*) Did you make a profit on breeding yourself?—I did.

62,279. You did not fatten, you sold the young?—I did not fatten, I sold young.

Poultry farming in Sussex.

62,280. Have you yourself inspected the Heathfield district?—Yes, I have been all over both the Heathfield and the Uckfield district.

62,281. Then would you qualify what you said with regard to poultry farms by what you saw at Heathfield, do you think that that will work itself out and damage the land—the exclusive use of the land I mean for poultry farming?—But they do not keep it exclusively for poultry farming down there. The rearers are cottagers and farmers who run the poultry as part of their operations and the collectors go round and buy their chickens from them.

62,282. You think then that the system they have adopted is satisfactory?—I think that it is a sound one in every way.

62,283. I wanted to clear up that point?—You see the farmers of the district and the cottagers obtain a most marked advantage in the formation of the fattening establishments, securing better prices for their produce.

62,284. Your experience of poultry makes you think that other districts would do just as well?—Certain other districts would undoubtedly. Of course there is a great deal carried on in Lincolnshire; for instance, take South Lincolnshire, the people there breed a great number of poultry, and also in Cumberland. At the present time in Cumberland so much is done that I have seen 500 baskets of eggs on a single day in Carlisle market.

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Prices of eggs.

62,285. You gave as the price of English eggs 10*s.* to 11*s.* and of the French eggs, which I think were the highest of the continental eggs, 8*s.*?—Yes.

62,286. That leaves a very large margin for the English farmers to work in?—Undoubtedly so.

62,287. That is, if they choose to organise?—If they choose to organise.

Winter supplies of eggs.

62,288. That is the key to the whole position with regard to eggs?—That is so with regard to eggs; organisation and the securing of winter supplies. Of course, winter supplies can only be obtained by breeding their pullets early, so that they may commence to lay before the winter, and by housing properly. To secure eggs in winter pullets should be hatched not later than the beginning of April; the houses must be warm and free from draughts; soft food, given warm, should be fed in the morning; and birds should be killed off before they are 27 months old. Only on Tuesday I was talking with a man in Kent, and he said that he is hardly ever a day without eggs in the winter. But then he pays attention to these two points, the early hatching of these pullets and the proper housing, and so he gets eggs in the winter season.

Distribution of eggs.

62,289. How about the collecting in France, is that done by individuals or by companies?—It is done by individuals. I have never come across a company in France connected with poultry.

62,290. You do not think a company or an association could work a whole county in England, do you?—I am a little bit afraid of large ventures of that kind.

62,291. Do you think the collecting could be made profitable to the collectors as well as to the producers?—I think there is no doubt about that. There are one or two attempts being made at the present time, but it is too early to speak as to their results. One is near Bishop's Stortford in Essex. A man has gone into it there. He says that at the present time he is marketing 4,000 eggs a week, and as soon as ever he can get the number up to 6,000 or 7,000 a week he will make a very good profit out of it, but his expenses are pretty much the same on the 4,000 as they would be on the larger quantity.

Demand for high-class poultry.

62,292. Now about the poultry, is it your view that the demand for the high class poultry would go on increasing with the supply?—The demand for well-fatted poultry would. Of course, there is bound to be a limit for the very tip-top quality, but for the well-fatted poultry I believe that we are only at the beginning of the demand for that in many parts of the country.

62,293. Then it would pay men to go in for the high class poultry as they do in Sussex, and also in parts of France?—Undoubtedly so.

62,294. Have you read Mr. Rew's Report?—Yes.

62,295. Do you think that satisfactory?—Yes, undoubtedly so; it is very excellent; and also Mr. Aubrey Spencer's Report with regard to Buckinghamshire.

Breed for table poultry.

62,296. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Do you recommend for this job chiefly crosses of poultry?—I think by means of the cross-bred poultry that we can obtain better results, but we must have the pure-breds as the basis; that is my own judgment.

62,297. In a general way what is your opinion about the most suitable general cross?—For what purpose?

62,298. For producing the best table fowls?—The best cross that we have had at the present time, has been between the Indian game and the Dorking, or the Indian game and the Houdan for table purposes. The introduction of the Indian game cocks even amongst ordinary fowls will always improve their table qualities.

62,299. You said they must be of course only one part of a farm, and not a separate poultry farm system?—Yes.

Poultry farming as a profitable industry.

62,300. On the small holdings say of eight acres or so have these men sufficient land to enable them to carry a sufficient stock of poultry to make it pay?—As part of

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their operations, certainly that would be so. I believe that they can. I was told only recently, by a man down in Hampshire, that by keeping a limited number of fowls on a place like that, he had made a very excellent profit which had paid his rent; that is what he told me, and he said that was an important thing for him.

62,301. Do these people on the debtor side of the account put anything down for the attendance on the poultry?—No, certainly not. The profit on the poultry is the payment for their labour. It is not like a separate industry. I do not think that it would be a fair thing to put that down, because, you see, if a man opens a shop the Income Tax Commissioners would not allow him to charge his own time as a deduction from his profits, they would say, "No, the profits are your payment, and you must pay upon them." I claim that if a man has not to pay money out of pocket, the profit he makes is the payment for his labour, and that it would be an unfair balance-sheet if he put down so much for his own labour.

62,302. So that, as long as he can attend to the work himself, there is no charge for that?—I do not think so.

62,303. But if he employs, as most of these small people do, members of his own family, would it not be fair to put a fair charge as wage for their work as against the rearing of poultry?—If he had to pay a member of his family money, I think it would be fair to charge it, but I think it should be taken upon the same basis as a farm balance-sheet. If a man is employing his wife and son and daughter upon the farm, I do not think he would be allowed to charge their wages in the balance-sheet.

62,304. I suppose he almost never does, because he pays them very little wage. I fancy, he simply gives them their keep probably and their clothes?—Yes, that would be so, but at the same time they are living out of the farm.

62,305. Is there sufficient profit to pay for the labour and to cover the rearing of the poultry?—That would depend upon the scale. If he goes in for fattening there is sufficient profit to pay for all this.

Prices of eggs and poultry.

62,306. (*Chairman.*) Have you said any thing about prices?—I just mentioned a few figures with regard to prices of eggs.

62,307. Comparing them with 10 or 15 years ago?—No, I gave the prices of English and foreign eggs.

62,308. Do you know anything of the course of prices, can you tell us what are the prices now compared with those of 10 or 15 years ago?—I think in connection with table poultry the advance in average values is from 10 to 15 per cent. With regard to the best qualities of English eggs that are marketed in the way that I have indicated, they have advanced something like 15 per cent. during the course of the last 15 years.

62,309. Then there is an exception in the case of poultry from most other agricultural produce?—Undoubtedly so.

62,310. There has been an advance of prices instead of a fall?—Yes. Within the last 30 years there has been an advance in the values of eggs of nearly 100 per cent.

62,311. Even within the last 15 years, when other things have been declining, poultry has been increasing?—That is so, with both poultry and eggs.

62,312. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are you speaking only of the best quality or of all classes?—I am speaking of the average of poultry now. Of course when you get into the very poor qualities they come into competition with the Russian, and there is no advance there. It is not in the poor qualities that we find the advance; it is in the better qualities.

62,313. (*Chairman.*) Would you say in the average quality consumed in London?—The average quality throughout the country.

62,314. I was told in East Sussex that the price of young poultry sold to the fatteners has increased considerably of late years?—Undoubtedly so.

62,315. And that the main profit has gone to the grower rather than to the fattener; does that tally with your experience?—I am afraid that the evidence given by the fatteners themselves would hardly bear that out, because they are making money; I am not sorry to see greater profits go into the pockets of the producers certainly.

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62,316. Then I must find out what is the value of that information—if it be information—but they say they have to give a much larger price than they used to do to the breeder, and that their profits are cut down very much by the keen competition?—They must have been large before then, because they are doing very well now. Undoubtedly they have to give more money, for the production of that district is not increasing to the same extent as the demand. Consequently they have to send to Ireland for large quantities of fowls to make up.

62,317. I was told that large quantities of lean poultry are sent over from Ireland to be fattened in the Sussex district?—That is so.

62,318. That tends to show that there is a great demand for poultry?—That is so.

The cooking of poultry.

62,319. (*Mr. Everett.*) Could not something be done to teach people how to cook poultry as well as how to rear it? I have been very much struck with this, that if you have a fowl cooked now in a farmhouse in Suffolk it is one of the most delicious dishes you can sit down to, but if you have a fowl as it is served to you in an ordinary hotel in London it is a tasteless, insipid article of food which you hardly care to put into your mouth; they do not stuff the fowls. You have nothing but the bare fowl without any stuffing?—That is so.

Extension of fattening establishments.

62,320–1. If they knew how to cook fowls there would be double the demand for them among people who like tasty food that there is as compared with the demand for them, as they are ordinarily cooked now. Do you not think there is something in the quality of the poultry as well?—No, I think it is mainly in the stuffing that is put into the fowls. There is just one point which I might suggest, and that is with regard to the formation of fattening establishments in different parts of the country. There are three or four points which it is most important to keep in view. The first is that a new rural industry would be created, and a demand for labour; the second is that chicken raisers in other parts of the country would receive better prices for their birds; the third is that there would undoubtedly be more demand for the grain grown in the local district; and in the fourth place it would form an exceptionally favourable opportunity in dairy counties for the use of skim milk, which sometimes is very difficult to get rid of.

Districts for poultry breeding.

62,322. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that there is anything special in the district of East Sussex which is peculiarly favourable to the breeding of poultry, or might it be carried on equally well in a great many other parts of England?—Of course it is a favourable district, because the soil is warm, but there are multitudes of other places equally favourable. I should like to mention that some of the very finest Dorkings that are bred in this country, early Dorkings, are produced around Coleraine in the North of Ireland, and others around Keith, in the county of Banffshire in Scotland. It is not a question so much of the place as of the attention given to the matter.

Poultry fanciers' mistakes.

62,323. Do you think a mistake has been made by poultry fanciers going in too much for feathers and peculiarities of that kind, and not sufficiently attending to the quality of the birds?—Some fanciers have undoubtedly made a mistake in that way, but at the same time we have to take into account that whilst they have made mistakes, and serious mistakes, there are several of our most valuable breeds to-day which would never have been known but for them. Take the Indian game, which I think for table purposes is one of the most valuable; it is purely the result of the fanciers' efforts. Therefore I think we ought not to judge them by their few mistakes, but rather by the whole of their work.

The witness withdrew.

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Mr. JOHN CARY LOVELL called and examined.

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62,324. (*Chairman.*) You are a member of the firm of Lovell and Christmas, of West Smithfield, provision merchants?—I am.

62,325. And you have been for 40 years actively engaged in the provision trade, and importing butter and cheese from all parts of the world?—That is so.

62,326. Principally from France, Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Holland, and Italy, and also from Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand and recently to a slight extent from the Argentine Republic?—Yes. The first named are the most important shippers, but in the winter months we get large quantities from the Colonies of New Zealand and Australia.

English butter.

62,327. I have asked you to come here mainly for the purpose of explaining to the Commission the reasons why the English butter has lost its hold on the English market. Will you explain to the Commission why, in your opinion, the English butter has lost its hold upon the market?—There was always a difficulty in getting a sufficient quantity and a regular supply of the finer qualities of English butter. It was extremely irregular in quality and irregular in colour, and we were always seeking to find an article to take its place in order to supply the wants of our customers. With foreign butters we can get the regularity we require; we can get almost any quantity, and we can get men to send it packed as we desire. I take it that that is the reason that the English has gone out of favour. There is another great reason, namely, that during the winter months the supply in this country was extremely small, and, of course, the traders here and the consumers want an article that they can depend upon getting the whole year round. That we succeed in getting from abroad.

Causes for reduced demand.

62,328. Then, compared with foreign butter, it comes to the market badly packed?—The English does.

62,329. In the second place, it comes in small lots instead of in a continuous stream of supply, and thirdly, it comes in a very unequal condition?—That is so. It really amounts to this, that if you wanted a considerable quantity of English butter in the winter months it was absolutely impossible to get it; but such are the arrangements made now with our friends abroad that we can get it in almost any quantity required. I could produce you 500 packages extra on Monday next if you were to give me an order to-day; I would undertake to produce you an extra quantity of that kind if you require it.

62,330. You could not get English butter in that quantity?—I could not get it if I searched England over. It may seem strange to you why I could produce so much at such a short notice, but it is from the fact that my correspondents always buy all the butter that comes on the markets; they do not refuse any, and we pack in tins for export abroad, and if we get an extra influx of orders on any day here in this country we cease packing for a day or two and let all the supply come to London. Then if so much is not required in London we go on packing again. So we have always a supply of butter coming in.

62,331. Then the foreign butter comes to the market better packed, it is absolutely uniform in colour and quality, and the shipments are regular all throughout the year, so that you can depend upon the supply that you want?—In the winter time probably the quantity would fall off to the extent of from 15 to 20 per cent.

62,332. Not more than that?—Not more than that from the principal places. From Denmark, and in fact from the Scandinavian provinces as well, we really get more butter during the winter than we do in the summer, because they have studied winter-dairying and they provide a supply at the time when it is most wanted.

62,333. Where do you consider the very best butter comes from?—Fresh butter, from Normandy.

62,334. The best of all?—The best of all.

Demand for Normandy butter.

62,335–6. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It is a little salted, is it not?—No, perfectly fresh. I think perhaps it might be interesting to you, if I am not going beyond what you wish to know, to explain how the Normandy fresh butter took the place of the English butter here on our markets. I can tell you that shortly, if you would like to know it.

62,337. (*Chairman.*) Certainly, it would be interesting?—Prior to the Franco-German war there was no fresh butter of any consequence sold in their country from Normandy, but when Paris was closed during the siege large quantities of what was known as Paris fresh butter, un-salted butter, found its way into the London markets. We had a quantity of it consigned to us as fresh butter, and seeing that it was an excellent article, we at once took the thing up, and had it packed specially in rolls to suit the London trade, and in a very short time that completely knocked out the English fresh butter business altogether. We get any quantity of it, and we get it perfectly regular in quality, so that you can sell 500, or 1,000, or 2,000 packages, and you would not have to show half-a-dozen.

62,338. Then before that there was a considerable supply of English butter?—There was a considerable supply, but never sufficient to supply the wants of the public, and we used to import a quantity of fresh butter from Belgium, but that was not fine butter. It was a useful description of butter, which came in here comparatively fresh, but the French butter very soon settled that business altogether, and there is no such thing as Ostend fresh butter now—we do not hear of it.

62,339. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) How long ago was that?—Normandy fresh butter began coming in from the time of the French war, and it has increased year by year ever since.

62,340. I mean the period when you had to go to Belgium to help your supply?—Before that. Going back from 1852 right up to about 1870, Ostend butter was sold very largely in England; but now there is none of it sold at all.

62,341. (*Chairman.*) French butter has completely taken its place?—It has taken the place of it.

Danish butter.

62,342. When did the Danish butter come in?—Prior to the Franco-German war, it came in to a large extent in the North of England, but when the French supplies were cut off, as they were at one time, it began to come in much more freely to London, and since that time the trade has continually developed, and the highest priced salt butter that is sold in London is the Danish butter, and the Swedish butter.

62,343. Is that all salt?—It is all salted. They have tried a little to send fresh butter from Denmark, but it does not succeed, because fresh butter requires to be dealt with at least within two or three days of its being made. We get the supplies so rapidly from Normandy that the butter which is made on Monday morning would be on your table on Wednesday; every day it would run so.

Prices of Danish and Normandy butter.

62,344. How does the price of the best Danish slightly salted butter compare with the price of the best Normandy butter?—It is never as high as the finest fresh butter.

62,345. What is the difference?—I say never as high, but such a thing might happen once or twice in the course of a year. Generally there is something like 2*d.* a pound difference between the highest quality of fresh butter and that.

Quality of English butter.

62,346. How does the Normandy butter compare with the best English butter?—The very finest samples of English butter that you can produce, carefully made in a dairy, would be as fine as any butter you would find anywhere in the world; but the average class of it would not be anything like equal to the average quality of our best Brittany butter.

62,347. That is due to the want of uniformity and bad manufacture, rather than to any inherent difficulty in the production of good butter, is it not?—It is so.

Irish butter.

62,348. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Some of the Irish is equal to the best, is it not?—Some of the Irish butter is very fine indeed; we see samples of it in Ireland. But the average quality of it does not touch the average quality of the best Normandy.

62,349. (*Chairman.*) Has there been an improvement in the Irish butter of late?—A very great improvement. 20 years ago we sold butter here in London which was sold retail at twelve and fourteen pence a pound, which we could not positively sell at any price now; I do not think that bakers even would have it. That was before the introduction of margarine.

62,350. Does the Irish butter come slightly salted?—We get fresh butter from one factory that we do with in Ireland; we get a considerable quantity of fresh

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butter from it, but the great majority of it is salted butter.

62,351. How does the price of the fresh compare with the price of the salt?—It is not equal in quality to the best French butter. It would be from three halfpence to twopence a pound below the finest quality of Normandy. But I must tell you that there are four grades of Normandy butter. We have four qualities. In Ireland we have only got two qualities, and the operations are not as extensive in Ireland as they are in Normandy.

Dairying abroad.

62,352. Then the dairying abroad is carried on more scientifically, as a rule?—Nearly all the countries there have interested themselves very much to instruct and educate the farmers and the dairy people in the production of butter. We have continually had experts over here, and we have sent them about the country and to other countries to pick up information everywhere they could. In Denmark they have a special college and professors there who teach the people, and nearly all the men who make the butter in the dairies in Denmark and Sweden have passed examinations and have spent perhaps a year or two in the college.

The factory system in Normandy.

62,353. Will you describe to the Commission the factory system of collecting and supplying you with butter in Normandy as distinguished from the creamery system?—Yes. Perhaps I might say first, touching on Denmark, that the factory system is not in use in Denmark; it is in Normandy. In Normandy the factory system is this, that the large dealers in it attend all the markets in the country to buy the butter. The butter is brought there by the farmer unsalted. It is there purchased by the dealer according to the quality of the butter; it may be the first, the second, the third, the fourth, or the fifth class; it is weighed and paid for accordingly at once in cash. The producer has nothing to do with the package. He brings it in a clean cloth and basket. It is weighed on the scale and turned out, and the buyer puts it into baskets according to the quality that he has purchased it for. Then when he gets its back to the factory, the butter is again inspected by competent persons in the factory and all of the first-class is put together, and all of the second, and so on. It is blended through a mixing machine, and that brings it all to one consistency and one quality, and in the winter time, when it is requisite, colour is added to it. Thus, you see, you get a uniform quality of that particular grade. That is the system on which the factory business is carried on.

62,354. (*Viscount Cobham.*) They do not mix the grades, but they mix the different samples in the same grade?—Yes. Sometimes they will find a sixth quality which they do not find good enough for the fifth. The first four qualities go entirely for the fresh butter, and we make salt butter of the commoner qualities.

62,355. (*Chairman.*) Then each individual farmer has the inducement to make the very best butter?—Yes.

62,356. And to produce the very best milk with the view of producing the best butter?—That is so.

62,357. It is not like the system of common creameries where each farmer sends in his supply to the creamery and it is all mixed together, and the result is then manufactured and sold by the creamery? Here each individual farmer makes his own butter, and has the full inducement to make the best?—That is so, and if he does not make it good he does not get a good price for it.

Factories and creameries compared.

62,358. In your opinion on the whole is that a better system than that of the creamery?—From actual experience I have no doubt on the subject whatever. I could tell you my experience of factories and the business I do for factories which is always increasing, whereas with creameries many of them drop out. Creameries send a good butter perhaps for two or three weeks, or four days out of the six, and then comes a day of bad butter. The manager of the creamery never can understand that it is not exactly the same; if it has been good for three or four days he thinks it must be good on the fifth and the sixth, but such is not the fact. To show how this works out take Bretel's butter; that is the Normandy butter; we sell some 12,000 packages of that butter a week, and I do not suppose that in the course of the whole week, we ever show it 20 or 30 times; it is taken from the grade and the grade shows the quality. The customer gives you an order for 5, 10, 15, or 20 packages, and he does not require to look at it. But we never can sell a creamery butter in that way.

62,359. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Why should they not grade their butter in the creameries?—For the reason that the milk or the cream, according as to whether they bring the cream to the creamery or the milk to the creamery, is all mixed together, and if one farmer or two out of the lot happens to bring milk or cream that is impure, it taints the whole of it. It is very difficult to discover it in the milk, and extremely difficult to discover it in the cream, but when the article, the butter is produced, any man who is a fair judge can find out the mischief, and then he excludes it.

62,360. Have they not overcome that difficulty in Denmark?—There are no creameries in Denmark.

62,361. Are they not?—They are dairies there.

62,362. (*Chairman.*) I was under the impression till I spoke to you, that they had creameries in Denmark, but from what you have told me that is not the case; they are simply large dairies?—They are very large dairies, some of them having as many as 600 cows in the dairy; possibly it may be that sometimes there are two dairies associated together, but they apply the strongest tests and they are extremely careful in the feeding, and with the water that they give to the cattle in Denmark. That is a point that I do not think I mentioned to you. In Denmark you see to a great extent, they do not allow the cows to roam about the fields as they please to pick up their food; they are tethered, and in order that the water should be given them good, it is brought to them. Water and food, of course, I need not tell you, have the greatest possible effect on the quality of the butter. Impure water will give butter a bad flavour directly.

62,363. When you speak of creameries to what district do you refer?—I am referring to England and to Ireland also.

62,364. Not to any of these places abroad?—No, I do not know of any successful creamery abroad except one in Holland, and that varies very much at times.

62,365. Then the difficulty in the case of the creamery is as you have said, that the farmers all send their milk there; it is all mixed together, and if in the case of two or three farmers their cows have been badly fed, the whole manufacture may be injured and worsened by it without its being possible to detect the evil in the milk itself?—It is extremely difficult in the cream. I might give you a little experience that occurred to myself in Dublin. I was judging at Balls Bridge with one of the professors from a college in England. We had to judge the work done by some dairymaids there in making butter. There was a large vessel containing a quantity of cream which was going to be measured out to the dairymaids to make the butter. I happened to be standing by the vessel, and out of curiosity more than anything else, I put my finger into the cream and I smelt the cream. I detected a bad flavour in it directly, and called the attention of the stewards to it. I said, it is impossible for any dairymaid to make good butter out of this cream, because there is already a bad smell in the cream. They admitted it. The whole of the butter that was made that day was tainted with that flavour. The next day they tested the cream that came in from the different places, and they rejected several lots of cream. Probably the cattle had been fed on too much cabbage or roots or some objectionable thing, and the flavour was at once found in the cream. That was a case in point, and I have known that to occur in many instances.

62,366. Then in Normandy how are what you call factories established—are they established by co-operation or are they a separate industry?—It is an individual effort generally. We have known such things as farmers co-operating to a small extent, but the great businesses have been made by individual energy.

62,367. Then there is no reason why the same individual energy should not be applied to any rural district in England?—Not at all.

Factories in England.

62,368. Can you form any opinion why that is not done in the same way there; is it that there is not a sufficient supply in any district in England?—The difficulty that I think I have mentioned in my notes to you, one great difficulty at least is this, that during the winter months the milk is sold. Wherever a farmer can sell his milk he does better than he would by making it into butter or cheese, but if you are not in a position to supply your customers with butter in the winter they do not want you in the summer. If you come into the market only in the summer when there is a great flush of butter you have to take a lower price in order to get

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in; people will not take it regularly because they say, "Just when I want you, when supplies are beginning "to get short, you have nothing for me."

62,369. We have been told by many witnesses that in some parts of the country the milk trade is overdone and that the price of milk has fallen on that account; one would suppose, therefore, that there is an opening for an extensive manufacture of butter there?—There is no doubt an opening for the manufacture of butter, and I think that if factories were established there would be a considerable quantity of butter made, and properly made, here, but if it is all going to be made on the creamery system and every man who brings his milk or cream to the creamery gets the same price whether it is good cream or bad cream, as long as that is the case you will not get a good uniform article, and it will never find—at least that is my opinion—a firm footing on our market. I have tried creameries; I have tried hard to sell the butter from creameries, and have sold it at almost no profit whatever in order to see if I could work the business, but it invariably comes to a standstill.

Creameries and factories in Ireland.

62,370. (*Mr. Little.*) It is always the case that the same price is paid for all the milk; in Ireland, for instance, do these creameries pay the same price for good and bad milk?—They do not know the difference.

62,371. They test the milk, do they not? We have had it in evidence here that they do?—That they have tested it? They test it as to richness of the cream, but not as to flavour.

62,372. Yes, and that they pay according to the quality?—I have never come across a creamery yet that sends out two descriptions of butter. Whatever they do as regards paying for the milk, the creamery butter is all of one class. I think possibly that may mean not so much as to bad flavours but as to the richness of the cream, and that does not touch my point at all.

62,373. (*Chairman.*) Have you known factories running successfully in Ireland?—I do know of one in Bantry, and I am selling a great deal for that factory. I think this year I shall have paid them something like 75,000*l.* nett for butter in the year. Of course, that is nothing in comparison with the Normandy factory; we do ten times as much as that with one factory in Normandy.

62,374. Have you had any butter from the creameries which have been established in the south of Ireland?—We do not buy any, we sell it on commission. We get creamery butter from Ireland, and we constantly have the difficulties that I have enumerated to you, but with the factories we have no difficulties.

Butter-making in Normandy.

62,375. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Are the Normandy farmers better butter makers individually than the British farmers?—The Normandy farmers are certainly very industrious, clean, hard-working fellows, there is no question of that.

62,376. In the factory system you must have a rather high average of butter-making in order that it should succeed?—The qualifications of the maker you mean must be good?

62,377. Yes?—As a rule the butter in Normandy is, I should say, of a higher average standard than you would get in Ireland. I have not a great knowledge of what is done in England. I explained to the Chairman that my business is with foreign butter, and I was somewhat reluctant to come here for that reason.

62,378. (*Chairman.*) I am sure it is very kind of you to come here rather on my pressure in order that we might get this information from you?—My reluctance arose from this, that I thought the English makers might say, "You do not deal in our produce, and you "have no right to interfere in the matter." That is the only reason I had, but if I can give any information to you or to the Commission I shall be very glad.

Factories in England.

62,379. In England do you know of the factory system being established?—At Colyton, in Devonshire, Salter and Stokes are running a factory and they have imitated our French factory as much as they possibly could in the whole mode of procedure. It is done on a small scale, but it is done succesfully, and they are selling a considerable quantity of butter on the London market. I knew this was going on, and I went to see those gentlemen after speaking to you on the matter, to ask whether I might be at liberty to mention what I knew to be a fact. Then there are Mr. Prideaux, in Dorsetshire, who is also running a considerable business on the same lines; and Messrs. Aplin and Barrett, of Yeovil, who are also doing the same thing.

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62,380. Do they buy the butter from the farmers in the same way as is done in Normandy?—Yes.

62,381. Into how many classes do they make it?—That I am not able to say. Salter and Stokes I know make two, and I think at times three classes, but two classes are constantly seen in the market, I know, because the boxes have different colours, and one colour signifies one quality, and another, another.

62,382. Of course the more highly organised the trade is, the greater number of qualities they would have?—Yes.

62,383. It depends largely on the great quantity supplied, I suppose; if you have a great quantity then you can make it up into four or five qualities, whereas if it is only a small quantity you can probably only make it up into two qualities?—That is so.

62,384. I suppose that is the explanation?—Yes. In the English factories one of these gentlemen told me that if the butter was very inferior they rejected it altogether, but with our Normandy system we never reject anything if it is saleable, because we have so many grades that we can put it in one of them; and there are lower qualities at lower prices coming in.

English and Normandy butter compared.

62,385. Do you know how the best quality of the butter supplied at these two factories that you have spoken of, compares with the best Normandy?—The best is sold at something like 1*d.* to 1½*d.* per lb. below the finest Normandy, but it would make an average price exceeding the average of the first three qualities of Normandy if they were put together.

62,386. Then the difference probably arises from this: as I have said in the case of Normandy butter the great quantity enables them to make these five different grades?—Yes.

62,387. And therefore the finest of those is better than the best of the two qualities of the English butter?—That is so.

Marketing butter in Normandy.

62,388. But if the quantity of the English butter was at all comparable to that of the French butter it would be possible to grade in the same way, and you would probably have the first quality equally as good as the first quality of Normandy butter?—Quite as good. You see in France our people go all over Normandy, and in fact beyond Normandy. I think at the present moment we are attending every week something like 140 markets. It is brought in by railway all over the country, and we have special facilities there. When the weather is hot we have large chambers for cooling, and the butter is never worked until it is brought down to a proper temperature. It is worked in a place that is kept down to a reasonable temperature, and after working it is put again into a cool chamber before it is sent away. Then we have special facilities for getting it to market. For instance, it is never sent on to the railway until night. The trucks come right into the place, the butter is put into the trucks, and then taken down to Cherbourg and shipped at night and kept out of the sun carefully there and also on the steamer.

62,389. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Is it landed at Southampton?—Yes.

62,390. (*Chairman.*) Where is the head-quarters of these factories?—Valogues in Normandy, which is about 20 miles from Cherbourg, Le Pelletier is another firm. They are our principal opponents in Normandy. Their place of business is at Carentan. They do a large business in the same way that we do.

62,391. You find them competing with you?—Yes, we are always competing on all the markets.

Prices of Normandy butter.

62,392. How is the price determined to the farmer?—By the London prices. We wire every day the state of the market, the price and the quantity that we require two days forward, and invariably we get exactly what we ask for within a few packages. Sometimes we get orders for particular reasons sprung on as all at once. A man may come in for some particular thing and want 100 or 200 boxes extra two or three days hence; we nearly always succeed in getting them; we telegraph and they are found because our people leave off the tinning at once if necessary.

62,393. What is the difference in price of these different qualities of the Normandy butter?—They vary a penny generally. For instance, the highest price last week was 15*d.*, but that was down on Monday to 14*d.* and the four prices are 14*d.*, 13*d.*, 12*d.*, and 11*d.*

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62,394. Now, looking to the fact that the price of cheese has gone down considerably in England, would you not say that there is an opening for a much larger manufacture of butter?—I am inclined to think that butter-making would be likely to show a better return than cheese-making in this country, because unless the cheese is made of the very fine quality it has to come down to the level or below the price of Canadian cheese. Very fine Cheddar cheese is always worth a considerable deal more than any foreign cheese, but if it is not of the first class then it has to compete with foreign importations, and, generally speaking, the good factory cheese of Canada is better than the medium quality English cheese and it is more regular.

Cheese-making.

Canadian cheese.

62,395. Is the Canadian cheese made in factories?—Yes, and they are extremely particular about the tests that they apply to the milk. The thing is studied scientifically there. These factories are associated dairies, and every man who supplies milk is a partner in the concern. They are most jealous of taking in anything that is in any way inferior. The very best cheese that was ever made in a factory in Canada does not come up to the individual cheese which is made by some of our finest Cheddar makers, but at the same time it is a long way in front of the average. We are getting very fine cheese now from New Zealand—splendid cheese.

62,396. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What is that called?—It is sold as New Zealand cheese.

62,397. (*Mr. Canning.*) How does the Canadian compare with the cheese from the United States?—The Canadian is better than the United States cheese.

62,398. There is more adulteration in the cheese from the United States, is there not?—No, I am putting adulteration aside altogether. I do not think there is much adulteration, in fact I should say there is not any adulteration in Canadian factory cheese or in the United States factory cheese. There is an adulterated cheese made out Chicago way, but we call that filled cheese.

Dairying in Ireland.

62,399. Before we go to the subject of cheese there are just one or two other questions with regard to butter that I should like to put to you; do you consider that the dairy schools have done much to improve the make of butter more especially in Ireland?—Very much indeed. My firm have paid for the education of a great number of farmers' daughters in different parts of Ireland, with the result that the butter has been improved immensely. I was told by a farmer in Ireland, myself, that after his daughter had been to the dairy school, he sent his butter to the Cork market, he did not send it to the factory at that time—after she had had two courses at the dairy school, whereas his butter previously had been generally graded second or third, never above second, he had always a first quality butter and the difference in the price between the two classes was nearly enough to pay the rent of his small farm. I only give you that as an instance to show what a benefit education has been over there.

Adulteration.

62,400. Do you consider that benefit would arise from more stringent legislation against adulteration and against the mixing of margarine with butter?—I am myself averse to the mixing of margarine with butter at all; I think that is where the principal fraud comes in, and I have given evidence repeatedly on that point before the Adulteration Committee.

62,401. That question has been dealt with, I suppose, by the Adulteration Commitee?—Yes, but it has not been followed by any legislation at present. There was an Act some years ago.

62,402. I do not think the Committee has reported as yet?—No.

62,403. I suppose it was brought to an end by the dissolution, and has not yet been re-appointed?—I suppose so. It is a very noticeable thing that we have had within the last five weeks a very rapid rise in butter here, because all the stored colonial was sold and supplies were somewhat short. It often happens so at the close of harvest-time. We had a very rapid rise in butter here, and instantly the demand for margarine mixtures increased, I should say 50 to 75 per cent.; we know in the trade perfectly well what that means.

Competition with English butter.

62,404. I gather from what you have said that the only competitor with English farmers on the English market for perfectly fresh butter is Normandy?—The Normandy butter is absolutely pure.

62,405. I mean that is the only part of the continent from which perfectly fresh butter comes, and all the rest is salted?—Almost the whole supply comes from Normandy.

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62,406. All the rest is slightly salted?—All the rest is slightly salted butter.

62,407. Even from Ireland only a limited quantity comes perfectly fresh?—Only a limited quantity. It has no comparison whatever with the quantity that comes from France.

62,408. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Cannot fresh butter come from the Channel Islands and Brittany?—The butter that is made in Brittany is not anywhere equal in quality to the Normandy butter; it is a poorer description of butter. We sell Brittany butter also, and that has always been known in London by the name of Jersey butter, because a great many years ago it was first imported to Jersey and then sent from Jersey to London. Going back to something like 1854 or 1855 we then received butter in that way ourselves, but it now is shipped from St. Malo; yet, strange to say, the real Brittany butter has always been called Jersey butter in the London markets.

62,409. It would not be fresh butter, I suppose?—It is not fresh butter; it is not of the quality that would be good enough for fresh butter; it is a lower and poorer description of butter.

Price of cheese.

62,410. (*Chairman.*) Would you now, turning to cheese, give an explanation, so far as you are able, of the great fall in the price of cheese which has taken place lately, especially in the case of Cheshire cheese?—Do you mean in this last particular year—1895?

62,411. Yes?—You will remember that, in the commencement of the year, we had a long period of extreme cold and frost. It is the experience of everyone in the cheese trade, that cheese is not consumed in cold weather to the extent that it is at other times. Our own particular sales at that time fell off, and we were doing comparatively nothing for eight or ten weeks. That caused a large supply to accumulate. Then there was another reason; we had New Zealand, Australian, and River Plate mutton coming in here in such enormous quantities, and sold at such low prices, that the labouring classes, who were not earning much money, of course took hold of the cheapest article they could get, and if a man could buy mutton at 2*d.* a lb., he did not want cheese at 6*d.*, and did not buy it. The result was that by May and June, we were selling colonial cheese at 32*s.* a cwt. which the previous year we were selling at 56*s.*, and we had great difficulty in selling it at the lower price.

62,412. Now take the best qualities of cheese. I am not going back some years, but going back a year or two; do you find that the price of the best quality is still maintained?—It has gone down considerably. There has been a general fall. There was a time when fine Cheddar cheese was retailed at 1*s.* a lb., but one does not hear of any such thing now.

62,413. I am not comparing the price with that of a few years ago, but with that of the last few months?—Not to the extent of the other; not the very finest cheddar cheese, although it has gone down. There was another thing that came in to a certain extent to spoil the spring trade in cheese, and to further depress the market. The principle time for selling cheese, or one of the best times, is when the harvest work is on, particularly for the lower grades of cheese. In haymaking and harvest work, the people who are working in the fields, take out great quantities of it, and we do a large trade in the country places. But this year there was comparatively none; the hay harvest was all over; they got the grass cut, and they carried it the next day, and there was really no hay harvest at all.

62,414. I suppose what happened was that in consequence of this prolonged cold and frost, during which people ate comparatively little cheese, there accumulated a considerable quantity in the market, and then as always happens if the supply is considerably in excess of the demand, the price went down enormously?—That is so. It then has to be sold, in order to create a fresh demand, and to get rid of it, so that it can be retailed at 4*d.* or 5*d.*, which it has been this summer.

62,415. Has there been any re-action in the price?—Yes, somewhat. One thing which has helped it is that in Canada when cheese fell so very low, and in the States also, a good many of the factories left off making cheese and turned their attention to butter We have

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now in the last week or fortnight felt the effect of that, for the Americans and Canadians have been pouring quantities of butter into this market, 20,000 and 30,000 packages at a time, with the result that down has gone the price of butter: we have gone down 2*d.* a lb. with the salt butter within the last 14 days.

Packing of foreign butter.

62,416. (*Lord Rendel.*) Is the package of a uniform weight?—Our French packages are all uniform and the Colonial packages are uniform, but where the dairies send from Denmark and those places there is a gross and tare. The cask is filled, and the gross weight is put on it and the tare of the package.

62,417. What is the weight of the uniform package?—The packages in France run, from the smallest 24 up to 60 lbs. The casks of salt butter are 70 lbs., and there are 60 lbs of fresh butter in the baskets.

Price of butter.

62,418. (*Chairman.*) You said in consequence of this great importation of American salt butter the price of salt butter has gone down?—It has.

62,419. Has the price of the Normandy fresh butter been maintained?—It has all gone down.

62,420. Has that gone down in sympathy?—Yes.

62,421. To the same extent relatively?—We are selling our best fresh now at 14*d.*, and it was 15½*d.*; there is 1½*d.* a lb. difference on the fresh butter, but the salt butter has gone down 20*s.* a cwt.

62,422. (*Viscount Cobham.*) What is the best price that you recollect of fresh butter?—The highest I have ever sold, the best Normandy fresh, was at 23*d.* That was only for a very short period. Before the great influx of butter from the Colonies and from the Scandinavian countries and Denmark, we used frequently to get up to 18*d.*, 19*d.*, and 20*d.*, but it has not been so of late years. Then the commoner grades of butter have all been knocked down by the increase in the margarine business. Of course good margarine is infinitely superior to rancid old butter, strong kept butter, and it has completely destroyed the business in that butter altogether. It has had one good effect, that the butter makers have been obliged to be more careful, and there is more butter made and better butter made than ever there was. There is no question of that.

62,423. If you charge 14*d.* what would be the retail price?—The retailers would charge 16*d.*, but then you see they have to put it in a package and to deliver it, and they would still charge 16*d.* if we charged 14½*d.*

62,424. Do you think the public taste has altered to some extent in butter?—I think the public are much keener judges of butter than they were 20 years ago.

62,425. A good many people rather prefer a slight taste of salt in butter, do they not?—Not as a rule; the fresh butter takes the lead always.

62,426. In any market?—No; I should say that it does in London and in all the seaside places, I might say that in the Midland counties and in the North the taste runs more for salt butter; they have never had fresh butter introduced to them as we have done it in London; the facilities have not been as great for it.

62,427. When the markets are glutted what is the lowest price that you recollect for best grade butter?—For fresh butter?

62,428. Yes?—I do not think we have been below 12*d.* a lb. for the best Normandy butter.

62,429. What do you think is the lowest price that would pay the producer, because we have heard of butter coming in from the Colonies at as low as 8*d.*?—I think they can produce butter in the Colonies for 7½*d.* or 7*d.* on the spot.

62,430. 7*d.* here?—No, but if they get 7*d.* there they could produce it; it costs a 1*d.* a lb. to bring it here in refrigerators.

62,431. Do you think there is room for a much further fall in butter?—No. I do not anticipate a further fall myself; I believe we shall have a steadier trade than we had last year. Last year was an exceptional year in all respects. The make of butter on the Continent, and in England, and also in Ireland was greater than I have ever known before. We had a wet summer all through.

Demand for butter.

62,432. (*Chairman.*) Is the demand for butter continualty increasing in this county?—It is continually increasing, judging by our own business. We have sold a great deal more butter this year than we did last year.

62,433. Of the better qualities?—Yes. There is never any trouble in selling the fine qualities. You can always clear them. It does not matter where the best butter comes from, and how much there is of it; it is simply a question of prices. If the market is a little glutted and we find there is too much at one price, we reduce it to meet the state of things, and then it is always cleared.

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62,434. But is the taste of the public a fine one; does it detect very readily the best qualities?—Very readiiy.

62,435. It is improving, I suppose?—It is always improving. As I was saying before, you could not sell the common butters now that we used to sell readily; people would not look at them now, not even in the poorest neighbourhoods; in fact I think very often in the poorer neighbourhoods they are more particular than they are in the others, because the people who run about with their ready money go where they can get the best, and they find it out.

Butter from Jersey cows.

62,436-7. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Has butter made from Jersey cows a place of its own in the market?—No. There would not be enough of it made to make any real difference. Of course one sees it occasionally; it is very much higher in colour as a rule than the butter made from short horns or Devon beasts.

62,438. Would it be any better than the best Normandy?—I do not think so.

62,439. (*Mr. Channing.*) Does it not command a higher price?—There is no real market for it. It may be here and there that a gentleman with a herd makes a small quantity of butter, and he has some particular person that he sends it to who makes a speciality of it, but there would not be enough of it to make any real business of.

62,440. (*Viscount Cobham.*) It does not affect the wholesale market?—No, I never heard of it.

Adulteration.

62,441. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Do you think that the low price that margarine can be got for has affected the price of butter much?—I do not think it has much effect on the best butter, but I think undoubtedly that margarine has an influence on common butter.

62,442. Do you deal in margarine?—Yes, I do.

62,443. Has it an increasing consumption?—After the stir that we have been continually making about it to stop the adulteration in the business, there was a falling off, and a very considerable falling off in the trade but just recently it has revived again very much for the reason I told you, when butter got scarce and dear, the mixers were at work again instantly.

62,444. Do you buy it abroad or in England?—We are agents for a Dutch firm, the largest firm that manufactures it.

62,445. You do not buy any manufactured in England?—No; but there is a great deal manufactured here. We have and have had for 15 years every package of the article that we receive branded—we began that long before the Act compelled it. Everything that we sold of the kind has been branded in full with the word on it; before the word "margarine" was brought in, we used to call it "butterine." When the first Adulteration Act was passed, there was a strong contention on that point; I was before the Committee myself, but then the word was altered, and it had to be branded margarine, and that we have done ever since. In London there are many people who undoubtedly sell these mixtures of margarine; I am afraid they do not always sell it for what it is.

62,446. The Adulteration Act has not cleansed that stable altogether, has it?—No, and it never will until they alter the penalties. There is only one remedy for it, the same remedy that was applied for bribery in elections will answer the purpose, and I think no other.

62,447. (*Chairman.*) Can you detect readily the presence of margarine in butter?—I have a very strong opinion on the subject. We nearly always can do so if there is any large quantity, but if it happens to be only 15 or 10 per cent. it is very difficult. When it gets up to 40 or 50 per cent. it is very easy to us, but it would not be so to anyone who is not an expert at it. Of course, when one is dealing with butter all one's life you get to know things about it that are not known to the consumer.

62,448. I think you told me that you could detect the quality of the hay that the cows had been feeding on?—I have detected the flavour of the grasses, and one could detect the flavour of cabbage if the cows had been fed too much on cabbage, or if they had been fed too much on particular roots you get the flavour at once in the butter.

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62,449. I think you told me you could detect whether the cows had been fed on white clover?—If they have had too much of it, if they have eaten the very strong flower of white clover I have known it come out through the butter as strong as possible.

62,450. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I understand you do not retail butter or cheese?—No.

62,451. You sell it in quantities?—Always in quantities.

Inspection of quality of butter.

62,452. May I ask you how you know that the quality of the butter you receive is kept up? do you analyse it at any time, or does it merely pass through your hands?—We employ an analyst who comes periodically to our warehouse and takes samples from every description of butter that we sell. We do not know when he is coming. He comes when he pleases, but he has to report so many times in the course of the year. That is for our own protection. If we have any fresh consignments from anybody those at once are sent to him before we sell them.

62,453. You take every precaution you can to see that the quality is kept up?—Yes, and we have had butter confiscated that has been sent to us by people who have tried to make us deceive our customers. We caused nearly 200*l.* worth of butter to be seized by the Customs on one occasion. They had been consigning us butter, and we tested it at first and it was found pure, and we went for a short time selling this butter, considering that it was pure because we held their guarantees. All at once we found out that there was adulteration, and we stopped the next consignment, and I went myself to the Custom House authorities, and compelled them to put the Act in force, and they came down and seized the consignment and condemned the whole of it; so there was an end of that business.

62,454. Do you have the butter tasted as well as tested?—Some members of my firm or myself are always looking at every day's arrival of butter. We look at the butter to see that it is of the right description, and if there is anything wrong with it we should telegraph instantly to our people; but it is very seldom that it happens so.

Quality of Normandy butter.

62,455. I think you have stated here that you believe the Normandy butter to be perfectly pure?—I am absolutely certain of it.

62,456. Therefore, although people may state that they had had Normandy butter analysed, and had found a quantity of animal fat in it, that would not be the case with the butter you import at all events?—No. But we have assisted repeatedly in detecting frauds of that kind. We have obtained convictions in France; we have had several men over there sent to prison for adulteration. I have at home a list of convictions. We have spent a great deal of money in detecting this sort of thing. We have what we call a butter association in London to which the principal merchants in London have subscribed large sums of money.

62,457. You would not dispute that it had happened?—We know it, because we have detected it ourselves, and we have been constantly in communication with the Customs to ask them to take samples in transit in order to test it. But with the higher brands of Normandy butter they would not dare to do such a thing for their own reputation; it would be ruination for a firm who had a large business to adulterate butter.

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62,458. Do you think it is the case that latterly the taste of the public has gone more to the best English butter than to the Normany butter?—No.

62,459. You think not?—Certainly not.

62,460. You judge by the consumption?—By the continually increasing consumption of it. Our sales of Normandy butter in July, August, and September of this year were nearly 20 per cent. in excess of the corresponding period of the previous year. The returns have been made up to the end of September, and that is the result of the comparison; those are actual sales.

62,461. (*Mr. Long.*) These are wholesale?—Yes.

62,462. You do not know how the retailer delivers it to the customer?—The majority deliver it as it is sold. Normandy butter has a better name than any other butter in the London market.

louring butter.

62,463. You told us in the earlier part of your evidence that there was a great difference between the Normandy butter and the English butter, the former having uniformity both in colour and quality?—Yes.

62,464. How do you account for that?—Because it is blended and it is coloured.

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62,465. But it is coloured in England; that art is not confined to Normandy?—It is not coloured in the dairies.

62,466. The butter is not?—Not in the English dairies.

62,467. Is it not?—I do not know of it myself. I know that when years ago I had to do with English dairies the butters came all manner of colours. You might have 20 flats of butter and you would have 20 different colours.

62,468. You mean that it is not all coloured to a uniform colour?—Yes.

62,469. Because it is made in different dairies and sent privately to the purchaser?—Just so.

62,470. That is the reason you think?—That is just one reason why the consumer does not care for it. He likes to see the same thing over and over again. If he gets one day a high coloured butter from Jersey cattle, which may be very good, and the next day he gets butter almost white, but equally good, he thinks there is something wrong; he thinks it is lard, or something of that kind, or that it is mixed. You hear all sorts of things of that kind.

Advantage of butter factories.

62,471. If the butter farmers in England were to make their butter and send it into a factory where it could be graded and mixed, do you think that they would be able to compete more successfully?—I think so undoubtedly. I think it is the only system that will really meet the case.

62,472. Must that butter be coloured for the London market?—The butter must be brought to the factory just as it is made without any addition of salt or anything of that kind, it must be a perfectly fresh butter. Then the factory man will blend it according to the quality and add the colour that is requisite. If he salts it he puts in the quantity of salt, and there, again, you get uniformity of salting, whereas if it is left to the farmer one will salt 2 per cent., another 3 per cent., another 4 per cent., and so you get all sorts of different kinds of butter and qualities.

62,473. But that would not get over the difficulty that you have referred to about grazing and watering—you still get varieties of that?—Yes, but in the butter, when it was produced, you could always detect the inferior quality, but you could not in the milk, or in cream, it is very easy in the butter, the smell will always guide you, but, as I say, you cannot get it in the milk or in the cream.

62,474. You think the English farmer could compete if he altered his system that way?—I think so. The Irish farmers have done so, and I do not see why not the English. I was talking to one of the Irish members—a Nationalist—very recently about what had been done in the Bantry and Killarney district, by the man who carries on the factory whose butter we sell. This gentleman told me, that it had been a very great boon, and that their being able to sell their butter in that way, had done an immense deal for the farmers in that district. It had improved the make of butter, and they had obtained better prices for it.

62,475. It of course gets over all difficulties of packing, and trains, and shipment?—Yes; and they get their money at once; they see the butter weighed on the scale, and they take their money away with them, and they take back the package that they have brought to the market. In Carentan market, which is one of the largest in Normandy, you can see, I might almost say, thousands of people bringing their butter in from all sorts of different sources—from 20lbs. to 100lbs. of butter. They all come to the dealers, but if they are not satisfied with the price that he gives they go to another. It is not all in the hands of one dealer; there are a number of persons competing, and there is a very strong competition there in the matter of price. The producers have no difficulty; they simply bring their butter and they take the money at once.

62,476. (*Mr. Channing.*) You spoke of several English firms who had organised the supply and secured uniformity of produce?—Yes.

Competition with foreign butter.

62,477. Do you think if that system was carried out generally, there would be any insuperable difficulties in the wholesale trade in London, taking English butter instead of a certain proportion of foreign butter?—I think it would very soon find a place.

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62,478. There is no insuperable difficulty?—Not at all. The difficulties have been in the making. If you get a nice clean package—an even package of even weight and quality—the public will know what to expect, and they will take it with confidence.

62,479. I mean there is no special advantage in taking the foreign butter which would deter the wholesale man from dealing with the English market?—Not at all. We do not care what we sell, we get our commission by selling it, only we sell that which we can sell more freely.

62,480. If Jersey cow dairies were taken up more largely, could not that be made into a separate grade of high class butter with some advantage?—I have not much opinion of it. I do not think it could be done to a sufficient extent to give it a place on the market. My experience of Jersey cattle is that they are very delicate, and I do not think that they would be found to pay farmers generally about the country, but I scarcely ought to offer an opinion on the subject, because I do not pretend to understand them.

Inspection of foreign butter.

62,480*a*. I had the advantage of hearing your evidence before the Committee of the House of Commons, and I just ask one question about it. You are very much in favour, are you not, of further action at the Custom House in dealing with imported butters?—Yes. I may tell you since that time the authorities of the Custom House have sent for me, and I have been down there, and they have promised to give us greater facilities in the direction I asked for before the Committee. I had a long interview down there with the secretary and some of the officials, and they have promised that whenever we can give them information they will take the matter up.

62,481. Do you think more legislation is wanted or merely better administration?—We had tried previously to get the Board of Trade to interfere and have asked them to carry out the Act, but they had never carried out the Act. I daresay you remember I said so before the Committee. After that I suppose something had been said about it. I had a letter from the Secretary of the Customs asking me to go down there, and I went with one or two other members of the trade. They met us in a very different spirit to that in which we had been met before, and they were quite ready then to take up those points.

Keeping qualities of butter.

62,482. (*Captain Owen Thomas.*) How long will fresh butter keep after leaving the factory without losing its flavour?—In ordinary weather I should say a week, but it is very rare that it has to be kept so long as that because we get it into consumption on the third day. We supply the large retailers almost every day in the week; we deliver all over London every day except Saturdays, that is five days a week.

62,483. I suppose you know of cases where butter has gone wrong?—In spite of the hot weather of this summer I do not think we had out of the thousands of packages we have dealt with 50 boxes of rancid butter the whole season through, and that would be butter only of the very commonest quality.

62,484. What does it cost on an average to pack and blend and put the butter through this machine?—Now I am afraid you are asking me something that I cannot answer. You see, I sell the butter here. The manufacturing business is entirely the business of my consignors, and I really do not know what it would cost.

Sale of Irish butter.

62,485. (*Lord Rendel.*) I think you said you sold about a tenth of the quantity of Irish butter that you sold of French butter?—I said the one factory that I mentioned was not one-tenth of the quantity that we sold for one factory in France.

62,486. For one factory?—Yes.

62,487. Then the proportions for the total would be, what?—Of the total of my sales of Irish?

62,488. Of Irish as compared with your sales of French?—Do you mean including all Danish, Swedish, and Finnish?

62,489. No, French?—Probably the Irish butter might represent 15 to 20 per cent. of the whole that we sell.

62,490. Not more than 15 to 20 per cent. of the whole?—Not more. *Mr. J. C. Lovell.* — 14 Nov. 1895.

62,491. In reference to the relative quality I think I gathered that you considered the Irish as good as the French, except the very highest grade of the French?—It is about equal to the average medium qualities of French.

62,492. From your great experience and taste you would consider that there was no reason why the home-grown butter should not attain the same general average quality as the Irish butter?—I think, on an average we ought to get it better in this country, because it takes longer to get it into the market from Ireland than it does in England. There would be 24 hours saved at least in the majority of cases, and that is a very important matter with fresh butter.

Competition with foreign butter.

62,493. Therefore do I gather that there is nothing standing in the way of home-grown butter displacing French butter other than the securing of this uniformity which is secured, as you have stated, by the factory system?—I take it that it would be a long time before they would be able to displace it, but I think they might very soon gain a place alongside it. I think you would find that it would be extremely difficult to displace it, because it has obtained such a hold on the public, but there is no reason why it should not gain a place alongside of it.

62,494. Do you regard the public, and in particular the lower middle classes, as very much guided by their taste?—All classes.

62,495. And as having a very improved and a correct taste?—Most decidedly.

62,496. Therefore you would, I suppose, expect that the quality of the butter will really determine the source?—Certainly.

Adulteration of cheese.

62,497. There is nothing therefore so far as quality is concerned to prevent the consumption of home-grown butter being very largely increased?—If it is put on the market in a proper form. Might I just say one word about the filled adulterated cheese, because I think that is an important matter. This trade is carried on to a considerable extent in Scotland. The milk is skimmed, and the cream is taken away to make butter; then the place of the cream is supplied by oleo—that oleo is the groundwork of margarine. This article has been very largely sold in this country, and most of the larger dealers in the pure article object to it very strongly. The public at first sight are not able to detect the difference between this cheese and ordinary cheese, but if you expose it to the fire the oil then runs away and leaves the casein or curd very dry and hard. It is generally understood that it is not a digestible cheese like the other. It is an injurious cheese, and there is a very strong opinion amongst the principal cheese people and dealers in this country that its mixing ought to be prohibited. I was speaking before I came here to two of the largest sellers of cheese in London, and also to a wholesale man. I mentioned that I was coming up here, and I asked them to read the notes of the evidence which I proposed to offer here, and I might say that they are absolutely in accord with me on this matter. The Chairman knows one of the gentlemen that I am thinking of and the position that his firm occupies.

62,498. (*Mr. Channing.*) Where is this cheese manufactured?—A great deal of it in Scotland.

62,499. (*Chairman.*) Can you form an opinion as to the value of the Normandy butter sold in the English markets?—The total value?

62,500. Yes?—I cannot.

62,501. It is very large, I suppose?—Very large indeed. I know, of course, what my own sales amount to in the course of the year if that is any guide. During the past year I have paid the Normandy people over a million of money for butter.

62,502. (*Mr. Channing.*) Has there not been an enormous increase of the consumption of butter per head of the population?—I think so; I think the increase must have been very large.

The witness withdrew.

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Mr. G. Brown. 14 Nov. 1895.

Mr. GEORGE BROWN called and examined.

Mr. G. Brown. 14 Nov. 1895.

62,503. (*Chairman.*) Are you a farmer residing at Watten Mains in Caithness?—Yes.

62,504. How long have you farmed?—20 years.

Particulars of witness' farm.

62,505. What size farm have you got?—A farm of about 1,000 acres arable.

62,506. Caithness is a lowland county, is it not?—In part.

62,507. That is to say the cultivated part of it?—Yes, the arable land.

62,508. It mainly produces oats, I think?—Yes.

62,509. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have you any hill-land?—There is plenty of hill land.

62,510. I mean yourself, on your holding?—Yes, I have some hill land too.

62,511. (*Chairman.*) Besides the arable land you have some hill land?—Yes, pasture.

62,512. There is a very considerable district between the hills and the sea which is cultivated as arable land?—Yes.

62,513. And which is to all intents and purposes a low land district?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

62,514. What has been the course there as regards rents—have they been reduced?—Yes.

62,515. I suppose the district has suffered from the fall in the price of oats?—Yes, and of store cattle and sheep.

62,516. What has been the reduction in rent there?—From 30 to 50 per cent. on the large holdings, from 20 to 30 per cent. on the medium-sized farms, and from 16 to 60 per cent. on the small holdings.

62,517. They go up as high as 60 per cent. on the small holdings?—Yes, and some over.

Size of farms.

62,518. What do you consider large holdings in your district?—Anything over 500 acres.

62,519. What do you consider medium sized holdings?—About 200 acres.

62,520. What do you consider small ones?—From 3 acres up to 10, 15, or 20.

Small farms.

62,521. Are those small farms occupied by men who live by the land wholly, or are those men employed upon other things?—All these sort of holdings are subsidiary to some other employment.

62,522. Is there a considerable number of those?—Yes, a great lot altogether.

62,523. I presume those are crofters?—Crofters or small farmers; you cannot distinguish one from the other.

62,524. If they are crofters they are subject to the Crofters' Act, I suppose?—Yes.

62,525. We have not gone into the crofters' question, and I do not think we can go into it?—There are a great many small holders who hold land outside the Crofters' Act.

62,526. Are there?—Yes, all leaseholders do where there was any agreement at the time of the passing of the Act.

62,527. Is it because they are leaseholders?—Yes.

62,528. Leaseholders are not yet included?—Where there was any agreement between the landlord and tenant prior to the passing of the Act, then they are excluded.

62,529. I think there are a great number of what they call pluralist farmers in the district, that is men who own several farms?—There are a few.

62,530. There are men who hold as many as eight or ten farms, are there not?—Hardly that.

62,531. Five or six then?—Some hold four or five, I daresay.

Burdened estates.

62,532. In the case of leases which were unexpired during this depression have reductions been made?—Not on many estates. There are a few of the best landlords who have given reductions, but a great many estates are burdened so heavily that there is no margin for lowering rents.

62,533. I am afraid there are a good many burdened estates in Caithness?—Yes, they are pretty well off in that way, in fact there are trustees on sequestered estates to the tune of something like 29,000*l.* of rental and the total rental of the count is only about 98,000*l.*, so that is just about one-third.

62,534. (*Mr. Clay.*) That is a third of the estates are burdened?—They are in the hands of trustees for the bond holders.

62,535. A third of the estates in Caithness?—A third of the rental is.

Reduction of rents.

62,536. (*Chairman.*) Then the landlords, at all events or those who have made reductions have suffered heavily?—Yes.

62,537. And there has been a depreciation in the value of the land?—Of course that naturally follows.

62,538. And the gradual disappearance of the margin which is left after paying the charges, and which remains for the family to live upon?—Yes.

62,539. Have the rates and taxes increased?—Yes, considerably.

62,540. I suppose the assessment of land has been reduced in proportion to the reduced value?—There is a higher rate exacted when the rents fall of course; you must increase the rates in order to get the sum required.

62,541. Then, I suppose, the landowners have been to some extent saved by their sporting rents?—That applies more to the proprietors of sheep farms.

Large and small farms compared.

62,542. Which class of tenants have suffered most—the large or the small ones?—The large, I should think.

62,543. The small holders you say occupy their farms as something subsidiary to other occupations?—Yes.

62,544. Such as labouring, fishing, and quarrying in Caithness; fishing, whale fishing, piloting, and seafaring in Orkney, and knitting, fishing, seafaring, and breeding ponies in Shetland?—Yes.

62,545. Do you speak about Shetland and the Orkneys as well as Caithness?—I speak for the northern counties.

62,546. The sons and daughters of those small holders go out to service and send home parts of their wages?—Yes.

62,547. Then as regards labourers what is their position?—Wages have increased.

Wages.

62,548. During the last 15 years since the depression began have the wages still gone on increasing?—They have been gradually increasing since 1869.

62,549. What has the total increase been?—From about 20 to 25 per cent.

62,550. What do they now amount to on the average?—We have a comparatively low rate of wages in Caithness, I should think about 35*l.* a year would cover the whole.

62,551. Has the labourer a cottage free?—He has a house and fire free.

62,552. And a garden too?—Yes, there is a garden also.

Condition of labourers.

62,553. Then considering the price of food he is very much better off than he was?—Of course, it is cheapened by the lower prices of produce.

62,554. Is the quality of labour remaining about the same?—There is not much difference.

62,555. The housing of the labourers is better?—It has been much improved within the last 15 or 20 years.

62,556. Have they cottages?—They are all cottages occupied by married men.

62,557. Are labourers more scarce than they were?—Yes, they are getting scarcer.

62,558. I suppose it is on that account that wages have risen?—To a certain extent it is. The Education Act has a good deal to do with it.

62,559. Has any land gone out of cultivation?—None in the north that I am aware of.

Change in system of cultivation.

62,560. Is there any change in the method of cultivation?—Yes, there is an extension of the rotation; there is the laying down of land in grass for two, or three, or five years, perhaps.

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62,561. Instead of the land being sown with oats it is just laid down in grass?—Yes, there are three or four years of grass taken instead of a rotation crop.

62,562. And economy of labour is effected in that way?—Yes.

62,563. And economy also in horses, I suppose?—Of course, you can do with less horses and less labourers when you have less land under cultivation.

Wages.

62,564. The increase of wages has been a serious matter with the farmers there; I suppose it has been one of their difficulties?—No, not to a great extent.

62,565. If the wages have increased 25 per cent. during the last 15 years that must be an additional charge upon the farmers?—It is an additional charge, but it is a mere bagatelle compared with the lowering of the prices of the produce. We do not look upon the increase of wages as being a very material matter.

62,566. It is not a material matter?—No; to a man paying 100*l.* a year in wages, 20*l.* extra would not make very much difference, if there were good prices for his commodities.

Cost of labour.

62,567. How should you say that the labour bill compares with the rent in that district?—That is, just the labour pure and simple?

62,568. Yes?—About half of the rent.

62,569. Not more than that?—No.

62,570. What is the average rent of the land there?—I would say about 12*s.* 6*d.* an acre all over Caithness.

62,571. Not more than that?—No, I do not think so.

62,572. Do you say that the labour bill is no more than 6*s.* an acre?—It is about that.

62,573. It seems a very low rate?—Of course, that does not include the perquisites. We work on the perquisite system; we do not pay so much a week. I am talking about merely the money paid out.

The labourers.

62,574. Then a great number of the labourers board with the farmers, I suppose?—Yes, a good many, but not in the north. There they are all separate, and they have the perquisites of a free house and a garden, and firing and a cow's keep, eight bowls of meal and 60 chains of potatoes.

62,575. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is the cow's keep over and above the house and garden?—Yes.

62,576. That in itself would be about 4*s.* a week?—About 7*l.* a year.

62,577. (*Mr. Little.*) What proportion would it bear to the whole—what part of the whole remuneration would the perquisites be?—I think the perquisites would almost amount to half.

62,578. Half of the money payment?—Yes.

62,579. Then the 12*s.* 6*d.* an acre in that case would be 18*s.*?—Yes.

Change in system of cultivation.

62,580. (*Chairman.*) By the adoption of these temporary grasses, the rotation has been extended from five to seven or eight years?—Yes.

62,581. Dependent upon the the capability of the soil to retain the grass?—Yes.

62,582. What is the maximum period for which the grass will last?—Sometimes—I have seen it in good fertile land—grass will last for ever, and the longer you leave it the better; but on some soils it does not do; it throws out; worthless grasses get up and you have to plough it up, and put it round another rotation.

62,583. What economy of labour would you say on the average has been effected by this extension of the rotation?—On a farm, say, of six pairs of horses they can put off generally about two pair I think; perhaps a fourth.

62,584. The same with labour, too?—Yes.

62,585. Then has the balance of the live-stock been disturbed at all by this change in the system?—Yes, most of the farms are put under grass, and you have a greater amount of cattle and sheep during summer than you can keep in the winter. The consequence is that you have a demand for stores in the spring and you cannot sell them off at the back end at a profit, the grazier's profit is done away with.

62,586. Then among the causes of depression besides the fall of prices, and the rise of wages, there is the difficulty in rent, I suppose?—Yes.

Reduction of rents.

62,587. I think you have already stated that where leases exist some of the landlords at all events have not reduced the rents?—I only said on the burdened estates where there is no margin, they could not. When landlords are hard up, they simply have no margin to live on. The best landlords have been very considerate to all the tenants, and they have given reductions all round.

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62,588. Is there competition still for farms at the reduced rent?—There is not a great competition in Caithness.

Competition for farms.

62,589. Not much?—No, and they are all taken at a reduced rent.

62,590. Still, when a farm is vacant, is it possible to let it at a reduced rent?—Yes, they have to let it so.

62,591. If the rent is reduced to a fair amount, is there competition then?—There is very little land in Caithness above 1*l.* an acre.

62,592. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) Have the landlords got any in hand?—No; two or three of them tried to farm, but they had to give it up.

62,593. (*Chairman.*) If a farm is vacant is there more than one applicant for it—are there several applicants for it?—Within this last year or so there have been perhaps one or two applicants, but they are not very keen on farms there.

Small farms.

62,594. Now on the smaller holdings, is there competition for them?—Yes, there is competition for medium and small holdings, and always has been.

62,595. Even for the medium sized farms?—Yes.

62,596. I suppose there are more men of capital ready to go into those farms?—Of course there is a greater number, and the supply is not equal to the demand.

Reduction of rents.

62,597. Has there been less reduction in rent in the smaller farms?—No, there has been a bigger reduction of rent in the smaller farms; there is less competition on the large farms than there is on the medium farms.

62,598. I thought you said just now that there had been a larger reduction in the case of the large farms of from 30 to 50 per cent.?—Yes, as compared with the medium-sized farms, but the reduction is from 16 to 60 per cent. on the small farms.

62,599. One rather gathered from what you stated that there was a greater reduction of rent on large farms than on small ones?—There was a great reduction on the small and the large, but the medium-sized farms were not so much affected.

Competition for farms.

62,600. You say in your brief that among the difficulties of the depression is "the faith of farmers allied "with the spirit of gambling in taking farms at high "rents"?—Yes.

62,601. That would seem to indicate that there is a competition among them, and that they are prepared some of them to give a rent beyond what is likely to make it pay?—Yes, that refers more to the south country farmers than to the people in the north of Scotland.

62,602. I thought you were speaking of the Caithness farmers?—No, that is in general terms. The causes of depression, stated in my brief, are taken in general terms all over the country.

62,603. I think we should prefer you to confine your evidence to Caithness, because we have taken evidence from other parts of Scotland, therefore, you will, perhaps, confine your evidence to the district about which we desire to hear you?—Very well.

Bad seasons.

62,604. What other causes of depression exist in Caithness—are there any special to Caithness besides those; has Caithness suffered specially from bad seasons, or not?—It has.

62,605. Did it suffer from the drought of 1893, or not?—No, we did not, but the drought of 1893 affected us very seriously in Caithness. We are a breeding county, but all the English cattle were sent north to Scotland and did away with our markets.

62,606. That affected the price of your lean stock?—Yes.

62,607. You suffered indirectly in that way?—Yes.

62,608. Then in 1894 did you suffer from the bad weather during the harvest, as the south of England did?—No.

62,609. During the present year have you suffered from drought?—A little, but not so very much.

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62,610. Was the price of cattle affected at all by the drought in the summer?—I think the price of cattle is high in the way of stores just now.

62,611. It is high?—Yes.

Price of cattle.

62,612. Has it quite recovered?—It is the fact that the glut in the market, caused by the importation of Canadian cattle, did away with breeding, but now there is a reaction set in and a demand for stores, because the farmers were all out of breeding.

62,613. Then the abnormally low price of one commodity is not compensated by the relatively high price of other products you say?—Yes, I do.

62,614. As you have explained the drought of 1893, together with the importation of Canadian stores glutted your markets and decreased the breeding which is now made apparent by the scarcity of stores?—Yes.

62,615. Has the diminished yield of crops in your district lessened the head of stock?—Yes.

Rates.

62,616. Then there are other contributory causes that you speak of, namely, the increase of rates and taxes, the decrease in the rateable value, and the increase of capital expenditure. What do you mean by the increase of capital expenditure?—That is the increase of capital expenditure by county councils and parish councils.

62,617. And the unfair incidence of local taxation?—Yes.

Tenure.

62,618. Then among the matters of which the farmers complain are the alterations during leases under which I suppose there are breaks of five or seven years?—No. The lease continues unaltered, but the five or seven years' leases have practically made themselves.

62,619. Are the long leases given up practically then?—Yes, up in the north.

62,620. Is that at the instance of the landlords or of the tenants?—Of both parties.

62,621. Neither of them wish to be bound so long as they were, that is up to 19 years?—No.

62,622. Is it not rather a disadvantage for the future that the leases should be shortened to five or seven years?—Yes, it is a disadvantage indeed, in fact a long lease is the only practical security that people have for high farming.

62,623. But the farmers have themselves acquiesced in the change?—It is rather a big risk now-a-days to speculate more than five years in the future.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

62,624. Do they consider that the working of the Agricultural Holdings Act has not been satisfactory?—Very far from it.

62,625. What are the principal objections?—The principle is accepted as right, but the farmers seem to be dissatisfied with all the rest of the arrangements of it.

62,626. Do you think the mode in which it is administered is too complicated?—Yes.

62,627. And that the method of appointing referees is unsatisfactory?—Yes.

62,628. Are you in favour of the referees being selected from an official list?—Certainly.

Freedom of cropping.

62,629. What further matters do the farmers complain of?—There is very little question up in the north about freedom of cropping. They do not see that it is practicable with a short lease.

62,630. What is the custom there with regard to freedom of cropping?—A good man has a free hand to do as he likes, if he is a good tenant and there is a practical factor over the estate.

62,631. Is it usual in leases to give absolute freedom of cropping?—One is never interfered with in any way.

62,632. Until within two or three years of the termination of the lease, I suppose?—The tenant is bound to leave the land in a specified rotation, but he has a free hand during any lease current to crop as he likes providing he does not deteriorate the holding.

62,633. Then there is no ground for change on that point?—No, I do not think there is any.

62,634. Do these changes of rotation involve loss during the transition?—Certainly.

62,634*a*. And the benefit may be reaped by somebody else?—Yes.

62,635. Would that loss be recouped under the Agricultural Holdings Act or not?—We do not expect it. It is a mere speculation, changing from cultivation into grass land and *vice versâ*.

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62,636. What other points do you wish to bring before us; I see you complain of the sale of German spirit in substitution for Scotch whiskey?—Yes.

German whiskey.

62,637. What do you mean by that?—There is a great deal of German spirit imported into this country. I think that affects the price of barley and indirectly agriculture.

62,638. In the same way that the sale of margarine affects the price of butter?—Yes, and the sale of foreign meat for British.

Small Holdings and Allotment Acts.

62,639. Then as to the working of the Allotments Act and the Small Holdings Act of 1892 has the small Holdings Act been put into operation in your county?—Not in Caithness nor in the north either; I think it is only in Ross-shire that it has been put into operation.

62,640. Have there been applications under it?—Yes, the parish council are now making a bit of a stir, but I do not think there will be any practical outcome.

62,641. Have there been applications to the county councils for proceedings under it?—There was once an application to the Caithness County Council made by three or four, but when we tried to buy an estate that was in the market we found that we could not buy it at such a rent as would make us safe, and we gave it up.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

62,642. What remedies do you suggest?—I think the only practical remedy is an amendment of the Agricultural Holdings Act.

62,643. That is the only practical one that you see?—There are other ones, but they only touch the fringe of the question. There is relieving the burdens on land, for instance.

62,644. In the way of rates?—In the way of rates and taxes.

62,645. What are the alterations that should be made in the Agricultural Holdings' Act?—The Act would require to be revised considerably.

Suggested amendments.

62,646. Will you just state what the principal ways are in which you think it should be altered?—There is the notice of claim, there is the altering and rearranging of the Schedules part 1 and part 2, and there is that principle of cumulative fertility we have heard so much about. I would like a clear explanation of that phrase; let it be properly defined, or give the valuators under the Act a freer hand than they have at present.

Official valuers.

62,647. Then what else do you suggest?—The appointment of official valuators, so that the men would become experts in the business; the extension to the landlord of the compensation for deteriorations during the entire period of the occupancy, (the one cannot go without the other, and if you are to give cumulative fertility you must give deterioration also, the one hinges on the other,) then the scales of compensation are practically an absurdity often, and they are administered by men who know nothing about it, and who cannot read with understanding an ordinary analysis, and yet they will sit in judgment and administer an Act which is almost entirely composed of agricultural chemistry.

62,648. Then you consider that the difficulties which there are in the administration of the Act will be largely increased by increasing the scope for compensation and deterioration so that the work must always be done by experts?—Yes.

62,649. It is in view of that you consider the official valuators should be appointed in the terms of Mr. Hope's Memorandum (*see* Appendix A. I.)?—Yes.

62,650. I presume you mean that they should be paid by the parties who employ them?—If you appoint official valuators the Government must pay them. You cannot expect men to devote their time and perhaps their entire work to this business without paying them. Folk do not work for philanthropy now-a-days.

62,651. Who do you think should appoint these arbitrators, who should select them?—The Board of Agriculture; that is the only official body who have a connection with agriculture now-a-days.

62,652. Not the county councils?—County councils only appoint lop-sided men. You may say that the man who gets on best terms with the sheriff clerks—with the lawyers—gets these appointments.

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State loans.

62,653. Do you think anything can be done in the direction of loans by the State for effecting improvements?—Yes. The lending of money at a cheap rate to landlords would help them to divide up immense holdings and get them let to medium-sized farmers where there is a bigger demand.

62,654. And in the case of a burdened estate?—I think the tenant ought there to be empowered to borrow money and let it be made a first charge on the land.

62,655. I suppose the improvements would have to be with the consent of the Board of Agriculture in such cases?—Yes, permanent improvements would certainly.

62,656. (*Mr. Long.*) Perhaps I might take you upon the last point that the Chairman examined you upon first, that is the suggestion that money should be lent in the first place to landlords, and in the second place to tenants. How do you propose that when it is lent to the tenant security should be given, what security do you propose?—It is for the benefit of the estate.

62,657. Yes, but what security would you give, would you make it a first charge upon the land?—Certainly.

62,658. For which the landlord is to be responsible?—The estate is. If the landlord's estate has dipped to that extent, that there is no margin to borrow on, then the tenant makes the improvement, and the improvement stands in part security for the money advanced.

62,659. I do not quite see the distinction between lending it to the landlord and lending it to the tenant if the property is to be made the ultimate security?—Of course that is true enough.

62,660. Who is to pay the interest on the money?—The tenant pays the interest in the one instance and the landlord in the other.

62,661. Supposing the farm changes hands?—It would still be continued in the same way.

62,662. But the new tenant might decline to pay interest on the money?—It would be made a stipulation and part of the bargain.

62,663. Supposing he declined, and supposing no tenant could be got to take the farm with that liability?—I do not think the possibility of that can arise.

62 664. You do not think such a possibility would arise in Scotland, in Caithness?—The landlord would get an increased rise of rent for the improvement effected by the last tenant which would practically be the same as the interest charged upon the estate.

62,665. But if the landlord can get the amount of interest, and repaid capital in the form of rent, why should you bring in the tenant at all, why should not the money be lent to the landlord?—I had in view when I was writing that in my brief that I suppose a burdened landlord would take very good care that he would not invest money in permanent improvements. He would not be inclined to do it. I am speaking from the point of view of trustees of sequestered estates.

62,666. What I really want to understand is whether you mean that the money shall be lent to the landlord or to the tenant, or whether it shall be lent at the instance of the landlord or of the tenant?—As hedged in the Agricultural Holdings Act where the official valuator is the referee.

62,667. This is a new proposal that you will lend money; as I understand it, what you want to deal with are those estates of which I am afraid there are a great many so burdened in the country that nothing more can be done in the way of improvement?—Yes.

62,668. And you want to enable the farmers, as everybody does throughout the country, to farm on a different principle if they think they can make that principle apply?—Yes.

62,669. You propose that the State should lend money to somebody in order to do this work?—Yes.

62,670. In the first place to the landlord, and if he will not do it, then in the second place to the tenant?—Yes.

62,671. But you would make the land itself, in other words, the landowner, responsible for the repayment of the capital and interest, I presume?—Yes.

62,672. You must do that?—You must.

62,673. Otherwise on a change of tenancy and a repudiation of occupancy you might have the loan repudiated. The State cannot be asked to lend to a tenant occupying upon a short term, can it?—No, but still the improvement is there as security for the money

62,674. Therefore the landlord must be made ultimately the security?—Yes.

Mr. G. Brown.
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"Cumulative fertility" and landlord's claim for deterioration.

62,675. You told the Chairman just now that if, what is called "cumulative fertility" is introduced into the Act of Parliament, there must also be to balance that an increased claim upon the outgoing tenant for deterioration?—Yes.

62,676. In your experience of tenants, who have quitted farms, and left them in an extremely deteriorated condition, has there been much chance left to the landlord of getting anything out of the tenant at all?—It is impossible for the landlord to get it. How can you assess deterioration for four years on a 19 years' lease?

62,677. If there is deterioration, has the tenant ever got anything out of which deterioration can be recovered?—The landlord you mean?

62,678. Where a farmer has been a bad farmer and has allowed his farm to get into a filthy state, and leaves it in a filthy state, he generally leaves when he is in a depressed condition, does he not?—Not always.

62,679. Not always, but generally?—I do not think that applies generally until perhaps the last half-dozen years. Formerly there were many farms left vacant by men with plenty of means.

62,680. I am talking of the present time, and at the present time a man does not as a rule leave a farm in a bad condition who has good means, does he?—Yes. I have known plenty of men who simply make money by leaving farms in that state. They take farms after a good tenant and simply exhaust them and leave them to the landlord then.

62,681. You could recover unquestionably against those?—Certainly.

62,682. You can recover now?—Yes, you can; you can recover at common law perhaps.

62,683. You can recover under the Agricultural Holdings Act, can you not?—You only can recover for four years.

62,684. You can recover the damages done upon leaving in the same proportion as you are called upon to pay?—Four years prior to the termination.

62,685. I do not anticipate that you propose to alter the Act, except that you would give cumulative fertility, and balance it by a cumulative deterioration claim?—Yes.

62,686. In what form would the landlord get his cumulative fertility? May I put to you a case which happily apparently you are not very familiar with. In some of the more distressed parts of the country—they are. I am sorry to say, very familiar cases—a man is evidently going down hill, he is evidently stricken by the depression and he is going down hill; as a rule, the landlords in this part of the country do all they can to keep such a man on his legs as long as it is possible; they make him large remissions of rent, and they do everything they can to help him to live, because if he is turned out it means his going into pauperism. Surely to give a landlord a claim against a tenant of that kind for deterioration would be mere waste paper?—Yes; but look at the immense benefit it does to the other parts of the country. It is not only a lever for the landlord to get good farming, but it is a spur to the other tenants to steer clear of a claim of deterioration.

62,687. I am not at all opposing the principle of recognising good farming on the part of a tenant; where a man has farmed well it appears that there is no difficulty; I want to know how you are going to deal with a case where a man has farmed badly, and where his bad farming has brought him to ruin. What is the landlord's claim to rest upon in that case?—That tenant can have no claim under the Act.

62,688. No; the claim is the landlord's against the tenant?—I have often had to adjudicate upon claims when I know the land and the farm was in a worse state than when the tenant entered and I have had to give compensation to——

62,689. To the landlord?—No, to the tenant.

62,690. Because he had done stipulated things?—Yes.

62,691. That I imagine everybody wants to do away with; but I do not quite understand the proposal that a landlord should be given a cumulative claim for deterioration?—The one is the natural consequence of the other. If you give the tenant compensation for cumulative

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fertility the landlord ought in justice to have the same for deterioration.

62,692. What is he to get his claim out of when his claim has been made statutory and when the arbitrator has given it to him—where is it to come from?—He will have to take the risk of getting his claim from his tenant like any other debtor, but in the meantime he has no opportunity of formulating a claim.

62,693. You would simply let one balance the other?—In that case, yes. Of course there may be men who are unable to pay their debts, but he has to take that risk like any other business man.

62,694. In recommending what you have described as cumulative fertility, do I understand you to attach importance to those particular words or to the recognition of the principle?—To the principle of it; I do not mind the words.

62,695. What you desire, I think, is very admirably expressed in your brief. You speak there of "the compensation for increased fertility, if any, made by the tenant over that which would result from following the rules of good husbandry"; do you present that as a better term than the other?—Than cumulative fertility, yes. There is no notice taken of what is justly due to the landlord by the rules of good husbandry. It is over and above the rules of good husbandry.

62,696. You do not attach importance as some persons seem to have done to the words cumulative fertility?—I do not know what they mean often.

62,697. That, I believe, is a state in which a good many people are considered to exist, is it not?—I dare say.

62,698. Although the phrase is a very popular one?—It is very popular in Scotland, I think.

Importation of foreign cattle.

62,699. What do the farmers in your part of the world think about the importation of Canadian stores; do they want them brought into the country, or do they want them kept out?—They do not want them in.

62,700. Do they think they can raise enough stock of their own to feed the country with stores if given the opportunity?—I think so.

62,701. It is a breeding district, is it not?—It is entirely breeding.

62,702. And there is no doubt whatever in the minds of breeders in Caithness, I take it, that if given the opportunity, and if their herds are kept healthy, they can supply the markets with stores?—Yes, that is it.

Compensation award.

62,703. (*Mr. Little.*) Upon the subject of compensation to tenants, I see you propose that awards should be uniform?—Yes, circumstances being equal.

62,704. You then go on to show the great want of uniformity, and further say that consideration must be given to a great number of circumstances such as would prevent that uniformity?—Yes.

Official valuers.

62,705. Then how do you desire to attain the object? You admit that they cannot be uniform because the circumstances will differ so much?—Yes.

62,706. How do you propose that they should be made uniform?—I think that the first thing is to get the men appointed under the Act who know something of what they are about.

62,707. Then you think the defect of the present system is that the valuers are not competent?—They are incompetent.

62,708. Is it that they are incompetent, or that they have submitted themselves to regular and uniform scales?—They have taken scales set out by farmers' clubs, chemists, and land agents, and many of them actually do not know what they are giving compensation for.

62,709. Does anybody know exactly what is the result of applying 60l. worth of bones, or 60*l.* worth of manure?—Certainly.

62,710. Exactly?—As near as human brains can come at it.

62,711. I see that you say that 60*l.* spent in lime would result in compensation under one scale of 90*l.* and under the other of 179*l.*?—Yes.

62,712. Is it not quite possible that on certain land there might be that difference after a number of years?—Unfortunately these estates that I have taken as samples lie very much adjacent to each other, and the circumstances are the same.

62,713. Under similar conditions men have given twice as much compensation for the same thing?—Yes.

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62,714. Under similar conditions as to the application?—Yes.

62,715. That is an error of judgment on the one side or the other you think?—Certainly.

62,716. Would you, by appointing experts, as you call them, through the Board of Agriculture, do away with this error of judgment?—You would have a greater chance of doing it.

62,717. You think there are experts who could determine accurately the value?—The men who have experience and knowledge of what they are about must acquire the ability.

62,718. Then you say for bones the result would be from 30*l.* to 90*l.* for an expenditure of 60*l.*; that refers to bones used under the same circumstances?—Yes.

62,719. You would admit that bones used on grassland and bones used for growing turnips are very different things?—Yes, but I have specially excluded that; I have taken the same circumstances so far as I knew.

62,720. You are actually cognisant of the circumstances?—Quite; I know the estates are the same.

62,721. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) I think your main point is the appointment really of men whose hand would be always at this work?—Yes.

62,722. Do you consider that that would be best done by the appointment of so many for the whole of Scotland or the whole of England rather than for certain districts or counties in these two countries?—I would prefer districts in each country on the lines of Mr. Hope's memorandum. (*See* Appendix A. I.)

62,723. You are against the county council having a say in the selection?—Yes.

62,724. How would you, then, propose that the Board of of Agriculture would get names sent up to them?—The Government often make these appointments, and we never hear any word about the local inquiry. I have often seen appointments made diametrically opposed to local wishes.

62,725. Do you think that would carry confidence in the county or district in which these men were to act?—I think so; I think it would put aside all local jealousy and other matters, and take the thing in a broad comprehensive view.

62,726. Of course you are aware that a county council could not nominate for a post of emolument members of that county council?—Yes.

62,727. I have yet to learn from you how you would propose that these men should be nominated. The head office of the Board of Agriculture up here, I think, can hardly be expected to know, if you appoint valuators to deal with a county or a district of counties, say, two or three counties connected together, the best practical men to appoint unless someone tells the Board about them—who is to tell the Board?—That is the difficulty that I see.

62,728. Is the county council not a recognised body in the county, dealing with everything; is it not likely to be the best body?—There is just this to be said about it; the county council is a representative body, and it represents either the interest of the majority of landowners or of the majority of tenants, and whoever has the majority in the county council will appoint a man, biassed in one way or the other, there is no doubt of that; there is too much wire pulling, and all that sort of thing about county councils.

62,729. Then you have no scheme for nominating these men so as to ensure our getting the most practical men upon this list of valuators?—Men are pretty well known all over Scotland for what they are. I see no difficulty myself.

Payment of valuers.

62,730. You said, I think, that these men ought to be paid by Government?—Yes.

62,731. If there was a list, say of half-a-dozen men, to deal with a county or a district, would that position and their pretty constant employment on the work not be sufficient payment without the Government paying them at all?—Very few would take it up in that way; if you are going to appoint an official valuator you must pay him for his work, because he cannot devote his time, and he cannot be expected to devote his time, to the exclusion of his other affairs unless he is paid in accordance.

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Basis of valuations.

62,732. But when he did the work he would be paid by the parties employing him?—That is quite true, but still if a man is appointed for a district it will occupy his time pretty much, and the more occupation he has got of his time the more expert he will become. The whole body of five, or whatever number Mr. Hope says, through experience will become experts in their work, and if any of the valuators drop off, the new one will be trained into the same sort of work. In regard to the reports of the scheduling of farms, when it comes at the expiry of a lease, supposing an official valuator dies, his notes are taken, and the others know exactly what is meant by certain phrases. Then they have their scale set down by their experience and they will know exactly what to do. It is only a matter of calculation, and it can be all put down in figures, both the residue left of crops and what the crops abstract from the ground.

62,733. The basis of your valution you consider must be founded upon the vouchers of the money laid out by the tenant?—Certainly, and the analysis of manures. The amount of money paid for manures and feeding stuffs is no indication of their value as fertilizers.

62,734. Of course you would allow the parties, landlord and tenant, to select their own man or men, if they so agreed without applying to the official list?—That is a matter outside the Act entirely, but at the same time if you are to schedule farms, and give compensation for deterioration, and for unexhausted manures, I cannot see how private agreements can be carried out without the farm being scheduled at the start, because a landlord and tenant may be excellent friends at the beginning of a tenancy, and may be the opposite at the finish, and then you have nothing to go back upon as to the state of the farm at the beginning of the occupancy.

62,735. Are you in favour of or against a landlord and tenant at the commencement of a lease coming to an arrangement that is in their opinion fair and reasonable instead of going under the Act?—Certainly not against, but at the same time the farm would require to be scheduled in view of compensation for cumulative fertility as it is called, and deteriorations.

62,736. An arrangement between a landlord and tenant at the commencement of a lease is generally made at the present day upon certain proportions for a certain number of years back upon the the amount expended by him upon manures, and feeding stuffs?—Yes.

62,737. So as to save all trouble of reference? He has merely to produce the vouchers?—Yes.

62,738. Is that not a simple matter? But suppose that that tenant deteriorated in his farming; he might begin all right enough and he might have changed his tactics, or his family might inherit after him, and they might turn the whole thing differently. He might be a very good farmer when this arrangement was entered into, but he might have exhausted the farm and left it in a wretchedly bad condition at the termination; how could the valuator then assess if he had not the history of the farm from the beginning?—The farm would require to be scheduled at the start.

The scheduling of farms.

62,739. You think that it would really be practicable to schedule all farms at the making of a lease, so as to be dealt with at the end of a 19 years' lease?—Yes. I think the landlords in their own interests ought to insist upon that point because it is the crux of the position.

62,740. Does that mean to say, am I to understand you, that at the end of a lease a valuator is to say this field, each field being scheduled, is in a proper order or is in extra high order, and so on?—Yes; what is the condition and character of it.

62,741. Then that would depend entirely upon the opinion of that man at the time at which he made his valuation?—Yes.

62,742. And you would think that was a fair basis to go on at the end of another 19 years' lease after it had been run?—Certainly.

62,743. Although that man was gone entirely?—That is where the appointment of the official valuators comes in. There are other four men whom you can refer to who make the same notes as that man and have the same ideas and through gradual friction they have come to see it with the same eye.

62,744. Do you mean to say that all these official valuators upon your list are to go to value one farm?—Not at all.

62,745. How will they make notes to compare with the one man?—Because if a certain body of men are working together on the same subject they must have a basis or data to go upon, and through gradual meeting and conferring together they are bound to have the same idea and the same mind. I know it from experience.

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Rates.

62,746. Have you any figures with you that can show whether your rates have actually increased during the time of the county council, as compared with the old *régime*?—I know myself what I personally pay. I know that my rates are higher than under the old road trust.

62,747. (*Mr. Little.*) How much higher?—About 2*d.*, I think.

62,748. 2*d.* in the £?—Yes.

62,749. (*Mr. Gilmour.*) Is yours a county where light railways could be of much utility?—Yes; there is a pretty considerable traffic along the coast, especially in connexion with the fishing villages.

62,750. The country being pretty flat?—Yes.

The scheduling of farms.

62,751. (*Mr. Clay.*) Is your idea regarding the scheduling of these farms at the end of the lease to enable the official referee, whoever he may be, to come at a just conclusion whether the farm has been decreased or increased in fertility?—Certainly, that is the whole point.

62,752. And that is the only way that he can get at it?—The only possible way.

Official valuers.

62,753. Regarding the official referee being appointed as the man to decide these matters, he will be a deal better than having this one and that one, strangers who are not experts, arranging these matters?—Yes.

62,754. Would you like to see an advisary board of the Board of Agriculture having an office in Edinburgh?—No, I do not think that it would be a benefit to the Board of Agriculture or to the country either. I think that is a mere fad.

62,755. I am putting that question to you to get your opinion?—You have got it straight enough, surely.

62,756. You do not think it would be advisable?—I do not think it would be advisable.

62,757. Regarding the appointment of these official referees, we seem to be rather in the dark to know who should appoint them, but you suggest the Board of Agriculture?—Yes.

62,758. You do not agree that the county council should?—No.

62,759. You do not agree to the sub-sheriff?—I suppose the county council had the chance of putting up referees, and suppose an official valuator is appointed for five counties; ten to one you would have five men put up, one in each district. The Board of Agriculture would be just as badly off as ever.

62,760. Would you have any objections to let them be appointed the same as the Government or the Board of Agriculture appoints the Drainage Commissioners?—The same thing; that is what I say. The Government has often appointed officials, and they never refer to local matters at all.

62,761. Where do they get their local knowledge from?—That is more than I can say. I suppose valuators under the Act would be just like them.

The Agricultural Holdings Act.

62,762. I suppose your idea is to define the Agricultural Holdings Act perhaps, more liberally and extensively than has been done, so as not to give the tenant farmer an opportunity of running his farm down as he is apt to do?—Yes, I think that sort of see-saw farming is the greatest curse of the country. The Agricultural Holdings Act as it stands encourages that. I have often been asked to adjudicate upon a claim, when I knew that the land and the farm had deteriorated since the tenant had entered upon it, and I have brought up that question at a sitting, and said that I did not see how the compensation could be awarded in this case, because I knew that the farm was worse than at the term of the entry, but the agent for the tenant immediately said, "What have you to do with what it was at "the start; you have only to go back four years there, "and here are the vouchers to prove that we have put "that manure in." He simply bottled you; you had to admit the fact that you had actually given that man compensation for making the farm worse.

62,763. Do you not think if there were a new Agricultural Holdings Act, not in the style of loose language, but in a little plainer language, it should make the allowance go back a certain number of years, so that

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the outgoing tenant should be benefited by the increased fertility which he has put upon the farm?—Yes.

Compensation for good farming.

62,764. In the present time a man who has farmed 14 or 15 years badly gets as much, and, perhaps, more advantage from the present Agricultural Holdings Act than a good farmer?—Yes, there is no doubt of that.

62,765. With that amendment, good fertility all through the farm would benefit the farmer, the landlord, and the country at large, would it not?—Yes, but I think you know that landlords do not seem to see that the very fact of getting compensation for deterioration during the occupancy of their tenant will practically, on many estates, amount to this, that the landlord will pay not a cent for compensation; it will be that the bad tenants will have to pay the good ones.

62,766. At present the good tenant has not the stimulus to put more money into the land?—Yes, that is so, and on an estate like that, the bad tenant who has allowed deteriorations to go on will have to be fined as it were, and the amount handed over to the good tenant, so that it will not cost the landlord one penny.

Valuation scales.

62,767. Would you be inclined to make a suggestion that in the Agricultural Holdings Act you are of opinion that the scales should be virtually abolished in a sense?—I think the scales are a mistake. Even the combined wisdom of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture seems to be at sea about it.

62,768. I suppose the arbiters have been going upon scales?—Yes.

62,769. But scales are not the true index to the fertility of the land?—I have here notes of manurial compensation based upon the experience of the members of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture. A Sixth Standard boy who had any notion of chemistry would at once point out half a dozen errors in it.

Basis of valuations.

62,770. (*Mr. Long.*) They are not in the Act. (*Mr. Clay.*) I am speaking about the way the Act has been wrought by the valuators; they do not seem to have taken in increased fertility or any other thing that went to the improvement of the soil; have the late valuators been taking all these things into account?—No; that has been given as the opinion of the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture, and you would think that the farmers there would have a little sort of sense of what is due to compensation in either way, but they have just made a mull of it.

62,771. What would you suggest to improve the mode of getting at the compensation—first through the official valuator?—Yes.

62,772. Would you strengthen the Act to give the valuator more sea room than he has now?—Yes. As to the scales and the mode or method of laying compensation, it would require really a considerable amount of hard head work to come at the proper thing, but, as I said before, it is a matter of figures.

62,773. But these experts working on one recognised basis, would naturally arrive at a proper conclusion, both for the landlord and for the tenant?—We know now-a-days how much the different constituent crops abstract from the ground during the whole rotations, we know the amount of that substance which is going away in the animal increase; and we have a very close notion of the amount of loss in drainage, so that when we have an analysis of the crops, and what is sold, and what is kept on the farm, and the manure supplied we can make up a very close estimate of the manurial residue left by the tenant at his outgoing—very close indeed.

Compensation for increased fertility.

62,774. We have had evidence here regarding that increased fertility which appears more in pasture land than in arable; we have had evidence here that grass land at 15*s.* an acre could very easily be doubled in 10 or 15 years by the liberal use of cakes; if you calculate 15*s.* an acre at 25 years' purchase, does it not leave to the landlord a very large amount of valuable material in the shape of money?—But the evidence that led in that way entirely ignored the fact that animals had been abstracting fertility from the land and the grass.

62,775. The increased fertility is more seen and more valuable in the increased extent of pasture land than it is on arable land, is it not?—It would depend entirely on the nature of the plants that make up the pasture.

62,776. If a tenant is on grass land and has got a reputation for being a good stocksman does he not even by his experience and knowledge improve that farm, and by his reputation for keeping that stock does he not raise the value of that farm?—That opens up too wide a question.

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62,777. Is it not the case?—That is the unearned increment.

62,778. I will take you upon the grass question; if you make grass go from 20*s.* to 40*s.* that leaves at 25 years' purchase, 2,500*l.* to the landlord if he was selling that property?—Yes, but ought the tenant to reap that benefit; ought a tenant to be compensated for all that. You are allowing nothing for the ways of Providence in increasing the fertility—that is not the tenant's doings.

62,779. Whose doing is it?—It is the Almighty's.

62,780. The Almighty does not bring the cake, manure, and lime there?—There is a certain amount of that fertility brought down from the atmosphere, and the plants and the soil increase the nitrogen in it by taking it from the atmosphere and making it into organic matter. I do not see that the tenant had any great hand in that. You must knock that off from the cake. That is the inherent fertility or unearned increment—either the one or the other.

62,781. If you have very little grass, and if you have very little nitrogen, or anything by which you could improve, does that grass not generally remain as it is, without the advantage of experience and good feeding?—To a certain extent feeding helps it a great deal, but there is a certain thing that is outside the tenant that you must take into consideration when you are talking about a jump up of 20*s.* to 40*s.*

62,782. I was talking of the jump from 20*s.* to 40*s.* giving the landlord the increased value if he had to sell it, but I mean the tenant to be paid in the first place for his part, which is unexhausted?—I quite admit that.

62,783. And then for the landlord to get it?—What I understood your question to be was that the tenant was to be compensated for the total amount of fertility there was in the land.

62,784. No, you must have misunderstood me; I was only saying that if the tenant made the farm worth 20*s.* an acre more, that, at 25 years' purchase for 100 acres was 2,500*l.*?—Yes, but there are other circumstances you have to take in.

62,785. That is from the landlord's point of view, but what does the tenant require to be paid for—simply his manuring as shown by his receipts and the increased fertility he has given to the land?—Yes. Of course he is paying a rent for the grass land, and so long as he leaves it under grass he helps to increase the fertility by the outside agencies.

62,786. Not by the inside?—Not by the cakes. He helps to increase the fertility by allowing outside agencies to act, whereas he might put it under cultivation, and the loss then would be greater.

62,787. We are talking about his leaving the land for the landlord as old grass; good grass instead of bad grass?—How could you assess the like of that?

62,788. That is what I am asking you?—I could illustrate it by putting the thing in another way. Suppose the tenant comes into a piece of land and the landlord drains it. The tenant increases the fertility by cultivation and applying manures, and the Government or any other party seem to think that a light railway would suit in the locality, and the railway is passed through the farm. How would you allocate the increased fertility that had arisen from these circumstances—the landlord's inherent fertility and drainage, the tenant's cumulative fertility, and the unearned increment by the railway?

62,789. You would leave that to the official referee, would you not?—It would be left to somebody; but in the same way you asked me how you would assess grass laid down by the tenants which had risen in the price from 20*s.* to 40*s.* an acre, totally ignoring the fact that there are certain works of nature which perhaps assist as much in creating that increased fertility as the mere cake bill of the farmer.

62,790. But the cake gives the farmer his first moving power, does it not?—No. I think the cake bill of the farmer is more a secondary matter, because if you have not the soil and the material to work on all the cake in the world would not help you, and if you plant your land wrongly with coarse herbage or inferior grasses you will never make sweet herbage of it unless you allow Providence and time to overcome it, and a better start with a higher form of vegetable.

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62,791. We are starting with the position that there must be first good cultivation and the laying down land to old grass?—Yes.

62,792. If you had that are not cake and rich feeding the first factors in developing the produce of that grass?—You must have the land good to start with.

62,793. Will the cake and other manures not first help you in developing that?—It will help to a large extent there is no doubt of that.

Technical education.

62,794. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You want to see the technical Education grant increased?—Yes.

62,795. Has it done good, such as you have had?—The teaching in dairying especially has done good, and I think the Science and Art Department has done an immense amount of good this way. I do not know about colleges; they are out of the reach of many farmers and farmers' sons, and unfortunately most of the professors are very bad farmers.

62,796. Do you think that much can be done in the way of experimental farms?—No, I do not think so.

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62,797. Do you think the migratory system of lecturers and classes has done some good and might do more?—Yes.

62,798. Chiefly in the direction of dairying?—Yes; but I think that the Technical Education Grant ought to be allocated entirely for the purpose for which it is given.

62,799. What purpose?—Technical education, but you may devote it to secondary education on the relief of the rates.

62,800. Is it devoted to the relief of the rates in Caithness?—No.

62,801. Then it is devoted to the purposes for which it is given?—We have given some to secondary education.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 11 o'clock.

One Hundred and Fourteenth Day.

Friday, 15th November 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
The Right Hon. WALTER HUME LONG, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.

JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

Mr. W. C. Little. 15 Nov. 1895.

Mr. WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, a member of the Commission, examined.

Mr. W. C. Little. 15 Nov. 1895.

Local taxation.

62,802. (*Chairman.*) I believe you have for many years past given great attention to the subject of local taxation?—Yes, I began to study the subject in 1865 at the time of the passing of the Union Chargeability Act. That Act threw upon the parish that I live in a considerable burden of the urban poor of Wisbech, and it very injuriously affected some property which my near relatives were interested in. I read everything at that time that I could lay my hands upon which threw light upon the subject. In 1870 I read a paper before the Wisbech Chamber of Agriculture, and I hand in some extracts from that paper (*see* Appendix A. XXXII. 1.) as proof that I have not formed my views on the subject hastily and without consideration, and that they are not recently formed views.

62,803. You also wrote on the subject for the Duke of Richmond's Commision, I believe?—I was for two years, or rather more, under the Richmond Commission going about the southern part of the country, and one of the greatest complaints which I had to listen to then from farmers and owners of land was the burden of rates. I got all the information I could upon the subject, and I embodied some of that information in the appendix to my report to the Commission, and I wrote a memorandum on Local Taxation, some extracts from which I now put in (*see* Appendix A. XXXII. 2.).

62,804. Then you have farmed yourself, I think, in Cambridgeshire?—Yes.

Particulars of witness' farms.

62,805. As a tenant or as an owner?—I am a tenant farmer, and I am an occupying owner, and I am a landlord. I farm about 640 acres, of which 40 acres are my own. Then I have a family interest in several farms, and I have been acting trustee for about 7,000 acres of land, which I have managed as trustee; that is now reduced by the death of some life tenants and the coming of age of others.

62,806. What is the rent which you pay for your farm?—Upon my word I cannot tell you how much it is an acre, but I can tell you the amount for 595 acres; I pay 834*l.* a year.

62,807. Has the rent been reduced?—Yes, it has been reduced from 1,180*l.*

62,808. Has the assessment been reduced?—The assessment has been reduced by 15 per cent. Our union has taken the course of reducing the assessment of land by 15 per cent., I believe, but I am not quite certain that they followed that up with a reduction of something on the houses in order to make it what they considered fair. (*See*, however, Question 63,728.)

Variation of rates on land.

62,809. We will go to that later, perhaps, and proceed now to the main question. Is it your opinion as the result of all your investigations that there has been an increase in the amount of rates on agricultural land?—I think that depends entirely on the period that you take for consideration. It would be easy to show an increase or a decrease, but I think that one cannot get away from the general statistics of the kingdom, which seem to show a decrease. But that is only an average result, and in many parishes there has been a consider-

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able increase. If you will allow me to refer to some figures which I have put in I think I can illustrate those points. Taking first of all in Table 2, Appendix A. XXVI., I have shown the actual rates paid for my occupation from 1878. I may say that I have selected that period because it was as far back as I could find my actual receipts for payments, and I therefore could be quite certain of the amounts not being mixed up with any other payments. That statement shows, taking periods of three years for comparison, that if you go back to the years 1878–80 the rates at the present time are practically the same as they were. In 1878–80 they were 115*l.* 16*s.* 11*d.*, and in 1893–5 they averaged 116*l.* 11*s.* 4*d.*, which is practically the same. You will see from that statement that there was an increase after 1880 and then a decided decrease, and that in the last three years there has been an increase. If I were to take the period 1884–6, that is about nine years ago, the figures show that there has been an increase of 18·8 per cent., and if I take the single year 1884 they show that there has been an increase of 65 per cent. comparing 1884 with 1895. But the comparison of a single year for any purpose I think is extremely dangerous, particularly with regard to single parishes or unions, because rates vary so much and the time of payment varies; so I have thrown this calculation into periods of three years, and I think that gives a fairer basis of comparison.

62,810. You say that in your own union or in your own parish the charge upon your farm has remained very much the same?—The actual rates paid on my farm are much the same as they were in 1880.

General decrease of rates.

62,811. I think I understood you to admit that looking broadly over the whole country there has been a decrease?—I think that statistics show that there has been.

Increase of rates on particular farms.

62,812. But that is quite consistent with the fact that here and there there may be cases where there is an increase?—Just so. Table 1 in Appendix A. XXVI. does show a decided increase. I have an account there from a gentleman who is very well known; he did not wish me to mention his name, but I am sure it is a guarantee for the accuracy and fairness of his statement. That statement extends from 1874 to 1894, and I have taken four year averages; that leaves an odd year in the last period ending 1894, and I have taken five years then. In the first four years his rates averaged 43*l.* 16*s.* 5*d.*, and in the last five years they averaged 63*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.*; that is an increase of 44 per cent.

62,813. That shows a very extraordinary rise between 1877 and 1878?—That is a case where the farm was transferred from one union to another and the union in which it was formerly situated was one where the assessment was low and the rates were low, but it was transferred to another union where the assessment was made on a higher scale and the rates were on a higher scale. That is a point to which I should like to draw your attention.

62,814. Since the transfer, according to the statement, the payments have been about stationary?—This farm was transferred in 1878.

62,815–7. Since the transfer to this more heavily taxed union the payments out of pocket for rates have been about the same on the average?—Yes.

62,818. For the first four years after the transfer it was 69*l.* 5*s.* 5*d.*; for the next four years, 64*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.*; for the third four years, 62*l.* 9*s.* 6*d.*, and for the fourth period 63*l.* 4*s.* 2*d.*: so that you can call them about stationary?—Yes.

62,819. Apparently the assessment has remained about the same?—Yes.

62,820. So that he has not the advantage there of any reduced assessment?—No.

62,821. Of course it would be admitted by everybody that it is quite consistent with the general decrease throughout the county or rather throughout the agricultural districts that there are exceptional cases?—Yes, but that does not go very far with the person who is subjected to this exceptional treatment.

Wisbech Union. Increased expenditure.

62,822. Can you assign any reasons in your own case why you have not benefited from the general decrease?—I cannot. I am told and I read it in the blue books that pauperism has very much decreased, but in our union I do not find that that is the case. If you will refer to Appendix A. XXVI., Table 6, you will see that I have given there a statement from the published accounts of our union in periods of three years from 1882 to the present time. I find from that that the number of indoor paupers in the last period is 23 per cent. greater than in the first.

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62,823. What years have you compared there?—The three years to 1882, then the three years to 1885, then the three years to 1888, the three years to 1891, and the three years to 1894. I have given a summary of the figures there, and I have them with me in detail if you like to see them.

62,824. Have you compared the expenditure?—Yes; you will find from the statement there that the indoor expenditure has increased by 3·8 per cent., and the outdoor expenditure by 2·8 per cent., that the total cost of paupers has increased by 3·1 per cent., and the cost of lunatics by 21·1 per cent.

62,825. I have looked into the Union of Wisbech myself in terms of years, but I have not got quite the same years. Comparing the years 1868–69 with 1893 I find there has been a very large decrease in the expenditure on the relief of the poor, namely, from 17,600*l.* in that union to 11,800*l.*?—That may be, possibly. I do not doubt your figures, but I have taken a comparatively recent period, and I have taken an average of three years.

62,826. What years were you taking?—I have taken the three years to 1882 and each successive period of three years afterwards.

62,827. Of course, it evidently depends on the years you select. I am giving you the year 1868–69, and I will now give you the year 1878–79. I find that for Wisbech the poor law expenditure, which in 1868–69 was 17,600*l.*, was in 1878–79 13,800*l.*, and in 1893 11,800*l.*, so that the figures do show a progressive decrease?—I do not dispute that there may have been a decrease between 1868 and 1880, but what I say is, that in recent times there has been rather an increase than a decrease.

62,828. Quite recently there might have been?—If you look at Appendix A. XXVI. you will see exactly how the parish in which I live fared. There, shown in Table 4, are the contributions to the Union for periods of three years, the common charges, separate charges, the county rate, and the total expenditure. On the total expenditure there is an increase of 11·4 per cent., that is including the county rate, which Table 6, of course, does not include.

62,829. Then you would say that in your particular union, within the last few years, there has been rather a tendency to the increase of expenditure?—Yes, a decided increase, and that notwithstanding the very low prices of provisions and the high wages, and the good position of the labourers.

Reduction of rent and assessment to rates.

62,830. Then, looking at land within the district, it does not appear to me that it has enjoyed the advantage of reduced assessments?—No, and that is very generally the case, certainly, in our neighbourhood.

62,831. I do not think it can be said from the evidence before us that it is generally the case; the general drift of the evidence is that assessments have been reduced in accordance with the rent?—Yes.

62,832. Of course, there are exceptions to that?—Yes, and very large exceptions.

62,833. There are exceptions to that, and apparently your case is one. Take the case of your own farm, the rent has been reduced from 1,180*l.* to 834*l.*, a reduction of 346*l.*, which is 30 per cent.; but you told us the assessment had been reduced only 15 per cent.?—If you look at Table 1, Appendix A. XXX., you will see the actual figures of my assessment. I have worked out there the ratio which the assessment bears to the landlord's net rent at different periods. From 1866 to 1868 it was 95·15 per cent., from 1868 to 1882 it was 87·7 per cent., and from 1882 to 1894 it has been 114·3 per cent. That is without taking into account the abatements of rent which have been made.

62,834. Still, looking broadly at the fact, you have not had the benefit on your farm, at all events, of the reduced assessment in proportion to the reduction of rent?—No.

62,835. The reduction of the assessment has only been 15 per cent., but the reduction of the rent has been 30 per cent.?—Yes: and that is very generally the case.

62,836. Have you applied to the assessment committees to reduce it?—No, I have not. I think it would perhaps be useless, and then if it were generally applied for, it would be of very little benefit. If it were applied

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for throughout the union, some would get a larger percentage of reduction than I should, and the rate would rise in a corresponding degree.

62,837. I think the evidence we have had before us shows that undoubtedly in some cases the assessment committees instead of reducing according to the rent have made a certain proportional reduction all round?—Yes, that is so.

62,838. And then left it to the individual farmer or occupier of the land to appeal against that, and to ask for a reduction; I do not know that the evidence goes so far as to show that they have refused in those cases to make reductions?—They have in some cases.

62,839. They have in some, but at all events in your case you do not appear to have asked them to reduce your assessment in proportion to your rent?—No; I was going to say if you will allow me, that the witnesses we have had here are generally men of position, and of considerable force of character, and they are able to get an abatement of their assessment upon appeal; but a great many farmers never think of appealing; they do not know how to set about it, and a great many assessment committees will not take much notice of an appeal, so that it is a waste of time to go to them.

62,840. Do not let it be supposed that I do not attribute the greatest importance to the reduction of the assessment and also to the effect of the position taken up by some assessment committees in that respect; but in your own case it seems partly due to the fact that you have not applied for a reduction?—Certainly, I must allow that.

Appeals for reduced assessments.

62,841. (*Mr. Long.*) Accepting the fact that in a great many cases appeals for reduction have not been made, would you attribute it in any degree to the belief in the minds of the rural ratepayers that there is no object in reducing one man's assessment if it is to be followed by the reduction of all the other assessments in his neighbourhood?—Yes, that is what I attempted to state. I think that is a very potent reason with a great many rate-payers like myself. They say, if everybody is going to be reduced the only consequence will be that the rate will be higher. I am quite certain that if the land were all reduced in our neighbourhood the townspeople would immediately cry out for a reduction. They would say, our trade is bad in consequence of the depression in agriculture and we require a reduction. I should like to point out that in Table 9 of Appendix A. XXVI. I give the actual consequence of the reduction of an assessment in a rural parish in Norfolk which belongs to one individual. There are the Hall, the shooting and woods, and 34 inhabited houses, which are principally cottages. The assessment has been reduced since 1876 from 2,743*l.* to 1,879*l.*—that is about 30 per cent. The rates are as 211*l.* in 1894 to 176*l.* in 1876–78, and the rate has risen from 15·66 pence to 27 pence in the £, a rise of 72·3 per cent. I have estimated the property other than land at 500*l.* a year. The Hall is actually rated at 200*l.* The shooting and the woods are rated at 146*l.*, and I have added 154*l.* for the 34 inhabited houses. I have assumed that the 500*l.* is constant and that the rating is what it was and has not varied. The sum to be charged upon that land was 146*l.* in 1876–78; then 125*l.*, 159*l.*, 166*l.*, 169*l.*, 176*l.* and 155*l.* in 1894. That statement, I think, shows that very little benefit was derived by the land from this reduction of assessments.

62,842. (*Chairman.*) I presume you would say that that shows that there may be a case in which, there being no other property than land within the union or within the parish (according as the rate is a union rate or a parish rate), the reduced assessment would have no effect; because you would have to raise the rate in the £ exactly in the same proportion; but I do not think you would say that that is generally the case all over the country, or anything like it?—I should say it is very common, and more than that, I should say you would immediately have an application from all the townspeople for a reduction of their assessment.

62,843. (*Mr. Long.*) Would you carry it any further? The Chairman puts it that there may be a case?—I say it is very common.

Rates in urban districts.

62,844. Is it not your opinion that it is the case in the majority of rural unions and districts that what is called urban property is so closely connected with the industry of the locality, that it is impossible to draw a distinction for rating purposes?—I should like to say that what are called urban districts very frequently are miscalled. It is a mere technical term. They are purely agricultural districts, dependent upon agriculture. The consequence of increasing the rate in the £ upon them would be to decrease the assessments.

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Assessment in the Wisbech Union.

62,845. (*Chairman.*) Now take your own union, which is in the main an agricultural union, yet does contain a considerable amount of buildings which are assessed separately, there has been an increased assessment of buildings from 36,000*l.* to 45,000*l.*?—That is since 1870.

62,846. And there has been an increased assessment of the railways from 4,500*l.* to 9,800*l.*; therefore it is obvious that in that case the effect of the reduction of the assessment for the union on any particular farms would not have the effect of raising proportionally the rate in the £ because there is other property which it would be spread over?—The railway is only a very small portion, and I imagine that all the other property would be affected and would claim for a reduction.

62,847. (*Mr. Long.*) In your opinion would these buildings be mainly owned by the identical agricultural ratepayers who have complained?—No, because we have a town of 10,000 inhabitants.

62,848. Exclusive of that town?—Yes, in that case because we have no private residents.

62,849. (*Chairman.*) Looking at the figures of your union I see that while there has been a considerable reduction of the assessment on land in your union, not perhaps in proportion to the rent, but still a considerable one, namely, from 186,000*l.* to 161,000*l.*, which is apparently about 15 or 16 per cent., yet at the same time there has been a rise in the assessment, and therefore in the value of the buildings of from 36,000*l.* to 45,000*l.*, and of the railways from 4,500*l.* to 9,000*l.*?—Yes.

62,850. So that it is obvious that a reduction in the assessment of the land in a case like that would not mean a proportional rise in the rate in the £ because the payment would be spread over a larger amount of other property which would have to contribute in a greater proportion?—Yes. I am not at all sure that your returns of 1870 and 1894, I think it is, or 1893, are exactly on the same lines. I should think it is extremely difficult to separate the land and buildings. In many cases the farm houses which some years ago were not assessed separately, but were assessed in with the land are now assessed separately, and I would not be at all surprised to find if the thing were looked into that the later return includes a considerable amount of buildings which were formerly thrown in with the land.

62,851. (*Mr. Long.*) Is it then your experience that there is considerable dissatisfaction as to this description in the rateable returns of the word "buildings"?—I do not know whether I have heard that expressed.

(*Mr. Dalton.*) May I say a word as to the return for 1893–94. Instructions were given by the Local Government Board to the assessment committees in making that return to make it up on the same lines as the previous one; but of course the Local Government Board cannot say to what extent those instructions have been followed. Everything was done with the view of making the two returns on the same lines, but we have no means of ascertaining whether they were so made.

62,852. (*Chairman.*) I should have said, looking on the face of the returns, that the proportions between the values of the two periods shows that the same principle of distribution is adopted in both cases, because it is obvious that there has been in many unions very large reductions of assessments?—That might, in some cases, be partly made by the transfer of buildings connected with farms from the class of lands to the class of buildings.

62,853. That is really, if I may venture to say so, an assumption on your part, and it is not founded upon any data?—I have somewhere, but I cannot lay my hands upon it at the present moment, the actual particulars of my assessment, and the way in which buildings are assessed. In two different valuations there was a considerable difference made; In the first a mere nominal sum was put down for buildings, and in the last my house was put at 45*l.*, or something like that. If that is counted as a building in the class of buildings, and not in the land it makes a difference.

62,854. Still in your union it would appear that nothing of the kind has been done because you have stated yourself that the assessment of farms has been reduced by 15 per cent.?—Yes.

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62,855. And this return shows exactly that proportional reduction in the value of lands in 1878 as compared with the present time, 1893. Therefore it is obvious that in that union what you say has not taken place, because the land shows exactly the amount of reduction that you would expect from the statement that you have made, namely, that the assessment committees have only reduced the assessment of land 15 per cent.?—Yes, but I said also that I was under the distinct impression, though I cannot vouch for it, that the houses in the town of Wisbech were reduced 10 per cent. as the immediate consequence of the land being reduced 15 per cent.

62,856. There has been an increase in the rateable value?—Because there has been a good deal of building; a new quarter of the town has sprung up.

62,857. No doubt; all I have introduced the subject for is to show that if the assessment of land is reduced it would not mean in your union that an equivalent rate in the £ has to be raised.

Re-valuation for assessment.

(*Mr. Dalton.*) Are there not other reasons which prevent an assessment committee from wishing to re-open the question of assessment; is there not a disinclination on the part of boards of guardians to disclose an apparent rise in the rate in the £ of the rates levied?—It is so long since I was a guardian that I can hardly answer as to their policy, but I know assessment committees are very unwilling to re-open the question; they say it will lead to a revaluation which is a very expensive affair, and they are not prepared to-day in our neighbourhood; in fact there is not one union in the Isle of Ely that will do it—to take rent as the basis of assessment.

Rateable value of a particular parish.

62,858. There is also the expense and trouble of re-opening an assessment whenever any change takes place?—Certainly. I think that is the paramount cause. I wish to be perfectly open to this Commission. I came here to give them all the information I could, and I have given in Table 5 of Appendix A. XXVI. the exact effect of the reduction of the assessment of land in our parish and the increase of other properties. In Table 5 you will find the rateable value of all property in the parish and that of railways, tramways, waterworks and canals. In that parish there is scarcely a single residential house; there are a few small shopkeepers but the majority of the population are farmers and labourers. The total rateable value is now 18,757*l.* and 10 years ago it was 18,401*l.*

62,859. (*Chairman.*) Is that for the parish only?—It is for the parish of Elm alone; that is the parish in which I live.

62,860. It is a purely agricultural district?—It is purely agricultural, but there happen to be two railways running through it, a waterworks main, a tramway, and a canal. The rateable value of those properties was 862*l.* 6*s.* 6*d.* in 1883, and they were doubled by 1893, being then 1,603*l.* 9*s.* 9*d.*; in 1883 it was 4·7 per cent. of the total, and it was in 1893 8·5 per cent. The poor rate is about 2*s.* in the £, and 1,840*l.* would be raised in the first period, and 1,874*l.* in the second period; the railways would bear 86*l.* 4*s.* 8*d.* in the first period, and 160*l.* 7*s.* in the second. The balance of the rate to be paid by other property was 1,753*l.* 15*s.* 4*d.* in 1883, and 1,713*l.* 13*s.* in 1893, the difference being 40*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.* in favour of the land; the land, 11,000 acres has gained on a 2*s.* rate 40*l.* 2*s.* 4*d.* by the increase in the value of railways, &c.

62,861. That, of course, is an interesting case as showing where a small agricultural parish with otherwise no buildings has gained somewhat by the assessment of railways, and so forth?—Yes; and I have worked that out by the acre, and it comes to ·87, or less than $\frac{1}{9}$ of 1*d.*

Effect of reduced assessment.

(*Chairman.*) Reverting to the proposition which you were just now making, namely, that there were many cases in which farmers did not appear to think there was any advantage in getting a reduced assessment in consequence of the fear of the rate in the £ being raised; of course, there may be such cases, but I think people looking through that return would come to the conclusion that there are not a great many. There is a very interesting one which I have before me now, showing the possibility of such a case, which I should like, if I may, to mention to the Commission. It is contained in the Appendix to the third volume of our evidence page 562, and is one of those very interesting cases submitted by the Local Government Board. In the Union of Dunmow in Essex, the assessment of land has been reduced from 84,849*l.* to 48,220*l.*, and the assessment of buildings has remained almost the same, that is, it was 17,353*l.*, and it has increased only to 18,059*l.* There are no railways within the union, and therefore the union has not benefited in any way from the assessment of the railways. There has, on the other hand, been an enormous reduction in the expenditure upon the poor law, namely, from 15,099*l.* in 1867-8, to 8,212*l.* in 1878–9, and to 6,972*l.* in 1892–3. The result of it all is that the rate in the £ has remained almost the same; it was 4*s.* 1*d.* in 1867-8, and it was 4*s.* 0·6*d.* in 1892–3. But the rate per acre in consequence of the reduced assessment of land has fallen from 4*s.* 8·2*d.* per acre to 2*s.* 10·6*d.* Now that is a very curious case as showing that the rate in the £ is kept up in spite of the great reduction of expenditure, and it has been kept up by the reduced assessment of land, but on the other hand, the rate per acre has been enormously reduced.

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Rent as the basis of assessment.

62,862. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Supposing there was a man in your union whose rent had been reduced, say, 50 per cent., would he get a corresponding reduction of assessment?—I have said that they refused to take rent as the basis of assessment.

62,863. They have given you, I believe, in your assessment half the reduction you have had in your rent?—They gave everyone 15 per cent., and some were entitled, perhaps, to 50 per cent., and some were entitled to nothing at all.

62,864. So they did it after a rough and ready fashion?—They did it upon a scale of percentage.

62,865. (*Chairman.*) I do not think one can say that that is wrong on their part, but they ought to go further than that, and in the event of any single occupier of land appealing to them to reduce the assessment in proportion to his rent they ought to do so?—That is the point, whether the actual rent is the proper basis of assessment; it is not the legal basis.

62,866. That is assuming that they come to the conclusion that that is the true value of the land?—Yes.

62,867. I think everybody must admit that they ought to accept that, *primâ facie*, as the value of the land?—An assessment based entirely on rent is bad on the face of it.

Reduced assessment in Wisbech Union.

62,868. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Supposing that in your union a man had no reduction of rent at all, and his farm really had not suffered from agricultural depression—possibly it may be difficult to find such a farm—but supposing that, and that another man had received a reduction of 50 per cent. in his rent, would, in each case, the reduction in the assessment be a similar 15 per cent.?—Yes, it was made uniform.

62,869. Although in one case it was not necessary, and in the other it was more than doubly necessary?—I have said that in some cases there has been a reduction of 50 per cent. in value, and in some there has been no reduction at all. A uniform per-centage of 15 per cent. was given.

62,870. You are not a member of the assessment committee?—I am not.

Effect of reduced assessment.

(*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) I think we should know in the case which has been quoted of Dunmow, whether population has very much decreased. It may be one of those parts of the country where land has become derelict, and where the population has become almost nothing at all.

(*Chairman.*) It has decreased from 19,699 to 16,674. It is a very remarkable case and a very interesting case, because it shows that the rate in the £ has been maintained in consequence of the reduced assessment, but in consequence of the reduced expenditure on the poor the rate per acre is greatly reduced.

Reduced assessment in Wisbech Union.

62,871. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In the Wisbech Union has the urban portion been reduced equally with the agricultural portion?—The land has been reduced.

62,872. (*Chairman.*) Of course they did not reduce the assessment on the houses?—I think that they did. I have a distinct impression of that, but I will inquire into it if you like. (*See* Question 63,728.)

62,873. Perhaps you would, because it seems a very improbable thing; in fact if they were doing that they were doing that which is undoubtedly illegal unless there was a real reduction in value?—The argument was that there was a reduction in consequence of the agricultural depression.

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62,874. (*Mr. Long.*) Is it not the fact that these assessment committees proceed rather upon a common-sense line of their own, adopted from their own local knowledge than upon a strict legal line?—I think they try to do rough justice, but they are not very particular as to the details.

Assessment of town property in agricultural unions.

62,875. Precisely; then in an agricultural union containing a town dependent upon the agricultural industry for its trade and existence, would it not follow that depression on the farms would be followed by depression among the traders?—Yes.

62,876. Would it not also follow from that that they would decline to add to the trader in the town that portion of the burden which they took off the agriculturist outside the town?—I think so.

62,877. (*Chairman.*) Would they not be acting illegally if they did that unless they were satisfied on appeal or generally satisfied that the general property was reduced in value?—I suppose they would satisfy themselves that it had decreased in value by just the same means as they satisfied themselves that the land had decreased in value.

62,878. Do you know yourself of your own experience any case where the value of town property in an urban district like that has really decreased in value at the same time that the agricultural land has decreased in value; for my part I never heard of such a case?—I have a very strong impression that there are many such cases.

62,879. Do you know of any one case?—I cannot at the moment give you authentic instances.

62,880. If you can add one later to your evidence it would be well that we should have such a case?—I will try to do so (*See* Question 63,742.)

Rent as the basis of valuation.

62,881. (*Mr. Lambert.*) I understand that you do not know whether the 15 per cent. reduction was given to the urban portion of your union the same as was granted to the agricultural portion?—I do know—distinctly it was made as regards land. I should say that in the whole of the Isle of Ely there is not one assessment committee that takes rent as the basis of value. In the large county of Lincolnshire there are only three or four unions that take it. I may refer to some correspondence between the Local Government Board and the Clerk to the Assessment Committee of Holbeach which has been laid before this Commission.

Assessment in Holbeach Union.

An inquiry was made as to how it was that the land in Holbeach Union had decreased so little in value or in assessment. The reply was "I am directed "by the Assessment Committee of the Holbeach Union "to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th "inst. with reference to the return recently made as to "the gross estimated rental and rateable value of "lands, &c., in this union, and in reply to your inquiry "to inform you that none of the parishes in this "union have been re-rated since 1870, which explained "the reason of the slight diminution in the rateable "value of lands, such slight reductions having only "been made by the Committee in case of appeal. "I may, however, add that new valuation lists are "now in the course of preparation, and when the "same come into force, it will be found that the values "of farm lands have been materially reduced." (*See* Appendix B.)

62,882. (*Chairman.*) That would indicate that in that case they were waiting for the individual occupiers to appeal?—Yes.

62,883. But no appeal had been made?—There may have been some individual appeals but that does not affect the general result.

Rent as the basis of assessment.

62,884. I think you admitted some little time ago that although these are exceptional cases yet taking it generally through the country, looking at our evidence, the assessment committees have reduced in proportion to the rent?—I said I could not deny that the weight of evidence from witnesses who came here was to that effect, but I doubt if that represents the general experience. I said that they were men who would prosecute an appeal and probably be successful, but that the great mass of the ratepayers have not received a reduction of their assessment in proportion to the reduction of their rent.

62,885. (*Mr. Everett.*) In your own neighbourhood you know that that reduction has not been proportioned to the rent or anything like it?—I know that in our own neighbourhood I have ascertained, as a fact, from gentlemen who are acting in several unions—and it is only a small county, and I know many of the principal guardians—that rent is not taken as the basis of assessment.

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Increase in rates in Wisbech Union.

62,886. (*Chairman.*) Then in your own union it would seem that your payments out of pocket in rates have not decreased, and that has been due first, according to your statement to the fact, that within late years there has been rather an increase of expenditure on poor law purposes, and secondly because you have not benefited from a reduction of assessment in proportion to the reduction of rent?—Then there has been an increased county rate. I have given the particulars in Table 6 of Appendix A. XXVI.

62,887. How do you account for the fact that your county rate is so very much higher than the average? Mr. Dalton, quoting Sir Henry Fowler, has told us that the average county rate in 1892 was 5*d.*

(*Mr. Dalton.*) In 1890-1 the average rate was 5*d.*, but I should say that since I have given my evidence we have got later county rate returns for the year 1893-4 and those have distinctly shown a considerable increase in many counties.

62,888. (*Chairman.*) Since Mr. Dalton's evidence, as he states, the county rates of 1893-4 shows the average expenditure of all counties is 6*d.* in the £; but I think you have stated that in your county the average county expenditure is 10*d.*?—It was 10*d.* in 1895. It averaged about 5*d.* under the magistrates, it went up under the county council to 7*d.* in 1890 and 1891, 9*d.* in 1892, 1893, and 1894, 10*d.* in 1895, and it will be 11*d.* this year. I was present at our county council on Wednesday last and we had our revised financial estimate before us and we were obliged to increase the rate 1*d.* in the £ over the estimate.

62,889. How do you account for that large increase?—I do not know.

62,890. Is it that they have taken over a large amount of roads from the highway authorities, and made them main roads?—It is, partly. There is a very large expenditure on main roads, and they are more expensive now; I am bound to say they are better. The improvement of the roads is a part of the county council expenditure that I recognise as the most profitable of all the work that they do.

62,891. I do not know what the average of the whole county this year will be, but for last year the average, as I say, was 6*d.*, while for your parish it was 10*d.* Therefore you averaged 4*d.* above the average?—Yes.

62,892. That, of course, is a serious item when considering what your rates are?—We are a small county and a poor one, and we are almost entirely agricultural; I think that is the explanation. I must say that the extra penny we had to lay on Wednesday was almost entirely due to the falling off of the Exchequer contribution.

62,893. Then last year there was a falling off, but next year it will be all right again?—Under the Finance Act there was a very considerable falling off. We do not get as much as was anticipated nor as much as we should have got if the old arrangement had continued.

62,894. I think a portion of the money has gone into the slaughter of swine, has it not?—I have the particulars here.

62,895. At all events, we have now got three reasons for your payments out of pocket for rates remaining as they were, instead of being reduced in accordance with the general reduction throughout the country—first, that your expenditure on the poor has rather increased; secondly, that you have not had the full benefit of reduced assessments in proportion to the reduced rent; and, thirdly, that the county rate is above the average of other counties, and is growing?—Yes.

62,896. Is there any other reason?—I think there is an extravagant expenditure on the poor. There is a great amount of out-door relief, and a good many people get on to the board of guardians by professing a regard for the poor and a desire that out-door relief should be given freely and liberally; that is the secret of our expenditure. It seems to me perfectly marvellous that with the decrease in the price of provisions and the increased prosperity of the poor, there should be a greater number of paupers than there were 13 years ago, and that they should cost more money. I am afraid that it will not be improved under the new district councils. Some of the members have secured

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a place upon the district council by promising liberal out-door relief.

62,897. The result of all that is that your payments out of pocket have been about the same?—Yes, but I could give you, and have given in the Appendix, several instances of increase, and I could find more. In Table 8 of Appendix A. XXVI. is an instance of a farm in Lincolnshire. The rates paid on the farm for the years 1889 to 1894 are given. The average for the first three years you will see was 95*l.* 17*s.* 11*d.*, and the average for the second three years 132*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*, which is an increase of 38·1 per cent.

62,898. It seems to me a very extraordinary result in comparison with other cases throughout the country, and unless one has the particular figures showing whether it is due to the assessment being maintained, or what not, it is difficult to account for it. In this case apparently the local rates for 1892 were 105*l.* 12*s.* 0*d.*, and for 1893 154*l.* 14*s.* 1*d.*, an increase of 50 per cent. in one year; that is such an extraordinary fact that it requires some explanation?—There is nothing extraordinary in that, because the rates are very irregularly paid, and that is why I have not compared single years, and why I think it is always dangerous to do so. The practice in the country is to collect a rate not very punctually, but according to the convenience of the payer.

62,899. That may, as a rule, account for some variation, but a variation of 50 per cent. is a very extraordinary one?—Suppose a man pays three rates in one year, and one in another, the thing is done. I can show you Mr. Westley Richard's published balance sheet, you will find in one year he pays only one half year's rate, and he makes a note of the fact. It is often the case.

Proportion of rates to farmers' profits.

62,900. I do not know whether you have looked at the accounts of individual farms presented to this Commission through the Sub-Commissioners. I have looked at them very carefully, and with one exception I have not been able to find any where there is not a considerably reduced payment for rates?—I think that may be so. I am not prepared to affirm a general increase of rates, and I stated so at the beginning; but now I should like to say that the rates if they are not greater in amount are a much greater burden in hundreds of cases, and I think in the majority of cases that that cannot be denied.

62,901. You mean that they bear a larger proportion to the profit the farmer makes?—A larger proportion to the gross profits. I have calculated it upon the gross profits of the farm. I have taken this line: Here is the produce of the farm worth so much; the necessary expenditure which cannot be avoided in order to get that produce is so much, the balance between these two sums is the sum out of which rent and tenants' profit must come, and that is the only sum which is affected by the rates; if rates rise it is less, if rates fall it is more. It does not matter what are the proportions which go to the landlord and tenant respectively; that is the gross profit and that is the sum which is affected by rates. If rates rise labour is not affected, and your expenditure with the manure merchant and others is not affected; it is only this balance between necessary expenditure and actual receipts that is affected by the rates. I have taken several instances and they are printed. I do not know whether you will wish me to go through them, but I can only say that I have taken those statements from gentlemen whose names were either personally well known to me or who were recommended to me by gentlemen on whom I could rely. I have thrown them into periods of three or four years for the purpose of comparison in order that the exceptional effects of one year might disappear (*see* Appendix A. XXVII., Tables 1–8). Some of them are taken from the reports of the assistant commissioners. There is one which came in after these accounts were made out that I should like to put before you; it is in Mr. Wilson Fox's report which came before us the other day.

62,902. (*Mr. Channing.*) For which county?—For Cambridgeshire. This is an account which can be verified by any gentleman who will refer to the report (page 58). The accounts extend over a period from 1877 to 1895. I have thrown them into periods of three years. The rent received commences with 3,532*l.* 13*s.* 3*d.*, and for the three years ending 1895 it is 1,885*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*

62,903. Are you quoting from Mr. Wilson Fox's report?—Yes, from page 58. I have taken first of all the rent chargeable; from that I have deducted the abatements of rent, and I have stated in the first column of the table I have prepared the sums received by the landlord, and in the next I have stated the tenant's profits or losses. For the first three years the tenant's profits were 2,798*l.* 7*s.* 9*d.*; for the next three years, 2,001*l.* 15*s.* 10*d.*; for the next three years, 1,851*l.* 1*s.* 9*d.*; for the next three years, 780*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*; for the next three years, 1,167*l.* 3*s.* 7*d.*; for the next three years, 586*l.* 5*s.* 2*d.*; and for the last three years there was a loss of 1,566*l.* 11*s.* 6*d.* The rent plus the profit or minus the loss gives the gross profits. Those for the first three years were 6,331*l.* 1*s.*; for the next, 4,676*l.* 11*s.* 2*d.*; for the next, 4,442*l.* 15*s.* 6*d.*; for the next, 3,340*l.* 3*s.*; for the next, 3,570*l.* 1*s.* 11*d.*: for the next, 3,200*l.* 9*s.* 8*d.*; and for the last three years the gross profits of landlord and tenant are only 318*l.* 18*s.* 2*d.* The rates for the same periods have been 335*l.* 7*s.* 1*d.*, 353*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.*, 339*l.* 14*s.* 9*d.*, 336*l.* 17*s.* 2*d.*, 284*l.* 0*s.* 7*d.*, 271*l.* 15*s.* 3*d.*, and 288*s.* 7*s.* 4*d.*, showing a decline of something like 14 per cent. The ratio of rates to the gross profits is as follows:—In the first three years, 5·30 per cent.; in the second three years, 7·34; in the third, 8·10; in the fourth, 10·09; in the fifth, 7·95; in the sixth, 8·49; and in the last, 90·4; that is to say for every 100*l.* that the landlord and tenant together got 90*l.* was paid for rates.

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62,904. (*Chairman.*) Of course it does not require any demonstration to prove that when the farmer's profits are decreasing the payments out of pocket for rates, even though they may be somewhat reduced, bear a larger proportion to his profits, but that seems to involve the proposition whether the rates are ultimately to be paid by the tenant or by the owner of the land?—I do not think, though, that any one without going into the calculation would have imagined—I am sure I could never have imagined—that the proportion of rates to gross profits was so large in one case as they are here, and that a case of an exceptionally good man; I could not say that I know the man, but I have a very shrewd idea who he is.

Incidence of rates.

62,905. I presume you would allow that by the relations of landlord and tenant the rates ultimately—not temporarily, but ultimately—fall upon the land?—I am not at all prepared to say that the rates fall entirely upon the landlord. I think that a considerable part of the rates falls upon the tenant, and certainly fluctuations of rates affect the tenant, and new rates, or rates for new purposes and additional objects thrown upon the rates, fall entirely upon the tenant until there is a re-adjustment of rent.

62,906. Everybody would admit this that until there is a re-adjustment, the rate will fall upon the tenant, but equally the tenant would benefit from any reduction of rent temporarily until the re-adjustment is made. I do not know whether you dispute the proportion that ultimately, after an adjustment has been made, the average rates fall upon the land or are reductions from the rent?—In a very long period it may be so, but the considerations which determine the rent are so many.

62,907. At all events there are many high authorities for that, among others Mr. Goschen?—Sir George Cornewall Lewis states the case, I should say, most favourably on your side, and Mr. Goschen in his draft report, submitted to the Select Committee on Local Taxation, argues the whole subject, and comes to this conclusion: "(1.) In the case of leases the average "burden of past rates invariably enters into account "with other outgoings, when a tenant first takes a "farm, and the rent which he would be prepared to "give is greater or smaller in proportion to the amount "of the rates to which the land is liable. To this ex-"tent the rates distinctly fall upon the landlord. On "the other hand, after the agreement has once been made, "the excess in the rate beyond the amount estimated "by the tenant when he took his farm falls upon him, "and where, owing either to legislation, or to charges "brought about by local circumstances, a serious "increase has taken place, the tenant upon whom the "whole risk is invariably thrown by the terms of his "agreement or his lease, feels that increase as a griev-"ance. (2.) Where there are no leases the occupier "might theoretically seek re-adjustment of rent with "every increase of rates upon his farm, but, practically, "it appears that the prevailing custom of rarely chang-"ing the amount of rent, except simultaneously with a "change of tenant, added to the increasing value of "the land, and the greater competition for it, which "has been steadily progressing in most parts of the "kingdom, and, lastly, the circumstance of farmers

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"being very generally charged with a lower rent than "the rack rent, have all tended to throw by far the "greater portion of the increase of the rates, where "there has been an increase upon the tenant"

62,908. I think everybody will admit that temporarily, when rates are raised, the incidence of the rate is upon the tenant, and it is only after an adjustment has been made after more or less time, that it is a deduction from the rent; but I think also that all these authorities agree that ultimately the rates are a deduction from the rent. I think I have heard from Mr. Chaplin much the very same sort of doctrine. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) "Ultimately" is a long time?—In the "long run" may imply a very long time.

62,909. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is it not very difficult, in practice, for a farmer in taking a farm to take the rates into account?—Yes.

62,910. How does he ascertain them? We have had cases of farmers who have been here, who, after many years, cannot tell us what rates they have paid; how then does the farmer find, before he goes into the farm, what rates he has to pay?—He might find out what the rates had been, but he could not possibly find out what they would be.

62,911. Does he generally find out what they have been?—I do not think he does, and he could not possibly find out what they might be. In my own case, after the Union Chargeability Act was passed, my rates were increased by about 16*l.* a year, and of course I got no benefit from it whatever. I mentioned the circumstance to the agent of the estate, and he said: "Oh yes, that "is the case all over the country, but you would not "like a re-valuation." He said, "I have got two sons "farming under me. I am the agent for the farms they "occupy. One has his rates doubled, and the other "has his rates very much decreased, and no re-adjustment has taken place."

62,912. (*Chairman.*) Still it would also follow from the doctrines you have been enunciating, that if rates have been reduced, either from reduced expenditure or from government subventions or from the reduced assessment of land, the tenant temporarily gets the benefit of that?—Certainly, he does.

62,913. It is only after more or less time that the adjustment is made in the rent; therefore the tenant would lose on rising rates and would gain on falling rates temporarily?—Yes, you do not suppose for a moment that farmers would have made all the noise they have about rates, if they had not believed they should benefit by a decrease of them, and that they are injured by an increase.

62,914. (*Mr. Long.*) This view of the relative position of the landlord and of the tenant is rather confined to the House of Commons, is it not, and it does not extend among agriculturists as a rule?—Certainly, agriculturists are very keenly alive to the pressure of rates upon them and the fluctuations which bear upon them.

62,915. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Have you ever come across a farmer who would not welcome a relief of the rates?—No, certainly not, and if I did I should consider him fit for a lunatic asylum.

62,916. He would regard it as a considerable boon to him?—Certainly. We have a great many occupying owners and the question of whom it falls upon does not arise; whether it falls upon the owner or occupier it falls upon the same person, those occupying owners are the class who are very severely hit by rates.

"Hereditary burden" theory.

62,917. What is the next point you wish to bring before us?—The next point is as to the hereditary burden theory. I am anxious to say something upon that because whenever a tenant complains of his rates he is told they fall upon the landlord, and if the landlord complains he is told that it is an hereditary burden. I do not know exactly what people mean when they talk about the hereditary burden. I have here a sentence from John Stuart Mill's work * which I should like to read to the Commission. He says, "The same re-"marks obviously apply to those local taxes of the "pecular pressure of which on landed property so "much has been said by the remnant of the protec-"tionists. As much of these burdens as is of old "standing ought to be regarded as a prescriptive "deduction or reservation, for public purposes, of a "portion of the rent. And any recent additions have "either been incurred for the benefit of the owners of "landed property, or occasioned by their fault, in "neither case giving them any just ground of com-"plaint." That is rather a vindictive statement, and it only shows how prejudiced a philosopher can be. I maintain that the hereditary burden theory cannot be upheld in the face of the changes which have been made in the area of taxation. Rural parishes, first of all, by the Union Chargeability Act, had the burden of urban rates put upon them. Then, in many instances, within my own knowledge, parishes have been transferred either to unions or different counties, or farms have been transferred to different parishes and their rates increased. There were several extra parochial places in our neighbourhood; these have all been brought in, and properly, I think, rated for public purposes. But surely if you take the hereditary burden theory, you must take also the hereditary exemption theory, and I do not see that poor rates are any different to taxes. If you buy a house subject to house tax, it is quite certain, if you are a careful calculator, that you will reckon upon the house tax being an outgoing, therefore when you buy it you pay no house tax. In the same way with regard to consols, you buy consols subject to income tax; you know perfectly well that you are only going to get something less than 2¾ per cent., and therefore, on this theory, you pay no tax at all, and you ought to be taxed again. I cannot help thinking that the argument could be applied there. I have mentioned the Union Chargeability Act, but there are other Acts which have made a good deal of change, I mean the Divided Parishes Acts. Some 17 parishes in the Isle of Ely, which is only a small county, have had their boundaries altered under the Divided Parishes Acts, and land has been transferred sometimes from one parish to another, sometimes from one union to another, and I do not remember a single case where it has not been to the disadvantage of the occupier and of the owner. (*See* Appendix A. XXVIII., 4, 5, 6, 7.) The land has generally gone into a parish that is more highly rated than the one it was in. I have surveyed two or three properties which have been injuriously affected by such transfers. In one of these cases I made two surveys in the weeks of a few years. In the interval the property had been transferred from a parish in which there was a low poor rate, no school board rate; and no highway rate; and it was transferred to a parish where there was, I think, a 10*d.* highway rate, a 7*d.* school board rate, and a higher poor rate—a distinct injury to the owner of this farm. The other day we had a local enquiry as to the alteration of the county boundary. A parish was transferred to the Isle of Ely from the County of Norfolk. It has been paying a 5*d.* county rate but comes in now for an 11*d.* county rate. It is a small parish rated at 359*l.* a year, and the representative of the owner, a relation of my own, stated, at the public inquiry, that for three years this farm had not produced a penny of rent, but it is still rated at 359*l.* a year. The outgoings will be increased at the 6*d.* extra by 9*l.* a year. I know that the owners are seriously considering whether it is worth while to keep on draining this land, or whether it should be abandoned, and allowed to become a mere again. If what they expect happens, and they are transferred to a parish which they adjoin, and they have to pay school board rates, and highway rates, I believe that that will be the last straw that will break the camel's back, and that the land will be abandoned. If it were not drained incessantly, it would revert to the state of a morass or of a mere, and the rateable value of the property would entirely disappear.

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Union Chargeability and Divided Parishes Acts.

62,918. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What is this place you are speaking of?—This is a small parish of Redmere transferred from the county of Norfolk to the Isle of Ely.

62,919. (*Mr. Channing.*) Is there a special drainage rate, a fen rate there?—There is not a heavy special Parliamentary rate, but there is a private drainage rate; it is drained by a private steam engine.

62,920. (*Chairman.*) Some of these drainage rates are very heavy, are they not?—Yes, they are a serious deduction.

62,921. Greatly exceeding the ordinary rates?—They are very heavy, certainly.

62,922. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Do you know at all what they are per acre?—No, I could not tell you that; they must be considerable because there is a steam engine kept up for about 600 or 700 acres of land. The outer rates are not considerable. I should like to call attention to Appendix A., XXVIII., 3, as showing the result of the

* Wealth of Nations, Book V., chap. ii., part 2.

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Union Chargeability Act in one case. There I give some short particulars, of which I have the full details, of the rates upon a farm in Norfolk and the Isle of Ely for a great number of years. I took them out myself from the books of the farmer, who was a most careful account keeper and who has noted down at the time of his payment of rates as a general rule, the amount of assessment, the day when the rate was laid, the rate in the £, and the day when he paid it. I have thrown it into periods because it extends over a large number of years. I have contrasted periods of eight years. You will see that there are first of all two years under the old poor law when the rate was a high one, namely, 37*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*; then with the new poor law there was a considerable reduction, and the rates in the next eight years averaged 21*l.* 4*s.* 11*d.*; in the next eight years they averaged 26*l.* 13*s.* 0*d.*; in the next eight years 28*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.*; in the next eight years 31*l.* 19*s.* 5*d.*; and in the seven years ending 1873 they averaged 45*l.* 19*s.* 5*d.* That is a farm that was seriously affected by the Union Chargeability Act. The parish maintained its own poor, they had no highway rates, and they had a considerable charity which helped to maintain some of the widows. Under the Union Chargeability Act they became liable for the poor of other parishes.

62,923. (*Chairman.*) Perhaps that was a case where the owner had built no cottages or had pulled down cottages in order to avoid the poor rate?—No, this was the case of a private owner with only this farm.

62,924. Was not one of the objects of the Union Chargeability Act to avoid the inducement which existed previously to owners either to pull down cottages or not to build them, and to throw the burden upon somebody else?—This farm was in an open parish some thousands of acres in extent, where anyone could build. You are speaking of close parishes, where the owner of the whole parish would not have any large number of cottages. But nothing could have prevented people here from building cottages, and in fact a great many labourers had their own cottages. The effect of the Union Chargeability Act was this: for the four years ending in 1866, before the Union Chargeability Act, the average was 31*l.* 1*s.* 5*d.*; for the next four years ending in 1870, it was 44*l.* 11*s.* 2*d.*, or an increase of 43·4 per cent., and for the three years following the average was 47*l.* 17*s.*, or an increase of 54 per cent. As we were talking about assessment, I do not know whether you would like to go into that question further, but that is a case where I can show—perhaps I might mention it later on—in comparing the returns as to expenditure at some distant date—that the assessments in the past were made at very much less than value, and that therefore, any comparison of the rates in the £ in the past, with the rate in the £ in the present is open to suspicion. Perhaps I might defer that until we come to the consideration of Sir Henry Fowler's report. I should like to say, further, with regard to the hereditary burden theory that even if it were true as regards poor rates—I do not admit for a moment that it is good—but if it were it certainly could not apply to rates for new purposes. The poor rate is now a general purposes rate, and it includes a great many things which have nothing whatever to do with the relief of the poor. Then school board rates and highway rates are levied on the same basis as poor rates, and as a consequence the land has been very heavily rated for all these purposes.

"Hereditary burden" theory.

62,925. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Has Parliament at any time given any sanction to this hereditary burden theory? Has it not, on the contrary, voted more subventions in aid of the rate for the relief of the poor than in aid of any other rate?—All the earlier subventions were, I believe, in relief of the poor rate.

62,926. And then there was the pauper lunatic grant?—Yes, for the pauper lunatics. The police, of course, was an early subvention.

62,927. There were four subventions in aid of the poor rate, I think; there were the grants for medical officers, and poor law teachers, both very old subventions?—Yes.

62,928. Then the grant for pauper lunatics, a later one?—Yes.

62,929. And later still in 1888, the union officers' grant?—Yes.

62,930. There is no other rate which has had so many subventions voted at considerable intervals by Parliament?—No.

62,931. Does that not show that Parliament has not acted practically upon the hereditary burden theory?—I think they could not have acted on that theory, or they would not have passed the Union Chargeability Act or the Divided Parishes Acts.

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62,932. Does not the theory also involve the principle that no alteration or improvement can be made in taxation? If you say that a burden, although it may originally have been just or unjust, cannot be altered as circumstances alter, you have the result in the land tax, for instance, which has been on for 200 years, that it gets more and more out of date, and if you are to act strictly on the hereditary burden theory, you can never have any amendments in the law of the taxation of property?—It is quite an impossible theory to act upon. It is only held up as a sort of threat to the landlords when they attempt to get any relief. No one supposes for a moment, I should think, that farmers and landlords have not a claim to equity, and if they did pay a large share of the rates in former periods when they had the principal property, it by no means follows that they should pay the same share when other properties have increased.

62,933. If you have the hereditary burden theory you must have almost necessarily an hereditary immunity theory too, must you not?—So I say.

62,934. That was broken through in the Finance Act of last year; that is to say, certain real property had to pay certain death duties, from which it was exempt before?—Certainly, and that is an additional reason for urging a relief to the land. It was continually said in past years that land enjoyed some immunity from taxation, particularly in respect of the death duties. Now, of course, that has been done away with, and that argument is no longer possible.

62,935. It has never been seriously argued or contended in Parliament that because a burden has been hereditary it cannot be removed?—I think Mr. Goschen went as far as any one has done in quoting that argument of Mr. Mill's; I do not think that anyone else has maintained it very strenuously.

Sir Henry Fowler's and Mr. Goschen's reports.

62,936. (*Chairman.*) What is the next head you wish to speak to?—I should like to make some remarks upon Sir Henry Fowler's Report of 1893 and Mr. Goschen's Report upon which that, to some extent, is founded. In the first place there is throughout Sir Henry Fowler's Report, a disposition to contrast the position of urban and rural districts, as if urban districts meant the town population, and rural districts included all the country population. Now the urban districts are, many of them, very small in population; they are not populous, they are large in area, and they contain a great quantity of agricultural land, and it is in some of those districts that the heaviest burdens that are now complained of exist. I have made a careful examination of the census returns, and I have given shortly the result of that in my brief. Of the 1,005 urban sanitary districts which are in England and Wales (excluding London), 647, or nearly two-thirds of the whole number have less than 10,000 inhabitants. I call a town of 10,000 inhabitants a moderate sized town, so that two-thirds of those urban districts are either small towns or populous villages, or in some cases rising places. Of these, 647,382 have less than 5,000, 103 have less than 2,000, and 21 have a population ranging from 199 to 982 inhabitants, the average population of the 21 being 710.

Urban districts.

62,937. I suppose you are aware that some of those small urban districts were constituted for the express purpose of getting exemption from taxation—of getting out of the highway districts and managing their own roads?—I suppose it may have been so in the past.

Rates in urban districts.

62,938. That accounts for the number of small urban districts with a large amount of agricultural land attached to them, but you went on to say just now that there were many of those small urban districts in which the heaviest burdens exist?—Yes.

62,939. I should like to have some cases of that kind because I do not know of them myself. Do you know of any of those small urban districts which are really agricultural districts where the burdens are excessively heavy as you say?—We have had complaints from several witnesses as to urban rates, and I think several of them came from districts of comparatively small population.

62,940. There are cases of farmers who have farms close to a big town where they are included in the borough, or, what is, strictly speaking, an urban district; but I cannot recall to my memory any case of a

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witness coming from a district such as you have described, namely, a small urban district. I ask you to point out any case such as you have mentioned, namely, a small urban district, including agricultural land, where the heaviest burdens exist; I do not know of any such cases, and I should like to know of them?—I am not prepared to point out such a case, and I am not sure that I did say, "in many of those small places"; I say in many of the urban districts.

62,941. Your argument was, that there are a great many urban districts which ought not to be so and which were not strictly so because they included a great deal of land where the population was small, then you went on to say that some of those districts were those where the heaviest burdens exist?—If I said so I admit that I am not prepared to prove that in those very small districts the heaviest burdens exist. What I intended to point out was that in many urban districts including a large quantity of agricultural land, those exceptional burdens do exist and are complained of.

Rates in the Isle of Ely.

62,942. That is a somewhat different proposition; can you give any case, to illustrate it?—Yes, I will just say that in our Isle of Ely, with one exception, the urban sanitary areas include a large portion of purely agricultural land; 23·7 per cent. of the whole area of the county is included in urban districts. I have here a map which shows the area of the urban districts, and I have given in my brief particulars of the rates upon a farm well known to me in one of those districts. It is a farm of 245 acres which lies entirely in two urban sanitary districts. (*See* Appendix A., XXIX., Table 3.) One of those districts is the borough of Wisbech, and the other is the local board district of March, the town of Wisbech is 10 miles and that of March is eight miles from the farm; there is not a metalled road——

62,943. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What would you term a metalled road?—A gravel road, a hard road.

62,944. Do you mean an ordinary highway?—Yes. There is not a metalled road, a school, a police-station, or a post office within 3½ miles of the farm. Rates are levied for the main drainage of the town of Wisbech which, as I said, is 10 miles away, and for lighting the town of March. In 1893 the total amount of rates in the £ in Wisbech was 4*s.* 9½*d.*, and in March 2*s.* 8¾*d.* The farmhouse, which is occupied by a labourer, pays at the rate of 7*s.* 6*d.* in the £. In addition to those purposes which are usually paid for out of the poors rate, the land in this case pays on full value its share of the salaries of municipal officers, the costs of municipal elections, corporation buildings, school board, burial board, and parliamentary and legal expenses, and those for a seaport town, I may tell you, are very considerable. Among the objects for which the house is charged on the full value and the land on one-fourth of the value, are the following: Scavengering and watering streets, sewerage, public water supply, fire brigade, markets, clocks, recreation ground, street improvements, port sanitary authority and canal boat inspection.

62,945. How many of these have been subject to the deduction of three-fourths; I suppose, a good many?—I could not say.

62,946. (*Mr. Dalton.*) It would depend very much upon the question whether and when the Borough of Wisbech adopted the Local Government Act, 1858, whether they come out of the borough rate or the general district rate, but, no doubt, you can tell us out of which they come?—I have taken out the items from the general district rate, and from the borough fund myself.

62,947. (*Chairman.*) In that case, as a matter of fact, is the farm assessed to its full value for all these things?—No. I have the full particulars of the assessment here. This farm belongs to, and is occupied by, an acquaintance of mine, who is a magistrate and alderman of the County Council. I asked him for some particulars and he sent me his rate receipts, from which I compiled this statement. (*See* Appendix A. XXIX., Table 3.) In the parish of Wisbech there are 86 acres, and that amount is assessed at 93*l.* 14*s.* 4*d.*, the buildings at 5*l.* 5*s.*, and the farmhouse at 17*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.* The farmhouse pays on the full rate for district rates, the buildings on half value and the land on one-fourth. In March there is land only amounting to 158 acres 3 roods 23 perches, that is assessed at 146*l.* 6*s.* 9*d.* to the district rate at one-fourth.

62,948. Do you know what the rate in the £ for the whole of the farm including the house is?—I could give you what it comes to in the whole. The total rates in Wisbech amount to 6*s.* 5½*d.* per acre. For the Wisbech and Walsoken main drainage there is the rate at 1*s.* 4*d.* in the £; for the Wisbech local government district there is one rate at 3*s.* in the £. Then for the Wisbech overseers there is one rate at 1*s.* 6*d.* in the £, and one at 1*s.* 8*d.* That makes the total 27*l.* 14*s.* 2*d.*, or 6*s.* 5½*d.* per acre. The land in March pays 2*s.* 6*d.* an acre, the total being 19*l.* 18*s.* 11*d.* The average rates on the whole farm are 3*s.* 8¾*d.* per acre, on the house 7*s.* 6*d.* in the £, or the land in Wisbech 4*s.* 3*d.* in the £. and on the land in March 2*s.* 8¾*d.* That is a farm of entirely arable land in the situation that I have described. In addition to the rates I have mentioned it bears land tax 1*l.* 6*s.*, it paid in the year in question 10*l.* 10*s.* for income tax, 40*l.* 14*s.* 11*d.* for tithe, 78*l.* 5*s.* for drainage rates, and 24*l.* 10*s.* for private drainage by agreement, which gives the total outgoings as 202*l.* 19*s.*, besides repairs to buildings, fences, banks, ditches, and bridges. This sum is equivalent to an average charge of 16*s.* 8*d.* per acre.

62,949. What is the amount paid out of pocket for rates?—47*l.* 13*s.* 1*d.*

62,950. (*Mr. Channing.*) May we have the rates that are paid on the three-quarters exemption basis?—I cannot give them separately, because they are not separate rates, they are all included in the general district rate.

62,951. What proportion of the whole rates is on that basis now—that would answer my question in another way; what proportion of the rates is on the three quarters exemption?—93*l.* out of 116*l.*

62,952. (*Chairman.*) Does the 47*l.* 13*s.* 1*d.* you have mentioned include the poor rate, the district rate, the county rate and everything?—It includes all the rates.

62,953. What are the drainage rates?—The parliamentary drainage rate is 78*l.* 5*s.* and the private drainage rate 24*l.* 10*s.*

62,954. What is the tithe?—40*l.* 14*s.* 11*d.*; that is the actual sum paid in 1893.

62,955. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You would agree, would you not, that this is an altogether exceptional farm extending 10 miles from the town?—I suppose it is situate in a borough.

62,956. Can you name any other case in a borough of the same size? (*Mr. Elton.*) Sheffield? (*Mr. Dalton.*) I mean a comparatively small town with farming land lying 10 miles off from the town, and, nevertheless, included in the borough?—I do not know. I have been in the habit of looking always to something in my own neighbourhood. I find that I can realise the fact so much better if I get a case I can examine and look into. This was a case that presented itself to my mind certainly as an exceptional case, but that such a case can occur is, I think, the strongest condemnation of the system.

62,957. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Who fixed the boundary of the borough of Wisbech? (*Mr. Dalton.*) Was it not by ancient charter?—It is by an ancient charter; it is coterminous with the parish.

62,958. That is the real history of it, is it not; it is a case where a charter was given a very great number of years ago to a borough which included a very large area, and when, at the time when the charter was given, there were no urban rates at all?—Yes, certainly.

62,959. So that the question of rating did not come into consideration in forming the area of the borough?—No. What I complain of is the indifference of Parliament to the interests of individuals. They carry out great improvements for the benefit of the public generally with utter carelessness of the interest of individuals. I think that more regard should be paid to individual cases of injustice which may arise.

Limited area of charge for urban rates.

62,960. (*Chairman*) Without entering upon a general recommendation as to what should be done for rating, how would you deal with some special cases of this kind, because it is not the usual case; but there are a certain number of cases we will assume, in which the boundaries of boroughs are extended so as to include more agricultural land than you can call accommodation land?—I should decidedly limit the area of the charge for many of these purposes to that part of the parish which may be supposed to be benefited by them.

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62,961. That is, in the main, the principle on which the Legislature has been going of late as I understand it, although there may be exceptional cases in which, because of old charters and what not, the thing has not been applied in modern times; that is the principle on which the Legislature and the Government Departments have proceeded, namely not to extend the boundaries of boroughs, so as to include agricultural land unless it be accommodation land or land which is very soon to come in for building purposes. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I should think it is the case, is it not, that the Corporation of Wisbech have full power to levy a separate general district rate over any part of the borough to meet the expenses incurred in respect of that part, and if they acted as you would consider equitably in this matter, land 10 miles off from the town would not be rated for these purposes?

(*The Witness.*) They are so pressed with rates, and there is such an outcry about them in the town that no man would have the slightest chance of being upon the corporation who attempted to increase them by relieving anyone else, however just it might be.

62,962. But still the corporation have the power of removing this injustice if they think fit, is that not so?—Only a few individuals comparatively have suffered from this. There is a population of about 9,000, and probably not 1,000 people, or even 500, have suffered from this. What are their votes against the others?

62,963. (*Mr. Long.*) The majority of the 9,000 can only remove this burden by placing it upon their own shoulders?—Just so.

62,964. (*Chairman.*) Still the burden upon them of relieving a distant farm would be very small?—They have got about 5,000 acres of purely agricultural land.

62,965. I take it from what you say that, apart from any general question of rating, you would consider there should be some means of quickening these corporations into acting in a right way so as not to charge land under those circumstances with rates for borough purposes?—I think there ought certainly to be some means.

62,966. (*Mr. Long.*) Would you carry it any further than that; would you say that there ought to be for all rating purposes a clear distinction drawn between land which is agricultural land and land which is not agricultural?—I think so, certainly. I cannot conceive the justice of putting upon land a burden for many purposes which are now paid for out of the poor rate. Take registration which, however, is a very small thing.

Assessment of railways.

62,967. (*Chairman.*) Would you extend the same principle to railways, because there is a great deal of railway property, which goes through parishes, which does not benefit in the smallest way from the expenditure, but which contributes enormously to the rates. I have known a case in which a railway passes through a parish, in a tunnel for two miles, where it is assessed at 12,000*l.* a year?—I have not considered that part of the question. I should be very sorry myself to exempt railways.

62,968. If you go on this principle, that no property is to be rated unless it derives a benefit from the expenditure, you may be perhaps carried further than you quite like. (*Mr. Elton.*) They get a pretty good easement on which they are taxed for 12,000*l.* a year; a passage underground is a very large easement. (*Mr. Long.*) This case of the railway does not follow upon the other at all, does it?—No.

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62,969. I do not understand that you put the case quite in that light; what you ask is that there should be a distinction between agricultural land and other land?—Yes.

62,970. The question of the railway is quite distinct?—I think it is.

62,971. (*Chairman.*) I am not going for a moment to dispute it; I am only asking you whether you consider that principle might not carry you a good long way in a direction which might not be altogether beneficial to many of these unions and parishes?—I am not prepared to say how we are to deal with railways. I should be very loath to see the assessment on railways reduced; that is all I can say personally.

62,972. I have made some calculations about several unions, and I find if that principle were adopted, of extending the principle of the Sanitary Acts, and exempting property which does not benefit that the unions would lose rather than gain, on account of the great quantity of railway property. There are some very remarkable cases of that kind. However we will not go further into it, but we will take it generally, that you think that in urban districts and boroughs there ought to be a closer definition, a line drawn so as not to include within the borough rate, land which does not substantially benefit from it?—Certainly.

Rates in urban districts.

62,973. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you brought the case of Wisbech forward as showing that it was felt to be inconsistent with the conclusion arrived at in Sir Henry Fowler's report—that is what you hung it upon, I think?—What I hung it upon was that the general tendency of that report was to lead the public to suppose that the increase of rates was in urban districts, and fell upon town people. I do not say that it is distinctly stated, but I think that any layman who did not thoroughly understand what these urban districts were, would be led to suppose from the tables and from the report, that the rural ratepayers had no reason to complain, and the rural ratepayers are identified with the farmers and the landowners.

62,974. With regard to the number of cases in which you say the technically urban districts are practically rural, would you admit that, although they are many in number, the aggregate amounts of the rates raised in them would be a very small proportion of the total urban rates, and would not affect greatly the average rates in the £ of the urban or rural rate, which is the purpose for which they are necessarily included?—I think they could not amount to enough to affect the total seriously.

62,975. The reason I ask it is to ascertain whether you think that there was any other possible way of dividing urban and rural rates but to take those which are legally urban rates in one class, and those which are legally rural rates in another class?—No, I do not complain of the system that is adopted, but I do say that it has led to misapprehension.

62,976. You do not think that the inclusion of the rates of these exceptional districts, which are large in number, but small in area, and small in the amount of rates levied, can have materially affected the result of the average rate in the £?—No, I think perhaps not.

62,977. That was the only reason for which they were included in this calculation?—Yes.

The Commission adjourned.

Sir Henry Fowler's and Mr. Goschen's reports.

62,978. (*Chairman.*) I forget the point we had reached before the adjournment?—Before the adjournment I was making some remarks upon Sir Henry Fowler's report and Mr. Goschen's report, which is made use of in Sir Henry Fowler's report. I should like to remark upon the periods which were selected for comparison. On page 14 of his report Sir Henry Fowler gives some figures adopted from Mr. Goschen's report as to the rates in the £ in 1803, 1813–15, 1817, 1827, 1841 and 1868. I should like to say that first of all those periods were all of them periods of very much higher prices than we have had in recent years, and the Local Government Board has always in its reports recognised the connection between the high prices of wheat and the cost of pauperism. I have taken for each period the prices of wheat on an average of two years; I have not relied upon one year, but I have taken the prices of 1802–3, for the year 1803 and so on. They then averaged 64*s.* 4*d.*; in 1812–13 they were 110*s.* 10½*d.*; in 1814–15 they were 92*s.* 0½*d.*; in 1816–17, 87*s.* 8½*d.*; in 1826–27, 58*s.* 7*d.*; in 1840–41, 65*s.* 4½*d.*; in 1867–68, 64*s.* 1*d.*; and then for 1889–90, which would affect the rate in the £ for the year 1891 the price was 30*s.* 10*d.*, and for 1890–91, 30*s.* 5½*d.* It is clear that those rates were higher in 1803, 1813–15, 1817, and 1827 than they were in 1868, and than they were in 1891, that those were all years of high prices and it seems to me scarcely fair to compare the poor rates and other rates which are increased by these high prices of wheat with the rates when prices are extremely low. When I say unfair I mean rather that it ought to be taken into account that the rate might naturally be supposed to be reduced considerably because of the lower price of wheat. Then I find that the year 1841, which is the lowest of this series, when the rates in the £ were 2*s.* 7*d.* is dropped

Periods selected for comparison.

Rates in 1841 and 1891 compared.

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out of the account altogether, and no subsequent comparison is made with that year 1841, which was, as far as I can judge, very nearly the period of the lowest rates. Sir Henry Fowler states that at no previous period—I think I had better give the exact words; I am quoting from page 51: "At no time during the present century, "for which statistics are available, has the average rate "in the £ of the rural rates been so low, or that of the "London rates so high as during the years 1890-91." I, of course, am very bold to contest the statement of so great a man as Sir Henry Fowler, but I do not believe in it, and I cannot help thinking that it is an error. I particularly notice that this period of 1841 is left out.

62,979. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But in that extract he was referring to 1891?—Yes, that is another point. Rates had then came down to a very low level, and his opinion was that at no period in the present century had they been so low. Well, I take 1841 and the rates of all kinds in that year were 2*s.* 7*d.* as compared with 3*s.* 8*d.* in 1891; but I believe that in 1841 the rates were higher than they had been in 1838, and I will give my authority. After the passing of the Poor Law there was an enormous decrease in the expenditure on the relief of the poor which continued for some years, but it was most marked in the first four years. I took out from a Parliamentary return the other day, the actual sums paid in relief in my own county, Cambridgeshire.* I found that in the first four years, after the passing of the new Poor Law, the expenditure of the relief of the poor had decreased by 40 per cent. It then rose again, and by 1841 the decrease was only 25 per cent. Therefore, I think I am justified in supposing, in fact it is proved that the relief of the poor in 1838, was very much less than it was in 1841 in that county. The same thing is observable in the statistics for the whole of England and Wales. If in 1841 the whole of the rates were only 2*s.* 7*d.*, I say that they were lower than the 3*s.* 8*d.* in 1891. Then comes the question—these rates which were 2*s.* 7*d.* in 1841, are rates for all districts, and is there any reason to suppose that the rates in the rural districts were higher than the rates in the urban districts. That is a point upon which there may be difference of opinion, but Sir George Cornewall Lewis who was questioned on that very point, before the Lords Committee in 1850, stated distinctly his opinion which was based upon evidence received by him at the Poor Law Board that he had no reason to suppose that rates in the rural districts on the average, were higher than rates in the urban districts.

62,980. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Have you got the reference to that?—Yes, I have. Before the Select Committee on the laws relating to Parochial Assessments in 1850, Sir George Cornewall Lewis said: "I have here some par- "ticulars which were obtained several years ago, with "a view of ascertaining the comparative pressure of the "local rates upon rural parishes, and upon town parishes, "and I can state them to the Committee; they are not "very complete, and it is exceedingly difficult to get a "complete account of all the local rates which are levied "throughout the country, inasmuch as there is no "annual return made to Parliament of all of them, and "the amounts vary in different parishes; but it appears "to me that, upon the whole, it may be said that the "pressure of the local rates, in comparison with the "assessments, is rather greater in town parishes than it "is in rural parishes."—Fortified by that I come to the conclusion that in 1841 the rates were considerably lower in rural districts than they were in 1891.

62,981. I thought you said they were 2*s.* 7*d.* in 1841?—Yes.

62,982. They are 2*s.* 3*d.* in 1891 according to Sir Henry Fowler's Report?—They were 2*s.* 7*d.* in all districts in 1841, and 3*s.* 8*d.* in all districts in 1891.

(*Mr. Dalton.*) I think I can put this right in a moment. Sir Henry Fowler said that for no year for which statistics were available had the rural rates been so low. I think it is quite clear from what you have said that no statistics were available for the whole of the rural rates, either for 1838 or for 1841. I want to point that out first—that no statistics were available. Then with regard to what you say as to the Return of Sir Henry Fowler, not subsequently referring to the year 1841, I think I explained in my evidence in answer to Questions 45,863-4, that we have no statement of all the actual rural rates raised for the whole country in 1841. Mr. Shaw-Lefevre asked me a question upon it. The rural rates, exclusive of the highway and church rates—that is the poor and county rates, which were the only other two rural rates, came in that year to 2*s.* in the £. In answer to the Chairman I said you would have to add to that 2*s.* in the £ the highway rate and the church rate, and that those, so far as we can see from the returns of former years would certainly come to 6*d.* or 7*d.*, bringing the average total rural rate, as far as we can guess it—for it is quite clear that neither Sir George Cornewall Lewis nor anyone else could give the exact rate, the figures not being available—but so far as we could judge from the fact that we had the county rate and the poor rate, which came to 2*s.* on an average, and that if we added to that the highway rate and the church rate they made it 2*s.* 7*d.* That was, I admit, not largely in excess of the rate which Sir Henry Fowler found in 1890 and 1891, to be the average rate in the £ of the rural rates which was 2*s.* 3*d.*, but still it was in excess. I admit that that 2*s.* 7*d.* is only a supposition, but I think it is the fairest supposition that we can have. Sir Henry Fowler's statement was merely that for no period for which we had statistics available was there a lower rate. From those years for which we have complete statistics, there may be different inferences drawn as to whether the rural rate in 1841 was considerably higher or lower than 2*s.* 7*d.*, but that was the nearest estimate we could form.

(*The Witness.*) I have expressed my views that 1841 which is a very low year for rates was by Mr. Goschen dropped out of consideration from the moment he had stated it, and he never referred to it again; that 1838 was, I think we may fairly infer, a period of lower rates, and that therefore there is considerable reason for doubting the assumption of Sir Henry Fowler that rates in 1891 were lower than they had been in the present century. But then I go to another point. Everyone who has studied the subject knows, I think, and will admit that in 1841 and in 1832, and at earlier periods, assessments were very loosely made, and that many of them were made upon a supposed value very much below the real value. I lately went into an estate office, and I found a Blue Book which I had never seen before. I found in it complete statistics as to the valuation of the different parishes in Bedfordshire in 1847, and I found even then there were parishes where the assessment was ridiculously small compared with the real value. I can remember perfectly well before the Union Chargeability Act hearing the subject discussed by valuers, and the argument was this: so long as you divide the rates equally among the inhabitants and ratepayers of the parish it does not matter whether you put the value at 50 or at 60, or at 65, or at 75 per cent., if you put it too high you were sure to get a high assessment for income tax, you were sure to get a high assessment for the county rate, and therefore the usual plan was to put down the valuation to about two-thirds of the real value of the property. In 1834 the Poor Law Commissioners reported on this subject*:—"The "first is the present method of rating the property "chargeable with the relief of the poor. The mode of "rating is now like many other parts of the administra- "tion of the poor laws, in the highest degree uncertain "and capricious. 'It will be seen,' says one of our "Assistant Commissioners, 'by a reference to the "'return recently made to Parliament, that in the first "'*ten* parishes named, namely, Abingdon, Andover, "'Arundel, Ashburton, Aylesbury, Banbury, Barn- "'staple, and the parishes of St. Michael, St. Peter, "'and St. Paul, and Walcot in the city of Bath, nine "'different rates of assessment are now in operation, "'and these vary in the proportion of one-fifth of the "'rent or actual value as assessed at Ashburton, to "'the full or actual value as assessed at Bath; while "'at Bridgnorth, a little further on in the return, it "'appears that in the seven parishes of the same "'town, five different modes of assessment are "'adopted.'" I have consulted a return which was made about this period, and is the one, I believe, referred to. It only deals with those places which were to return members to Parliament. I find that in some of those places property was rated at one-tenth of its value, for instance in Cheltenham; in others at one-fourteenth or one-fifteenth, but I think that in the great majority of these places the houses were rated at one-third, and land at two-thirds. I do not wish the Commission to suppose that I think the returns which exist

* Poor rates, county rates, &c. Expenditure on Relief of the Poor Return to House of Commons, 1848.

* Report of Poor Law Commissioners, 1834.

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as to value were based upon those extremely low valuations of one-tenth, but I do believe that the system of assessing was extremely capricious and was extremely vague, and that it was generally very much below the mark. I think, perhaps, the return from one of these parishes will exhibit the spirit in which the law was carried out. "The assessments are made, "as nearly as the same can be calculated, upon a value "which bears the proportion of three-fourths of the "actual value of rent, and houses are then rated at "one-third of that valuation and lands at one-half."

62,983. (*Mr. Dalton.*) What parish is that?—That is Richmond, in Yorkshire. Therefore reading the other returns by that light. I should say there was first of all a valuation—in many cases you are told that it is an extremely old one—that then was a column for an assessment, which was a small part, a definite proportion of the valuation, and that where we have returns of valuation we have certainly the larger sum, but that valuation, as in this instance, was made from an extremely liberal view—or, rather, the contrary to a liberal view—it was an extremely low assessment. That leads me to suppose that any comparison of rates in the £ at the present time with those of rates at a former period is fallacious, and may be very misleading. After the Union Chargeability Act there was much greater precision in assessing values; indeed, I think, that there was a circular of the Local Government Board about 1842 which led to some improvement, and in 1864 before the Union Chargeability Act, the Poor Law Board of that day issued another order. I have given a statement which refers to a farm as to which I happen to know what the rent was at different periods, and I have contrasted the assessment with the actual rental. In 1841 rates were paid upon an assessment which was 41·5 per cent. of the rent. From 1841 to 1864 the assessment was at 71 per cent. of the actual rental; from 1864 to 1872 it was 95·8 per cent., and in 1894—the farm is now let and the property is divided, and I could not swear to this, but upon the best information I can get in 1894 the ratio which the assessment bore to the actual rent was 171·3 per cent. (*See* Appendix A. XXX. 2.) So if you are going to compare rates at one period with rates at another and simply depend upon rates in the £, you are on very slippery standing ground.

62,984. (*Mr. Channing.*) But in the sub-division of the farms, perhaps there are new buildings?—No, and besides that would rather tell the other way.

62,985. (*Lord Rendel.*) What was the variation in the rent?—The rent did not vary from 1841 to 1872; it was never altered.

62,986. (*Mr. Everett.*) It is now assessed at a great deal above its actual rent?—Yes, at 71 per cent. above the actual rent.

62,987. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The effect of that would be on that particular farm to make the rates altogether incomparable with one another?—Certainly.

62,988. (*Chairman.*) Now we will go on with the criticism of Sir Henry Fowler's Report?—I have already spoken about the urban and rural districts as a point, and I should like to remark upon the School Board rates.

Rates in rural and urban districts.

62,989. Before you go to that for one moment, I suppose you would not deny Sir Henry Fowler's main proposition that the urban rates are much higher than the rural?—I should not deny that for a moment. I do not think it interferes with my views at all. If urban property has enormously increased it is fair to suppose that urban bears a larger portion of the rates than it did.

62,990. Not merely that, but that the rate in the £ is very much higher in the urban districts?—Yes, but it includes a great many things which rural district rates do not.

62,991. Quite so; but even comparing the same thing with the same thing, comparing the poor rate in the one with the poor rate in the other, you would not deny that the poor rate is very much higher in the urban districts than it is in the rural districts, would you?—I do not know; the urban districts are generally amalgamated with the rural to the disadvantage of the rural.

62,992. There are a great many places; take the whole of London, for instance; take Manchester, Birmingham, and places like that, where in the main the poor law unions coincide with the towns, where you would find the poor rates are very much higher than they are in the rural districts; is not the rate in the £ expenditure for poor law purposes in London relatively very much larger than it is in the rural districts?—Very possibly, but I have not considered that.

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62,993. And it has, of course, of late years been very much greater—have you looked into that?—No, I have not.

62,994. (*Mr. Long.*) Surely that is not a part of your contention at all?—No.

62,995. It does not bear any relation to your contention at all?—No.

62,996. Do you know what Sir Henry Fowler's views are upon these particular questions to which the Chairman is referring?—No.

62,997. (*Chairman.*) Have you only devoted your attention to one or two special points?—I have principally devoted my attention to those points which bear upon rates on agricultural land, and the false inferences which it appeared to me might be drawn from his statements.

62,998. Have you not carefully studied the whole report?—I cannot say that I have.

62,999. Are you aware that the poor rates in towns where you can separate them from the rural districts are very much higher than in rural districts?—No, I am not. If there are more paupers in towns they necessarily cost more.

School board rates.

63,000. (*Mr. Long.*) So far as you know, is the amount of pauperism to be maintained out of the poors rate proper greater in a large town like Birmingham or London than it is in a rural district—speaking proportionately to the population?—I have not studied that part of the subject, and I am not prepared to answer it. I was proceeding to remark upon school board rates. In Sir Henry Fowler's report the school board rate is dealt with by spreading it over the area of value of the whole of the parishes in a union or a county without regard to the fact that there are a number of parishes which pay no rate at all. The pressure, therefore, upon particular localities is minimised, and the average rate is made to appear as only 2*d.* in the £. Every one knows that it amounts to very much more than that. In 1893 and 1894 out of 1,901 districts—not in boroughs—203 have a rate of 1*s.* in the £; 296 have rates of 9*d.* in the £ and below 1*s.*, and 552 have rates of 6*d.* in the £ and below 9*d.* Thus 55·3 per cent. of the whole number have rates of 6*d.* or more, and only 13 per cent. of the whole number have a rate below 3*d.*

63,001. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In which year is that?—That is in 1893-4. Then 1894-95 shows an increase in the number of high-rated districts; 12·5 per cent. have a rate of 1*s.*; 15·9 per cent. of 9*d.* and below 1*s.*; 28·4 per cent. of 6*d.* and below 9*d.*; 31·8 per cent. of 3*d.* and below 6*d.*; 88·6 per cent. above 3*d.*; 8·9 per cent. of 1*d.* and below 3*d.*; and only 2·5 per cent. below 1*d.* In the county of Cambridge I may say, that many of these school districts are in rural parishes where the land forms a very large proportion of the rateable property. In the county of Cambridge every parish which has a rate of 6*d.* or more, is a rural parish. In the Isle of Ely, 17 parishes out of 36 have school boards; these parishes comprise 67 per cent. of the area of the county the average rate in the pound for 1892-3 was 4·5*d.*, the highest rate being 9½*d.* in the £ in a parish where the population is 794.

63,002. (*Chairman.*) How many parishes are there in the whole county?—I have not calculated that.

63,003. I see there are 40 parishes in the whole county with school boards; how many parishes are there altogether in the county?—I do not know to one or two; I think about 172, but I know the Isle of Ely pretty well. This map that I have of the Isle of Ely shows the area over which school board rates extend; it is 67 per cent. of the whole.

63,004. Of course Sir Henry Fowler's was only a kind of large average?—Yes.

63,005. But I think everybody who read his report would know that these averages do not indicate the special burdens which fall upon special parishes; everybody knows that only one rural union out of seven has a school board, and, therefore, six out of seven have no rate, and the school board rate falls on the one parish out of seven and there where there is a school board rate the average amounts to 8*d.*; but a great many are higher and a great many less?—Yes,

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but I think it is a point which I am entitled to make that in calculating the burdens upon land the school-rate has been spread over the whole area and the effect of a very high rate is minimised by that means.

63,006. (*Mr. Dalton.*) May I read what Sir Henry Fowler says upon that. Speaking of the school board rate he says:—"This rate is a rate which falls very "unequally, some districts being entirely free from it "while others are rated to it very heavily. As show-"ing how high this rate often is in the districts in "which it is raised, I may mention that according to "the reports of the Education Department, the "average rate raised in urban and rural parishes "where there are school boards outside boroughs, were "in England 6·7*d.* and 6·8*d.* in the £ in 1890 and 1891, "and in Wales 7·8*d.* in the £ in 1890 and 8*d.* in 1891. "To arrive at the average rural school board rate I "have no alternative but to spread the whole of the "amount raised by this rate, namely 350,652*l.*, "together with one-fourth of the 421,361*l.* school board "rates" to which reference has already been made "as "having been raised in parishes wholly or partly com-"prised in urban sanitary districts other than boroughs, "evenly over the poor rate valuation of all rural sanitary "districts. The result is a rate of 2*d.* in the £." I only mention that to show that at the time he got that average he was careful to state how he had done it, and that it was a high rate in the parishes in which it fell.

63,007. (*Chairman.*) I do not think anybody reading that can be under the least doubt as to the existing state of things, or that it would make the least false impression on anybody, as to the fact that the rate is a heavy one in certain parishes, and does not exist in others?—Yes, but it does seem to me, notwithstanding all you say, that when an average is struck which shows the rates on the average to be lower than they were, and to be lower than in towns, it ought fairly to be taken into consideration, that in many parishes a very heavy burden is imposed upon the ratepayers for education.

63,008. I think anybody would arrive at that, from Sir Henry Fowler's statement?—When there is a parish without a school board, where there is apparently no burden, it may be disguised, but it is a burden and a tax, though it is voluntarily contributed. The State lays upon the parish the obligation and the necessity of providing schools and equipping them, and it does not insist upon the money being raised by taxation, but it imposes the burden upon the parish, and in every parish where there is no school board rate there are contributions, and in many of them, voluntary rates. In those parishes where there are school board rates, there often is very considerable assistance from voluntary subscriptions, or else the rates would be very much higher. In one parish in the Isle of Ely, where the rate is 5*d.* or 6*d.*, I forget which, there are five schools which are let by the owner of the property to the school board at 10*s.* a year for each of them. I do not suppose they cost as little as 5,000*l.*, and you really ought to add to the education rate, in order to ascertain the burden of the interest on that 5,000*l.*

63,009. (*Chairman.*) That seems to me to be a very wide proposition. These schools could not be used for any other purposes under the trust?—But they could. They are private property.

63,010. I do not know, but I should imagine that they are under a trust?—No, they are private property entirely.

63,011. Belonging to the owner of the land?—The owner of them is the owner of the whole parish, and he built the schools and school-houses, and he supplies them at 10*s.* a year each.

63,012. It would have been impossible for the purposes of local taxation to put in the voluntary contributions in towns or in rural districts, would it not?—Yes.

63,013. Sir Henry Fowler says he has no alternative but to deal with them in this method, and can you suggest any alternative method that he could have taken of arriving at an average rate for the total rural rates?—I do not say that he could, but I say that his account of local taxation leaves out of account a number of burdens which are imposed upon ratepayers.

63,014. The extent of which it is impossible to ascertain as between urban and rural districts?—Just so.

63,015. I do not understand that you consider that the interest upon the original cost of those schools should be treated as a burden in these days. It is rather a benefaction which is past and gone, although the landlord may still have the ownership of them, and might realise them if he thought fit, yet they would not sell for anything if he were to try to do so; therefore you cannot consider the interest upon the cost of those schools as any present burden?—I say it is. It is a burden imposed by the State to provide schools, and if it is not borne by the rates and is borne by a private individual, it is not the less a burden which property has to bear.

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63,016. (*Mr. Channing.*) In any of these parishes have you got a voluntary school rate independent of the school board rate?—There are voluntary schools in several of the parishes.

63,017. And a voluntary school rate?—I do not think there is a rate, but there are subscriptions, I emphasize this because the education rate is one which farmers think it particularly hard that they should pay. They derive a very small benefit from these schools, and the effect of them is rather to take away labour from agricultural districts. The more children are educated the less willing they are to remain in the rural district and to work for farmers. But the pressure of a school rate upon a farmer is so very different to that upon any other individual of the community. Take the case mentioned in Mr. Hunter Pringle's Report on Bedfordshire, Huntingdonshire, and Northamptonshire (p. 82) of Potton and Bozeat, where there are high school board rates. In many rural parishes the school rate exceeds 2*s.* in the £. A rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* in the £ on a farm is equivalent to an income tax of 1*s.* 0½*d.* in the £ on both the owner and the occupier. An occupying owner having a farm worth 300*l.* a year would pay at the rate of 1*s.* 6*d.* in the £—more than 20*l.* a year—for an education rate, while a private individual deriving a similar income from Consols, or a professional man occupying a house at a rental of 60*l.* a year would only pay 3*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* a year.

63,018. (*Mr. Channing.*) That is an enormous burden on an isolated parish?—Certainly. I went into a rural parish the other day where the rate is 2*s.* 11*d.* in the £ for school purposes.

63,019. (*Mr. Everett.*) No, surely not?—Yes, 2*s.* 11*d.* in the £.

63,020. (*Mr. Long.*) Was not this a result which is the very reverse of that which was anticipated when these burdens were created?—There was a distinct impression that the rate was never to exceed 3*d.* in the £., and the Government of that day went so far as to assert that they had taken measures to prevent its ever being above 3*d.* I have got here some remarks that Sir William Harcourt made at the time in the discussion on the subject in the House of Commons. He said, dealing with the school fund in the first place: "Owing chiefly to the financial genius of the first "minister of the Crown, he believed they were now "raising an amount of Imperial taxation from the people "of this country with less oppressiveness than ever "attended the levying of any similar amount of taxation "on any other nation in the world . . . . . "But local taxation was not administered "by Parliament or by Chancellors of the Exchequer who "understood the principles of finance, and he believed "the present state of our local taxation was a disgrace "to the country. It was unequal in its incidence as "regarded classes, and unfair in its incidence as "regarded classes, and unfair in its incidence as "regarded property. It was impossible to defend it "on any principle of reason or justice. The difference "between local and Imperial taxation reminded him "of nothing so much as the cleanliness of the Dutch "people. They made their rooms extremely clean and "swept all the dirt under the bed. We had carried "our system of Imperial taxation to great perfection, "and swept the whole of our financial rubbish under "the bed of local taxation. We had in the result "arrived at a chaos of blundering injustice which "must very soon end in parochial insolvency . . . "He proposed to reverse the operation of the Govern-"ment plan, to limit the amount which the local rates "would contribute, and to make the Imperial Treasury "bear the residuary charge, whatever it might be. "This was an Imperial necessity, and it ought to be "an Imperial charge. Money for the support of the "Army and Navy was not levied by local rates, and "he would ask whether the enemy against whom by "this Bill they were doing battle was not as real as

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"the enemy contemplated by the Army and Navy "estimates.

63,021. (*Chairman.*) I think you were asked whether some kind of pledge had been given by the Government?—I was coming to that.

63,022. (*Mr. Long.*) The question I asked was, whether at the time this Bill was passed there was not a very strong indication that the result would be very different?—I should like to give you the reply of Mr. Forster. "Mr. Forster . . . again assured "the House that it was his belief that even sup- "posing that there were no voluntary schools and no "available buildings generally speaking a 3*d.* rate "would cover the expense, but agreed to restore "the original clause to meet the one or two excep- "tional cases where it was possible, though not pro- "bable, that a 3*d.* rate would not meet the deficiency "of the school fund." What is now the proviso to the 97th section was then agreed to with the object of assisting those one or two exceptional places where the rate would be threepence and upwards.

63,023. (*Mr. Channing.*) If you had the school rate distributed over a much larger area a good many of these anomalies would disappear, would they not?—Yes, but that would be taxing other parishes which have done their duty for the benefit of those which have been behindhand. I do not quite see the fairness of that.

63,024. Would it not be fair to have something almost in the nature of a county rate to provide for the local expenses of the education of the county?—I think that education is a national necessity and a national benefit.

63,025. (*Chairman.*) Do you think it would be safe to leave the management in local hands, and to have the funds entirely supplied by the State?—When I intimated my wish to give evidence, I said I did not propose to discuss remedies.

63,026. Still it is very difficult to go into these matters without some kind of inkling when you raise grave objections to such things. Do you think the expenditure should be entirely provided by the State?—I think that a larger part might be provided, and I also think that the exactions of the Education Department might be less. This 2*s.* 11*d.* in the £ that I was speaking of, was primarily caused by a demand on the part of the Education Department for great structural changes.

63,027. Then you think that the contribution should be larger, but you would not advise that the contribution should cover the whole cost?—I do not think you could have local control and the entire cost paid by the State; I do not think I could recommend that.

63,028. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you not think you might have had an effective limit put to the rate?—Yes.

63,029. I understand that a great many school boards when they are constituted now and read the Education Act are under the impression that they can only levy a threepenny rate; they then write up to the Department, and of course find that they can levy a higher rate. Do you think it would have been possible to put some effective limit to the rate; at present there is practically none. There is a perfectly effective limit to the police rate put in the case of the London police?—It may be possible, but I have happily never had anything to do with a school board.

63,030. (*Chairman.*) Have you done with the school board rates?—Yes, I do not think there is anything else to say on that.

State subventions.

63,031. What is your next point?—I wish to remark upon the subventions. These subventions are usually treated as if they came out of some fund to which the ratepayers did not contribute. You are told you have had large subventions from the State, and your rates have benefitted and you pay less, in total disregard of the fact that the ratepayers pay their full quota to those Imperial funds upon which subventions are derived.

63,032. (*Mr. Dalton.*) And the result, therefore of that, so far as it affects the rate in the £ of the rates raised is that there has been an apparent rather than a real relief so far as the rateable properties have contributed to the subventions?—I think so. We had every reason to suppose that rates would be lowered when we got large subventions. When we were told that pauperism was diminishing; when we knew that the labourers were better off, and that every sovereign would purchase about 33 per cent. more than it used to do, we might expect that rates would diminish, instead of which they are practically what they were 10 years ago, and there is every probability of their increasing.

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63,033. (*Chairman.*) You are not much of an admirer of subventions then?—I do not object to them, I think that they were the only practicable way of giving some assistance, but I do object to their being considered as entirely so much relief to the ratepayers when the ratepayers have to contribute to them.

63,034. I see that in 1881 you went rather further in favour of subventions; you said "These subsidies may, "therefore be said to be justifiable, and indeed desir- "able in case of such objects as can be best adminis- "tered by local authorities, but where government "inspection would be necessary or efficacious; on "these grounds, the subventions which are now given "are clearly defensible, and a further extension of the "principle to a grant in aid of the cost of indoor poor "relief may be advocated?—I do not object, as I say, to subventions, and I do not withdraw from that at all; I only say that they are not to be counted as entire relief to the rarepayers. They are the only way at present discovered of getting hold of other property than rateable property.

63,035. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You admit that they give relief?—Certainly.

63,036. But you think that the extent to which the ratepayers have contributed towards them should be taken into account in connexion with the rate in the £ of the rates raised?—I do think so. It is a benefit, but it is not all the benefit it appears to be.

63,037. It is not a benefit pure and simple?—It does bring other property in, but it brings it only equally with rateable property.

63,038. (*Chairman.*) I need hardly point out that since your memorandum to the Richmond Commission a very large increase of subventions has been made?—Yes, that I admit.

Burdens on real and personal property.

63,039. What is your next point?—The next point is one of the rates and taxes on real and personal property. I think it is much to be regretted that no recent attempt has been made to ascertain approximately the incidence of the whole burden of taxation on different descriptions of income.

63,040. I understand that Sir Alfred Milner is coming to give evidence on that very point; ought we not therefore to leave it to him?—I should just like to put in an estimate made in 1885.* That is a return of the capitalised value of real property, which was then estimated at 3,778,437,000*l.* and realised personal property, which was estimated at 5,632,821,000*l.*; thus real property is about 40 per cent. of the whole. The Imperial taxation levied on real property was at that time calculated at 8,441,452*l.* per annum, while that on personal property was put at 9,716,191*l.* Thus real property, with 40 per cent. of the total capital value, bore 46·5 per cent. of taxation, while personal property, with 60 per cent. of the total, bore only 53.5 per cent. of the burden. But in this estimate no account is taken of the amount of land tax redeemed by a payment of a capital sum. That is about 900,000*l.* Since the date of this Return, the distinction between real and personal property in respect of the death duties has been abolished, and the case of the relief of real property is strengthened. But taking the figures of 1885 as a basis, with the necessary correction as to land tax it would appear that the respective contributions of real property and personal property to Imperial taxation were as follows:—Real property with 49·27 per cent. of total taxation had 40·15 per cent. of total value, and personal property with 50·73 of total taxation had 59·85 per cent. of total value. I remember perfectly well, at least I think I can remember, though I cannot refer to the exact speech, that Mr. Gladstone at one time declared that on the whole real and personal property were fairly and equally assessed, that if land was burdened with local rates it was not burdened with the death duties to the same extent as personal property. All that has been altered, and therefore I maintain that the case for the relief of real property has been enormously strengthened by the recent Finance Act.

Poor rate.

63,041. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Sir Henry Fowler practically admitted that, did he not on the third reading of the

* Return. Imperial Taxation on real and personal property. Mr. Richard Paget, 1885.

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Finance Bill?—Yes, I believe so, but I have not got a quotation from his speech.

63,042. (*Chairman.*) What is the next point?—I should like to remark upon the absurdity of still calling the poor rate a poor rate. It is levied for a variety of purposes, and at the present time only about 50 per cent. of what is collected as a poor rate is spent upon the poor. It leads to a good deal of misunderstanding. The general public do not know in the least that this poor rate is a general purposes rate. I think that things should be called by their proper name, and that in any reform it would be desirable to abolish entirely this misnomer of poor rate for a rate which includes several other objects, and of which only 50 per cent., or thereabouts, is actually expended on the relief of the poor. In the earlier years of the new poor law, something like 75 per cent. of the poor rates was spent on the relief of the poor, or for purposes connected therewith. In 1892—93 the amount expended for the relief of the poor was only 47·95 per cent. of the whole expenditure.

Burdens on real and personal property.

When we were speaking about the relative burdens of real and personal property, I omitted to draw attention to some figures in Appendix A., XXXI., 1, in which I have attempted an estimate of my own on a very limited scale. I have taken the taxation, to which real property contributes its full quota and I have attempted to ascertain what proportion of the total taxation is raised by this direct taxation to which real property, as I say, contributes in full. From 1871 to 1875, the property and income tax was 10·21 per cent. of the total sum levied by taxation, and the property tax, income tax, land tax, and house duty, were 13.93 per cent. In the next five years the property tax, and the income tax were 9·91 and the property tax, income tax, land tax, and house duty 13·83. In the next five years the property tax and the income tax were 15·40 per cent. of the whole, and with land tax and house duty added the per-centage was 19·34. In the next five years the property tax and income tax showed a percentage of 18·99 and, with land tax and house tax, added, 22·95. In the next five years the property tax and income tax were 18·88 per cent., and, with land tax and house duty it was 22·18 per cent. of the whole taxation. There is a slight adjustment which is required here, because at one period some patent licences were taken into account, and at another period they were left out, but being adjusted to that, the property and income tax were 18·67 per cent. of the whole taxation in 1891–95, and the property and income tax, land tax, and house duty, which fell entirely upon real property, were 21·93 per cent.

63,043. Including in real property, house property?—Yes.

63,044. Then all this argument equally applies to rates in town?—Yes, so far.

63,045. It is not an argument addressed merely on the agricultural side of the question?—No, that is an argument which applies to all real property.

63,046. Therefore, it is an argument, if anything in favour of some plan of raising local taxation by an income tax or something of that kind?—I have not proceeded so far as to supply the remedy, I wish to state the nature of the complaint.

63,047. Yes, but before the Duke of Richmond's Commission you were not quite so reticent, because you did in your memorandum to the Commission suggest four different ways in which it could be dealt with?—(*See* Appendix A. XXXII. 2.) Yes, and I am only surprised that they did not tell me it was not my business to make suggestions.

63,048. You then suggested four different ways in which this relief should be given?—I have not changed my opinion.

63,049. I do not say that you have, but I observe that you did not include in those four heads of relief anything in the direction of a local income tax or of the rating of personalty?—No.

63,050. Therefore, I think I am entitled to ask you whether you think there is any possibility either in the direction of a local income tax or in the direction of rating personalty?—I do not think a local income tax on personal property is possible, but I would not say that it was not possible to have a special income tax on personal property to be applied as a subvention.

63,051. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Simply on personal property and not on incomes? (*Mr. Channing.*) On personal property localised?—No, not localised; I do not see the possibility of that.

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63,052. (*Mr. Long.*) The transference of the income tax from imperial to local expenditure you mean?—Yes.

63,053. (*Chairman.*) There would be very little difference between that and an ordinary subvention?—If it were levied especially upon personal property, and income, and not upon real property, then it would lay a burden on personal property which it does not bear and would so far relieve real property.

63,054. That is very much the principle of the contribution from the local authorities to the probate duty; that is a duty raised now upon all kinds of property, including personalty and it is especially marked for the purpose of going to the local authorities?—Yes, but is it not levied on real property as well.

63,055. (*Mr. Long.*) That is the result of the Finance Act is it not?—Yes.

63,056. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Would you not admit that if the contributions of rateable property to the imperial revenue are larger proportionally than those of non-rateable property it is necessary, if you go much further with subventions, first of all to equalise the contributions of rateable and non-rateable properties to the Imperial Revenue, and then to transfer what may be necessary? At present if your figures are to be depended upon, rateable property is contributing to these subventions more proportionally than non-rateable property?—If it is taken out of the general exchequer.

63,057. As it is at present?—As it is at present. Of course I could not go into the question of how much of real property escapes income tax and how much of personal property; I could not attempt to estimate those proportions.

63,058. I thought that your evidence pointed to the fact that real property contributed more than its fair proportion to the Imperial taxation?—Yes.

63,059. If that is the case it contributes more than its proper proportion to the subventions which are taken out of Imperial revenue?—Just so.

63,060. It does not matter whether you profess to take a part of the Imperial revenue such as the probate duty or whether you profess to take another part such as the customs and excise; you are taking it from a common Imperial fund?—Yes.

63,061. To which, as I understand you argue, the rateable property already contributes more than its right proportion?—I think so.

63,062. Therefore you would consider that Imperial taxation should be set right as between rateable and non-rateable properties?—Yes.

63,063. And that that would not interfere with the claim that you have for getting subventions in aid of local taxation?—I think that if those figures are correct, and I have taken them from the statistical abstract, and I am sure I have endeavoured to reckon them correctly; I will not swear that there is not an error in them, but there they are, for any one to go through—then I do not see any escape from the conclusion that in those particular taxes to which real property must contribute its full quota, it pays a very much larger share of the total taxation than it did 20 or 30 years ago, or than it ever did before in modern times.

Local income tax and rating of personalty.

63,064. (*Chairman.*) At all events, speaking of local taxation, you are not in favour of anything in the direction of a local income tax or of the rating of personalty—you do not see your way to that?—No, I do not see my way to that.

63,065. Then we may give the go-by to all that so far as you are concerned?—I do not advocate it.

State subventions.

63,066. Then whatever could be done must be done in the way of subventions, or by one of those other aids which you recommended in 1881?—I think so.

63,067. I suppose you are aware that in the case of subventions the proportion which would go to land now is very different from what it used to be?—Yes.

63,068. If you give subventions generally in aid of local taxation, whereas 20 years ago one-third went in

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aid of agricultural land, now only one-fifth goes?—Yes. I am aware of that.

63,069. Therefore, in order to give any relief in that direction you would have to raise a very large sum of money?—I think that the town ratepayers are entitled to consideration as well as the rural ratepayers.

63,070. You think they are entitled to consideration?—Certainly, I do. Of course I am particularly concerned to advocate measures which will relieve land, but I am quite ready to admit that there is a case for others; but upon town property and houses the burden never can be the same as it is upon land. A house, which is the measure of a man's taxation, bears a very small proportion to his total income compared with the farm upon which a farmer pays rates, and on which the proportion is nearly treble his income. A farmer is rated upon two-and-a-half times or three times his income, whereas a householder is rated perhaps upon a fourth or fifth of his income.

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(For Mr. Little's further evidence, *see* page 487.)

Adjourned to Thursday next at 12 o'clock.

One Hundred and Fifteenth Day.

Thursday, November 21st, 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq. } *Assistant Secretaries.*
ALAN MACKINNON, Esq. }

Sir A. Milner, K.C.B. 21 Nov. 1895.

Sir ALFRED MILNER, K.C.B., called and examined.

63,071. (*Chairman.*) As we know you are Chairman of the Inland Revenue Department?—Yes.

Imperial taxation.

63,072. This Commission has invited you to give evidence "upon the amount of Imperial taxation borne "by Rateable and Non-rateable Properties respectively, "and the estimated annual value of each of these "properties, distinguishing, as far as possible, agricul- "tural lands from other Rateable Properties, and also "detailed evidence as to the history and present "incidence of the Inhabited House Duty, similar to that "already given by Mr. Robinson with regard to the "Land Tax." Have you prepared a statement in furtherance of the application made to you by this Commission?—Yes, I have prepared two statements with regard to the incidence of taxation, and a third giving details of the Inhabited House Duty.

63,073. The third may be taken separately, may it not?—Yes.

63,074. The first two have relation to the appendix which is a tabular statement showing, in your view, what is the amount of Imperial taxation levied upon Rateable and Non-rateable Property?—Yes.

63,075. Distinguishing land from other Rateable Property?—Table 1 gives the amount of Imperial taxation levied on the several kinds of property. Table 2 gives the annual values, as far as we can get at them, of the same kinds of property, and, further, their capital values as far as we can get at them. I attach rather more importance to the table of annual value than to that of capital value, because I think it is a nearer approximation—both being necessarily only approximations, to the truth.

63,076. Then the statement you have sent is an explanation of these two tables?—My written statement is nothing but an explanation of how I have arrived at the tables.

63,077. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But your written statement does not give any account of the results of the tables themselves?—No, it does not.

63,078. (*Chairman.*) Do you desire to put in this written statement as an answer to the invitation made to you by this Commission?—Yes (*see Appendix A. XXXIII.*). I was not asked to draw any inferences, and I have not done so.

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63,079. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) I understand that you have collected the information which is contained in these tables from the best sources at your disposal?—Yes.

63,080. You do not claim that they are anything more in the nature of the case than approximate estimates but you believe them to be approximate?—Yes. In every case where I have great doubt about the figures it is clearly stated in the paper. They are all approximate, but some of them I have considerable confidence in, and some, I admit, to be necessarily more or less of a guess. In regard to Schedule B., for instance, when I come to speak of the annual value and the capital value of farmers' profits I have stated that the material at my disposal does not enable me to arrive at it with even that approximate accuracy with which the material at my disposal enables me to arrive at, for instance, the value of Railway Property or of many other items in this table.

Income tax, Schedule B.

63,081. With regard to Schedule B. I observe that in your paper you make this statement; "if I am wrong in "this it is a consolation to think that the mistake will "not greatly affect the calculation as a whole. Schedule "B is rapidly becoming a farce. Last year it only "amounted to 190,000*l.*, or little more than one per cent. "of the total income and its tendency is still to "diminish." Therefore I take it that even supposing your calculations with regard to Schedule B. were erroneous it would not make any material difference?—It would make practically no difference to the first table which shows the incidence of Imperial taxation on different kinds of property. If I was seriously wrong it would make rather more difference to the second table, but even there not very much.

Taxation on non-rateable and rateable property compared.

63,082. If I may turn to the tables for a moment I will try to ask you questions which will enable you to summarise the information which is contained in them. The first question I would ask you is this: I understand from your tables that the amount of Imperial taxation levied on Non-rateable Property including the Unredeemed Land Tax is 13,744,353*l.*?—Yes.

63,083. That is against the amount of 14,498,826*l.* levied on Rateable Property?—That is including the Redeemed Land Tax.

Redeemed land tax.

63,084. (*Chairman.*) Do you consider that the Redeemed Land Tax ought to be taken into account?—I do not think that is a question for me to answer.

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63,085. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You have stated in your paper that that is a matter on which you do not feel yourself at all called upon to express an opinion, and that that is a matter for the judgment of the Commission itself. In your statement I see you say this, "It appears to me"—speaking of the Redeemed Land Tax—"to be quite "outside my province to determine whether this item "should or should not be included. That is a question "for the Commission. But in order to enable the Com- "mission to adopt either course as seems good to them I "have divided the Redeemed Land Tax between 'Lands' "and 'other Rateable Property' on the same principle "as the Unredeemed, and have placed it in a separate "line at the bottom of the General Account." In reference to the answer which you have just given me as to the amount of Imperial taxation levied on Rateable Property, I gather that the amount of Imperial taxation levied on Rateable Property is in excess of the amount which is levied on Non-rateable Property?—If you include the Redeemed Land Tax it is decidedly. If you exclude the Redeemed Land Tax they are almost equal, but the Non-rateable is still a little higher.

Taxation on non-rateable and rateable property compared.

63,086. But including the Redeemed Land Tax—a matter which we can discuss hereafter—the amount of Imperial taxation levied on Rateable Property is in excess of that which is levied on Non-rateable Property?—Yes, it is 51·33 against 48·67.

63,087. That is the proportion of the excess, is it?—That is the proportion of one to the other.

63,088. That is the proportion of the one to the other and shows, therefore, the excess of the taxation levied on the one kind of property over the taxation levied on the other kind. Now, I want to go from that question, and to ask you what are the relative values of the two kinds of property according to annual and according to capital value. I shall ask you to take the annual value first. What is the annual value of Rateable Property as a whole taking together the two classes of property into which you have divided it, the one being land and the other being described as other Rateable Property? Can you give us the total amount?—210,559,575*l.*

Annual value of rateable property.

63,089. (*Chairman.*) Where do you get these figures from?—From my second table by adding together the two kinds of Rateable Property, Lands and other Rateable Property, that is what they come to, 210,559,575*l.* Of course in this sort of calculation it is absurd to go beyond the millions; if you get them right it is a wonder.

Annual value of non-rateable property.

63,090. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Now, will you kindly tell us what is the annual value of the Non-rateable?—228,839,471*l.*

63,091. The annual value, therefore, of Non-rateable Property is greater than that of Rateable?—Somewhat.

63,092. I understand that you have just told us that the per-centage of Imperial taxation is 51·33 per cent. on Rateable Property as against 48·67 per cent. on Non-rateable Property?—Yes.

Annual value of non-rateable and rateable property compared.

63,093. Am I right then in coming to this conclusion, that, although the annual value of Rateable Property is less than the annual value of Non-rateable Property, the amount of Imperial taxation levied on Rateable Property is greater than the amount levied on Non-rateable Property?—Yes; the tables lead to that conclusion.

63,094. (*Chairman.*) This is all on the basis that you include in the transaction, the Land Tax?—Yes, but the proportion borne by Rateable Property is still heavier, though not so much heavier, if the Redeemed Land Tax is excluded.

63,095. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In either case, whether including or excluding the Redeemed Land Tax, the proportion of Imperial taxation borne by Rateable Property is the heaviest?—Yes.

63,096. I observe that you have divided Rateable Property under two heads: land is under the first head and other Rateable Property is under the second head?—Yes.

63,097. What is the annual value of the land?—In round figures 50,000,000*l.*

63,098. I will ask you next what is the value of other Rateable Property?—160,000,000*l.*

63,099. And then the value of Non-rateable Property?—228,000,000*l.*

63,100. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) I notice that as regards lands which you show in the nett value?—Yes.

63,101. You do not show the nett value in the case of other Rateable Property, and in the case of Non-rateable Property?—Yes, I do in the bulk of other Rateable Property. I do in messuages under Schedule A.

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63,102. But not as regards all the other items?—The other items are the gross estimated value.

63,103. Then in the Non-rateable Property it is also the gross estimated value?—Of Non-rateable Property I think you cannot say that, because the figures show nett profits.

Taxation of rateable and non-rateable property compared.

63,104. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) These being annual values of these three kinds of property, how much does each of them pay to Imperial taxation? I will ask to take the land first; how much does the land pay—still including the Redeemed Land Tax?—4,059,483*l.*

63,105. Then how much does other Rateable Property pay, including Redeemed Land Tax?—10,439,343*l.*

63,106. And Non-rateable Property?—13,744,353*l.*

63,107. Now, will you tell us what is the per-centage in the £ of Imperial taxation borne by each class of property upon its annual value; upon land, including the Redeemed Land Tax it is, how much?—It is 19*d*·52.

63,108. On other Rateable Property?—15*d*·60.

63,109. And on the Non-rateable Property?—14*d*·41

63,110. So that what you describe as other Rateable Property pays a higher per-centage on its annual value than Non-rateable Property?—Yes.

63,111. And land pays a higher per-centage than either of them?—Yes.

Capital value of rateable property.

63,112. Now, I should like to take for a minute or two the capital value; what do you estimate the capital value of the land to be?—Rather over 1,000,000,000*l.*

63,113. And the capital value of other Rateable Property?—Rather over 3,000,000,000*l.*

63,114. And of Non-rateable Property?—Six thousand million pounds, but I think that is too high.

Capital value of non-rateable property.

63,115. You think that is too high?—Yes, this opinion is absolutely personal to myself, but I do think that 1,000,000,000*l.* for property yielding no annual income is too much.

63,116. Which item are you referring to? I did not catch that?—There is an item: "Property yielding no annual income"—such as Furniture, Works of Art, &c., and that is put down at 1,000,000,000*l.*

63,117. And you think that is too high?—Yes, that is why I think that the Capital Value Table is an even rougher approximation than the Annual Value Table.

63,118. To the best of your judgment and so far as you are able to form an opinion as your personal opinion, what should you put that figure at?—Not much over half what it stands at in the Table.

63,119. Do you think it might be put at 500,000,000*l.*?—Say 600,000,000*l.*

63,120. (*Chairman*). Who put this figure of one thousand million pounds in? I rather gather from you that it is not your figure?—I put the 1,000,000,000*l.* in for this reason, it has all previous authority in its favour; in previous calculations of this kind that figure has been taken, and as I have no absolute power of checking it, no later information of my own, I put it in, but at the same time I doubt it.

63,121. (*Mr. Everett.*) Have you any data to come at it by, or how is it arrived at?—I will tell you what our only data are but they are on this point most wretched data, they are the Probate Duty figures. Of course we know that while the Probate Duty valuations of most kinds of property are approximately accurate, of many kinds, I think very accurate, this sort of property is valued in the roughest and most haphazard kind of way.

63,122. And undervalued a good deal?—Enormously undervalued; but still I find it difficult to believe that if there is really 1,000,000,000*l.* of it; there should be only 6,000,000*l.* a year, which is about the figure declared for Probate Duty.

63,123. Does the 1,000,000,000*l.* result from some manipulation of that 6,000,000*l.*?—No, it does not at all. I think it rests on an assumption of this sort—it is an argument from the value of the houses, if I recollect rightly, the idea being that what is inside the

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house, roughly speaking, is about half the value of the house itself.

Probate duty.

63,124. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is the proportion that you derive from Probate Duty? Supposing that you would have 1,000,000,000*l.* of Probate Duty on ordinary estates, what proportion of Probate Duty would be the annual increment to the Revenue?—Do you mean what proportion does the amount declared for Probate every year bear to the total capital of that class of property?

63,125. Yes?—About a 40th, I should think.

63,126. This would be about what?—About $\frac{1}{160}$th.

63,127. (*Mr. Everett.*) The property of the country becomes chargeable for the Death Duties oftener than 40 years, on the average, does it not?—Yes, according to common calculation, once in 33 years?

63,128. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Is not what passes for Probate more nearly a 50th of the total value of the property?—That makes a large allowance for escape, does it not?

63,129. I am merely speaking with reference to past estimates of the same kind that have been made, such as you find in "Porter's Progress of the Nation." It is more to elicit what your own opinion is as to what are the data for it than to criticise you?—I say $\frac{1}{40}$th; but that is very rough, for this reason—that I think if all were charged, if we got everything we ought to get, $\frac{1}{33}$rd, but then a great deal escapes us.

63,130. (*Chairman.*) Is that the average mean of the periods when successions fall in?—Yes.

63,131. Deaths, in fact?—Deaths of persons leaving property.

63,132. That is the average period when you would expect property to turn over again and come in again?—Yes, every 33 years.

63,133. Therefore, if you get the true amount that you ought to get in any particular year then if you multiply the property on which it is paid by 33, you would get approximately what is the true value of property owned by the people of this country?—Of that class of property which pays Probate, and only of that class of property.

63,134. The figure of 33, or any other figure, is very difficult to establish, I suppose?—It is very difficult to establish, and that class of guess has not entered into these calculations at all.

63,135. Are you acquainted with M. De Foville's calculations in France upon a similar subject?—I have seen them, but I do not recollect the result at this moment.

63,136. I think he gets rather a higher figure than 33, and bases it upon actual knowledge of property which they get to know of in France by means of the Registration Duties, and which they have actually compared with the total amount of that kind of property in particular districts and so on, in order to see what the proportion is that passes at death in one year?—Do you remember what figure he arrives at?

63,137. I think it is rather more than 33; it includes gifts and things of that kind. But then that is the figure for France, and it does not necessarily follow that it would apply to this country?—No.

63,138. (*Chairman.*) However, that figure of 33 does not enter into these tables?—No; the only importance of it is in connexion with this particular 1,000,000,000*l.*, which, as I say——

63,139. Is a fanciful figure rather?—A very doubtful figure.

Capital value of non-rateable property.

63,140. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Reverting to the question where my examination was interrupted, we had arrived at this, that according to the figures in the table the capital value of Non-rateable Property is 6,000,000,000*l.*, which you think too much, and in your estimation it ought to be 5,600,000,000*l.*?—Yes.

63,141. (*Chairman.*) You have expressed doubts with reference to only one item, 1,000,000,000*l.*?—Yes.

63,142. There may be equal doubts or other doubts with regard to some of the others?—There may be doubt about everything.

63,143. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Of equal importance?—Certainly not. The other figures are certainly not as doubtful as this; I regard it as far away the most doubtful figure.

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63,144. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) We have now arrived at this position, that according to the way in which you would correct the table the capital value of Non-rateable Property is given as 5,600,000,000*l.*, and from what I gather from this information the capital value of Non-rateable Property, roughly speaking, is five and a half times as much as the capital value of land?—Yes.

Capital value and taxation of non-rateable property and land.

63,145. It appears, then, that the taxation, if it was in fair proportion upon Non-rateable Property, should be five and a half times as great as the taxation upon land; whereas I think I gather from your figures, already given to us, that although the capital value of the Non-rateable Property is estimated to be five and a half times as great as the capital value of land, Non-rateable Property only pays a little more than three times as much in taxation as is paid by the land?—No, four times as much.

63,146. Is that so?—Yes.

63,147. Not including Unredeemed Land Tax, I think?—If you include Unredeemed Land Tax it is about three-and-a-half times; if you exclude it, it is four-and-a-half times as much.

63,148. The fair proposition, according to the figures we have had before us, being five-and-a-half times as much?—Yes.

63,149. Then, so far as these tables are approximately correct, the information we should derive from them would be this, that land, as compared with Non-rateable Property, pays a great deal more than its fair share of Imperial taxation?—It pays more in proportion to its annual or capital value.

Death duties.

63,150. Now, may I ask you a question with regard to some figures in your first table. Under the first column headed "Lands," you will find the Death Duties, which are divided into six separate items, and the total of those six is something like, I think, 878,000*l.*?—They are not totalled, unfortunately. It is between 800,000*l.* and 900,000*l.* certainly.

63,151. Can you tell me how much of that is due to the new Finance Act?—It is put down; the amount derived from the Estate Duty in 1894 is 226,000*l.*

63,152. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Does that represent the whole of the additional Death Duty thrown on land by the Finance Act?—No.

63,153. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) What would the whole additional duty amount to; are you able to tell us that?—I think the addition will be someting like this: when the Estate Duty is in complete working order some years hence there will be about 2,700,000*l.* more under the head of Death Duties than there was last year, and I think, of that extra 2,700,000*l.* about 600,000*l.* will come from land.

63,154. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) In addition to the figures in the table?—Yes.

63,155. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) In addition to the 226,000*l.*?—In addition to the 878,000*l.*; we must take the whole together because there are so many changes. You see the land will be paying less to Succession Duty than it does now, because the succession duty is going to fall off very much. On the other hand it will pay a great deal more under the new Estate Duty. Taking them altogether, I think it means an additional charge of 600,000*l.*, but at the same time there will be additional charge on other sorts of property of 2,100,000*l.*

Death duties on land.

63,156. Then am I right in understanding that it comes to this, that though land, according to these tables, is already paying a larger share in proportion to its capital of Imperial taxation than Non-rateable Property, that share which has been increased already by the Finance Act will be still further increased when the Act comes into full operation?—Yes, there will be an increase on the balance in the taxation of land.

63,157. In the proportion of Imperial taxation borne by land as compared with the proportion borne by Non-rateable Property?—Yes. You are now dealing with a single item, and in that single item of Death Duties land at present pays less than its proportion.

63,158. (*Chairman.*) If anything, it is rather favourable to land, raising the taxation in that form as compared with the others, because it pays a less proportion as I understand your figures, than it does in the other items of taxation, take the Income Tax, for instance?—It pays a less proportion now, but it will not pay a less proportion when the Act is in full operation; it will

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by death during the period would be declared in a subsequent period; it is brought under our notice later; it then pay an equal proportion as far as Death Duties alone are concerned.

63,159. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Yes, but what I understand is that the ultimate effect of the Finance Act will be to still further increase the share of Imperial taxation, which land pays in proportion to Non-rateable Property? —Yes. That is to say, that if, the Estate Duty being in full operation, this calculation was to be worked out again of what is the amount of pence borne by land as compared with other property, you would find that the proportion on land would be slightly heavier than it is now, because you are going to add, if my calculation is right, about 600,000*l.* on the one hand, and about 2,100,000*l.* taking all other property but land, on the other. But, of course, that is out of proportion to the value of land as compared with all other property; the addition will fall in a greater proportion on land than it does on other property.

63,160. I suppose the difficulty of preparing this table has been accentuated by the fact that it is for only half of the year that the Finance Act has been in operation, is that not so?—Yes; the fact that we are in a period of transition has made it vastly more difficult.

63,161. Can we have similar tables to this prepared for the year 1894 complete?—This is 1894–95; this is the last complete year.

63,162. The object I have is this rather: if we have at the present time tables complete for the year preceding and then the year following the operation of the Finance Act, we could see exactly what the effect of it had been? —I am afraid you will not be able to see what the effect of it as between different kinds of property really is for several years.

63,163. Why is that?—It is because the land comes under the operation of the Act more slowly than other kinds of property, partly because of the fact that it is brought in in the first instance more slowly and also because it often pays by instalments.

63,164. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) According to the figures we have had it is out of proportion in both cases, but much more in one case than in the other?—I must be clear on this point. I do not mean that the charge upon land under Death Duties will be heavier than upon other kinds of property, because it certainly will not; but land has hitherto been paying less for Death Duties in proportion to its value than other kinds of property; therefore putting it on an equality in respect of the Death Duties does alter the proportion of what land pays over the whole extent of Imperial taxation. I do not know if I make myself clear, but it is perfectly clear to me.

63,165. (*Chairman.*) Can you say what the correct proportions would be when the Death Duty comes into full effect; how much will be upon land and how much upon Personalty?—I should have to make a calculation before I could give it you with any accuracy.

63,166. That seems to me to be a very important figure to arrive at; would you give us an addition of 600,000*l.*?—Yes, to land, and I give an addition of 1,000,000*l.* to other Rateable Property and of 1,100,000*l.* to Non-rateable Property.

63,167. What has that got to be added to in these figures that you give—not to the whole of the Estate Duty, 1889; that would have to be cut out?—This is an addition on balance, and nothing has got to be cut out. These are figures which would have to be absolutely added. According to my calculations three or four years hence the Death Duties are going to produce about 2,700,000*l.* more than they did in the year to which these Tables relate. I distribute to the best of my ability that 2,700,000*l.* in this way—600,000*l.* to land; 1,000,000*l.* to other Rateable Property and 1,100,000*l.* to Non-rateable Property.

63,168. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) That is, assuming the value of property to be the same as it is now?—That is assuming things to go on as they are now.

63,169. If there is a rise in the value of property you may have additional figures, of course?—Yes, you may.

63,170. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But those figures give a larger proportion to Rateable Property, do they not, than to Non-rateable Property?—Certainly, it must be so, considering what the nature of the Estate Duty is.

63,171. You have 1,600,000*l.* for Rateable Property and 1,100,000*l.* for Non-rateable?—Yes, in the addition of the new sum coming in.

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63,172. Although the value of the Non-rateable Property is very much in excess of the value of Rateable Property?—Yes; the increase on it is less, because its previous taxation was much higher.

63,173. (*Chairman.*) If your figures are to be relied upon then we have got to add 2,700,000*l.* to the 10,894,000*l.*, which is the aggregate of the receipts from Death Duties now?—Yes, I think so.

63,174. Making a total sum of 13,594,000*l.*?—Yes.

63,175. Then you have got to add 600,000*l.* to the 878,000*l.* of the lands alone, which would bring out 1,478,000*l.*; in other words, the payments then by land would be about a ninth of the whole?—Would it be about a ninth of the whole?

63,176. Yes?—Is that not rather a confirmation of the figures which are here in the Tables, because the annual value of lands is about a ninth of the whole, and if the Death Duties are really equalised, that is about the amount which land ought to pay.

63,177. The fact that land comes out on that method of taxation equally as compared with its real value would rather tend to show that that is on the whole the fairest part of taxation?—I think it is the fairest kind of taxation.

Income tax and death duties.

63,178. Whereas in regard to the Income Tax apparently the proportion is much higher?—No; what upsets the proportion, and what makes land come out in this Table so unfavourably and so heavily taxed is the Land Tax.

63,179. Quite so, but whereas the proportion is one-ninth in the case of Death Duties when you look at the Income Tax your calculation makes 1,354,000*l.* out of a total of 10,978,000*l.*?—Yes, that is so.

63,180. Which is only one-eight?—Yes.

63,181. Whereas it is only one-ninth in the case of the Death Duties?—That is explained of course by the fact that, rightly or wrongly, I think the other property ought to have a higher capitalisation—a much higher capitalisation—in many cases than land. That is why the Income Tax works out unfavourably to land.

63,182. On this particular part of the case it would seem that the Death Duties bring out the proportion of charge upon land more fairly in proportion to the value of the two properties, than do the other methods of taxation?—They do.

Assessment to death duties.

63,183. With regard to your calculations as to the future, I do not quite see how they are compatible with what is said in the Commissioners' Report. The Commissioners in their report say that the actual amount of value of the property of all kinds which came to be assessed within that portion of the year 1894–5, during which the Death Duties were in operation, was 91,000,000*l.* that was the total assessed property, of which Personalty was 76,000,000*l.* and Realty 15,000,000*l.* Then the report goes on to say that of that 15,000,000*l.* of Realty only 2,000,000*l.* represented land. Therefore if that is to be taken as a fair index of the future?—It is not the smallest index.

63,184. Why is it not?—For the reason I have just been explaining.

63,185. I am not now talking of receipts within the year but of the assessable property in the year?—Of course it comes into the assessment so much more slowly. What happens constantly is this; a man dies, we will say in January; in March all his Personalty is declared and paid upon, and his Realty may not reach us for assessment even for months afterwards.

63,186. I thought you had taken that into account. The real amount of assessed property which came within the year was only 74,000,000*l.* Then you point out that that figure would be increased largely by another 8,000,000*l.*?—Yes, but you must distinguish three things; property paying Duty down, property declared for Duty without paying, and property belonging to persons, some of whose property has already paid duty, but the value of which is not declared at all in the first instance. The two figures you see there under Realty are the Realty which actually paid Duty, and then the Realty which was declared for Duty; but that is no index of what is the Realty which passed by death during that period, because some of the Realty passing

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is not only that it pays later, but it is brought under our notice later than other property. You cannot possibly get the fair proportion of land to other property from the Estate Duty figures for some years. I am certain of that.

63,187. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) You do not have them valued in the same document as the Probate Duty is, do you?—Sometimes they are and sometimes they are not. When a man has very little Realty he generally brings it in, and values it in the same document. If not he tells us there is Realty to come. We may have to wait 10 months for the Realty; in fact we do constantly.

Income tax assessment.

63,188. (*Chairman.*) For the first time in the assessment to the Income Tax, under the operations of last year, the Income Tax was reduced by about one-eighth?—Yes, by ⅛ for lands and ⅛ for messuages.

63,189. The question which was put by Mr. Chaplin appeared to point to the conclusion that some additional burden was thrown upon land, as compared with other property, by the operations of last year in increasing the Death Duties; but we ought to take into account also that land at the same time was reduced in the assessment to the Income Tax by one-eighth?—Yes, but that does not affect these figures, because I have allowed for the one-eighth in this calculation.

63,190. It does not affect these figures, I admit, but in considering the effect of the whole arrangements of last year you ought to take that into account?—Yes.

Value of capital in trades and professions.

63,191. Now, looking to the figures on Table 2; you have told us that one figure there, the 1,000,000,000*l.* is open to very grave doubt; are there not some of the other figures which are also very problematic, to say the least of them? Take the capital in trades and professions (one-fifth of the assessment to Income Tax, plus 25 per cent. for exemptions,) that you bring out as 907,408,040*l.*; is that not an extremely doubtful figure?—Nothing like so doubtful as the other.

63,192. But still it is a very doubtful figure?—Yes, it is doubtful.

63,193. There must be a vast number of trades and professions where there is no capital?—Certainly.

63,194. Take all the professional people in this country—lawyers, doctors, engineers, and numerous people of that kind—they have no capital?—No.

63,195. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Would you say that lawyers have no capital?—No, I should not say none.

63,196. They actually use a considerable capital?—Yes.

63,197. (*Chairman*). I should have thought they only had their law books—perhaps I should have said barristers. But let me take another class of people. Bankers have no doubt large capital?—Yes.

63,198. But that capital for the most part is invested, is it not?—Yes.

63,199. And, therefore, would pay Income Tax under another head?—Yes.

63,200. Therefore all this is a matter of extreme doubt as to how you could value the property of trades?—I have really only followed Sir Robert Giffen in that, you must direct your interrogatories to him.

Rateable and non-rateable value of railways.

63,201. Now let me turn to another figure, namely, the distinction drawn between the Rateable Value and the Non-rateable Value of railways. How have you arrived at that figure?—I see that you put down railways in the United Kingdom at 21,153,499*l.* for the Rateable Value and 14,633,169*l.* for the Non-rateable?—Yes.

63,202. Making a total of 35,786,668*l.*?—Yes.

63,203. I was under the impression that the whole of the railways were rated?—They are not rated on their whole value.

63,204. Not on their plant, but they are rated upon the whole value of their concern, are they not?—We know the whole value on which they are rated. You can find out the valuations of railways for local purposes, and you will see that they are vastly less than their profits charged to the Income Tax. Now, I have deducted the one from the other. I do not know what better rule could be followed for seeing what proportion of railway property is rated than to take that which is actually charged in the rate books.

63,205. But you have made no deductions in the case of the Non-rateable Property value. I presume that for the Rateable Value of the railways you have made the deductions which are allowed in rating them?—No, I have taken the gross estimated rental, and that I believe is the right principle. I have thought that over a good deal, and I think that is the right way to look at it. The gross estimated rental represents the rateable part of them so to speak, although the rate may actually be levied on only a portion of it.

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Taxation on non-rateable and rateable property compared.

63,206. Now, adding up the taxation and the annual value, if you do not take into account the Redeemed Land Tax, I think there is very little difference between the proportion of taxation according to your calculation of Rateable and Non-rateable Property?—Not a great difference.

63,207. It is very slight, is it not?—Rateable Property has got rather the worst of it.

63,208. As between those two the difference is small?—Yes.

63,209. So far as I make it, if you take the value of a penny in the £, a penny in the £ works out to about 300,000*l.*, and the difference between the two might be represented by about 200,000*l.*, as is shown in your table. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Not as for land; there is more than a penny difference; it is a penny half-penny difference. It is between 16·18 for lands, and 14·41 for Non-rateable Property. (*Chairman.*) I ought to speak in the first instance of the difference between lands and other Rateable Property, and that is very small?—Yes, that is not very great.

63,210. (*Mr. Dalton.*) But it would work out to a very large sum if worked out into the amount of taxation. (*Chairman.*) I have worked that out; it is about two-thirds of a penny, and it works at about 200,000*l.* The large difference that you worked out in answer to Mr. Chaplin is brought about by including the Redeemed Land Tax?—Yes.

Redemption of land tax.

63,211. Now that Land Tax has been in process of redemption for the last 100 years, I think?—Yes, very nearly.

63,212 And a very large portion of it must have been redeemed a great number of years ago?—Yes.

63,213. The greater part; for I think of late years that there has not been much done in the way of redeeming the Land Tax?—No, not very much.

63,214. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) But the process is still continuing I think?—Yes, it still goes on.

63,215. (*Chairman.*) Still it has been of late years of a comparatively small amount?—It is generally redeemed when people want to improve property and build on it.

63,216. I suppose that since the time when the greater portion of that has been redeemed property has been bought and sold, and has passed into other hands?—Yes, in many cases; less in agricultural land, I should think, than in other land.

63,217. But still the great bulk of it must have passed into other hands altogether?—Yes, a good deal of it has.

63,218. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Why?—A good deal of it has.

63,219. (*Chairman.*) I think you have said that it is generally redeemed when people contemplate building operations?—Yes, that is true of recent times; of course, originally a great deal of agricultural land was redeemed.

Incidence of land tax.

63,220. I think you desire not to express any opinion as to whether that should be included in the estimate or not. Has not the Land Tax itself been rather regarded as a property than as a tax in the same way as a permanent rentcharge?—Yes, I believe it has been so regarded.

63,221. Like tithe rentcharge—a subject with which land has been bought and sold in the same way, has that not been the way in which it has been looked at?—Yes, I believe it has. I do not say that I agree with it.

63,222. But that has been the view of past times?—Yes.

Incidence of taxation.

63,223. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) To continue this last point which the Chairman has been following out, I should like to ask you generally what you mean by taxes "falling on" property? I must ask that with some qualification, because that was the question which was put to you by the Commission, but I should like to ask it because it is really a thing that you must have had before you in working out the problem that you got?—Do you mean what is property?

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63,224. What do you mean by the phrase? The canon of taxation is that taxes should be levied equally upon all persons in a community, but there is nothing said as to equality of taxation falling upon property?—I should like very much to understand the question better than I do.

63,225. It seems to me to be raised by this point which has been suggested with reference to the Land Tax, that is the case where the tax falls upon the property, and is a certain deduction from the property, so that it becomes in the nature of a head-rent or rent-charge of which the Government is the owner. That is a tax upon property. But Income Tax which is paid by the owner of the property, is not a tax upon property, it is a tax upon his income, just as it is a tax upon all other incomes?—The owner has only got his income with which to pay both the one and the other.

63,226. But still it is a tax upon the property; if he has an income at all he pays the tax; whether he derives it from property or from his own exertions, he pays the tax?—You mean the Income Tax is not a tax upon property; that is your point, is it?

63,227. That is what I am suggesting now, but it is more to elict the view that is to be held upon it. It seems to me that the phrase "a tax upon property" is a very loose one, and it includes all sorts of taxes the incidence of which is quite different amongst themselves?—Yes, but that is inherent, is it not, in the reference of the Commission? We were asked "to "prepare and give evidence upon the amount of "Imperial Taxation borne by Rateable and Non-rate-"able Properties respectively."

63,228. Precisely, but property does not bear it, it is the individual who bears it?—It is rather a metaphysical distinction to my mind.

63,229. I think not; it is rather a serious distinction, because when you apply it to the Land Tax we have a tax which has one incidence and when you come to the Income Tax we have a tax which has a totally different incidence; the one is strictly a tax upon property but the other is not?—The way I have looked at it is this: all taxes are paid out of income; some taxes are paid out of the income derived from property, and other taxes are paid out of the income obtained by personal earnings and so on.

63,230. Some are paid out of capital are they not?—A man can only pay out of his income it seems to me.

63,231. Is that quite so?—A tax? Yes.

Death duties.

63,232. Are the Death Duties always paid out of income?—The proper way to regard them, I think, is as a kind of accumulated Income Tax or Property Tax.

63,233. Are they not as a matter of fact paid out of capital, so much so that in the discussions upon them the objection has been taken that they are taxes upon capital, and the reply has been that no great harm is done in taxing capital to that extent, because you are repaying debt to a still greater amount? That would not be quite the case now, I think, but that has been the argument?—You hear it said that they take one year's income or two years' income; that is the way in which it is commonly put.

63,234. As a matter of fact they are paid out of capital. A man gets so much property left him and he only looks at the nett amount that he gets after the duty has been paid?—You know I do not agree. Taking taxation as a whole, it is part of the annual produce of the country; it is a charge upon the income of the country, some of that income derived from property, some from other sources.

Railway passenger duty.

63,235. Is that quite so? I put it that a considerable amount of taxation is derived from capital. I have been asking these questions partly because I am going to proceed to put another, and that is that in dealing with the other taxes I see you do not insert the Railway Passenger Duty as a tax upon railway property?—I am not certain that it ought not to be inserted.

63,236. I do not know whether you recollect the time when the Railway Passenger Duty was greatly reduced?—Yes.

63,237. And immediately you had a very remarkable rise in certain railway shares that were going to benefit extremely by the remission of the duty?—I am inclined to think that it ought to have been put in.

63,238. That would have tended to throw up the Imperial Taxation?—On Rateable Property?

63,239. On the Non-rateable Property. (*Mr. Everett.*) How much is that raised?—It is not a very large item.

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63,240. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) It is 260,000*l.* I think in the last accounts?—260,000*l.*, which would fall partly on Rateable and partly on Non-rateable.

63,241. Still these are questions that bear some consideration, and I do not think that is a point that you have discussed in the memorandum?—I have not discussed the Railway Passenger Duty. I have not taken any notice of it.

Stamp duties.

63,242. With regard to stamps on deeds and other instruments would you say the incidence of these duties is upon property at all? Are they not charges of a moderate amount upon transfer, like charges upon transactions, like Bill Stamps, and things of that kind? They are hardly in the strict sense of the word taxes upon property?—I should have thought that if you had not got the stamp on the transfer, the property would sell for a little more.

Effect of taxes upon value of property.

63,243. That may well be?—Are not all these taxes which are taken account of here, things which reduce the value of the property and which if abolished would cause a rise in its value?

63,244. I do not think the Income Tax does?—You think not?

(*Mr. Dalton.*) Not if an additional Income Tax is placed on a particular class of property, such as Consols.

63,245. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Then it ceases to be an Income Tax; it is a special tax upon that kind of property. There is a good deal to be studied in connexion with taxes upon property, and I just wish to ascertain the principles which have guided the Inland Revenue Department in distributing the taxation in this manner?—I do not understand you to put a question.

63,246. I put the question that I wish to ascertain fully the principles that have guided you in dealing with different taxes; and I am calling attention to the different nature of the different taxes, all of which you have included as Taxes upon Property. But you have no further explanation to give upon the points I have mentioned?—I have explained my point of view; perhaps I have not explained it satisfactorily?

Taxation upon rateable and non-rateable railway property.

63,247. With reference to the distinction between Rateable and Non-rateable Property in the case of railways, are you satisfied with the distribution of taxation between the two kinds of property, of all the different items. For instance, you give 502,181*l.* of the Income Tax to the rateable part of railways, and you give 347,390*l.* to the Non-rateable?—Yes.

63,248. But that is on the assumption that you can divide Railways in that manner?—I am not saying that you can divide Railways in this manner, but if this calculation had to be made at all they must be divided in some manner, and I do not think there is a better possible manner of dividing them.

63,249. Is it possible to divide Railway Property at all, do you think, in that way?—Between Rateable and Non-rateable?

63,250. Yes?—Whether it is logical or not in principle, in fact it is so divided it seems to me.

63,251. Is it not the case that, as far as Income Tax is concerned, the charges fall equally upon all the property, but as far as rates are concerned the rates fall upon a very small part of the property of the railways?—Not on a very small part. They do not fall on the whole.

63,252. They are practically paid by the ordinary shareholder, and come out of his pocket, not out of the general income of the railways at all?—They are charged on part of the property, while Income Tax is on the whole.

63,253. So whatever you may call the rateable part of railways the charge is not upon any particular part of the property of railways such as you divide it, but it is upon a totally different part of the property; is that not the case?—I do not think, in these Tables, that we were looking at the persons out of whose pockets the tax came—that is another question—but at the kind of property on which the taxation was levied.

63,254. If it were the practice with railway companies, as is the case with some public companies, to pay the Income Tax upon the profits in a lump sum, the effect of that would be that the incidence of the Income Tax

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would not be upon the railway property generally, but upon a few individuals by comparison, as it is in the case of other public companies?—Yes.

63,255. Are you aware of any cases of railways where that practice is followed—where the Income Tax is paid out of the profits of the railway company generally before the dividends are paid to the shareholders?—There are some foreign railways I know that pay Income Tax without deducting it from debenture or shareholders, but I am not sure whether any English railways do it.

63,256. I am not aware of the practice in regard to English railways, but that would make some difference in these figures, would it not?—I do not think it would; I think you are introducing now considerations which I have entirely excluded.

63,257. I am merely trying to show that the distinction between Rateable and Non-rateable in the case of railways is an impossible one?—I think it is a very important one, is it not?

63,258. They may be valued for rates in a certain way, but the burden of the rates and the burden of the taxes comes out of the general body of property all the same, and in the case of the rates the burden falls upon the owner of the margin as it happens to be. But you have not looked at the point who pays the rates in deciding what is rateable property?—I think all charges on railways such as rates fall on the ordinary shareholder.

63,259. And probably the Passenger Duty would do so too?—Possibly.

63,260. These are points which should be considered, should they not, in distributing taxation?—No, that is where I differ. I see their relevance as between different people, but this a question as to taxation falling on different kinds of property.

63,261. If you show that railway rates, for instance, do not fall upon railway property generally, but only a portion of them—that held by the ordinary shareholder—then you should put that down as a special tax upon the property of the ordinary shareholder, surely?—I am not dealing with railway rates at all in this paper.

63,262. But you follow the distinction of Rateable and Non-rateable Property, and I wish to ascertain exactly what you mean by rateable. (*Mr. Everett.*) Property that is charged to rates is rateable, is it not?—That is what I have gone upon, that which is charged to rates is rateable. If I find a railway with an annual income of 3,000,000*l.* is charged to the rates at 2,000,000*l.* I put down that 2,000,000*l.* as Rateable Property and 1,000,000*l.* as Non-rateable.

63,263. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But the real property that is rated and charged may be quite different?—I do not see it.

63,264. (*Chairman.*) The Income Tax, I suppose, is paid by the various persons who are debenture holders, and so forth, and there is a deduction made, or rather it is charged upon the interest which each of the various parties interested may make?—No. That is how the railway distributes the Income Tax of course, but the Revenue simply takes the gross earnings of a railway, and it knows nothing at all about debenture shares or any other shares—it simply charges upon the profits of the railway.

63,265. Quite so, but then the railway company is able to deduct it from the interest of the debenture holders?—Yes.

63,266. In the case of rates there is no such deduction made, and therefore it falls really upon the shareholders only. (*Mr. Giffen.*) The ordinary shareholders?—Yes, it is so.

(*Mr. Chaplin.*) It is a rate on the particular property; it does not matter whom it falls upon.

(*Sir Robert Giffen.*) It is a rate on the whole property.

(*Mr. Chaplin.*) Is not the point decided once for all: if the property is charged with rates, it is Rateable Property.

(*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But it is the whole property of the railways which is charged with rates, and it falls upon a portion of the property rated.

(*The witness.*) I quite appreciate the difficulty of that question as to whether the whole of the railway property may not in a sense be said to be rated; but I thought I could not call the whole of a property rated, when, as a matter of fact, it was staring me in the face that the Gross Estimated Rental of railways for rating included only part of the property; of course I have nothing to do with first principles: I had to make the best calculation I could upon the facts before me. It is a difficult question to decide who are the people who ultimately pay a tax. This kind of consideration is a perfectly proper consideration, but it is something beyond and outside this calculation altogether. Take, for instance, Lands; the Income Tax on lands is partly paid by mortgagees, but still it is borne by the land, and all the Income Tax paid by mortgagees will be found in that 3,366,153*l.* which I here put down to Land. You see I had to give some simple and natural interpretation to the words Rateable Property and Non-rateable Property. I was not asked to say anything about the persons who paid the taxes, but how much taxation falls upon a particular kind of property; then I am met at once with the difficulty caused by these things, like railways, quarries, and mines.

63,267. Suppose I put the point in this way then, that the whole of the railway property is really rateable, but it is assessed in such a way that the proportion which the actual assessment bears to the total property is, perhaps, too low, but the whole property is really rateable?—To the question how my calculation has been made the answer is very simple. In the column of rateable property you see that portion of the annual value of a railway which is put down in the rate book as its gross estimated rental, and in the other column of Non-rateable Property you see the balance of that annual value.

63,268. And you do not take it as a case of under valuation for rating purposes because really the whole property is rateable?—No, because that raises the question "What ought you to rate?" which is a big point. I was looking at what was rated, not at what ought to be rated; I could not possibly go into that.

63,269. What I was trying to point out was that not only is the whole property rateable in the strict sense of the word, but that the incidence of the rate is upon the whole property and not upon the particular part that you call Rateable Property?—I am most anxious to give every information about the basis of the calculation, but I think it transcends my duty to defend the principles. I will explain them, but it is no good my arguing about them. This is a very large question which you raise, of course, and it goes far beyond railways—it applies to all businesses.

Incidence of excise licences.

63,270. Coming to the next question, I wish to ask about other taxes which seem to me a little doubtful. You have omitted altogether anything in the Customs and Excise as possibly falling upon property. I wish to ask the question whether you would be quite sure that the Excise licences to a large extent do not fall upon property?—I have considered that matter. I thought Excise licences were, properly speaking, taxes on transactions, on the carrying on of business. You know the distinction which is drawn by some foreign economists between taxes on property, taxes on articles of consumption, and taxes on transactions—business.

63,271. That would be so, and that raises the question that I raised about deeds, whether they are not taxes upon transactions rather than taxes upon property?—Yes. I have excluded a great many of them as being taxes on transactions, but not those which were on the transfer of property from hand to hand.

63,272. In the case of licences, where you give a licence to a man to carry on a profitable business, and it becomes in the nature of a monopoly, does not the licence really fall upon property?—I should not like to say it did not, but I do not think it falls so clearly upon property as to have a distinct right to be in this calculation.

63,273. This is a point which you have considered, and that is the answer that you give to it?—Yes.

63,274. Still the effect of that to some extent is that if you were to distribute taxation in a little different manner, the general conclusions at which you arrive would be very different from what they are?—You have touched on nothing which would greatly affect it, except that question about what property is rateable.

63,275. And Land Tax?—If you exclude the Land Tax it would alter the calculation radically from beginning to end.

Incidence of income tax and death duties.

63,276. Do you think that the taxes are of such a kind that they can all properly be added up—Death Duties, Land Tax, Income Tax, and stamps upon

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Deeds? They do not fall upon property in the same way?—The ultimate incidence of any tax is one of the most difficult problems I know of.

63,277. Is it not the case that Income Tax is paid by everybody above a certain amount of income, but that the Death Duties are only paid by a few individuals by comparison, and the stamps are only paid by a few individuals by comparison?—I should not have thought they would have been few by comparison. I should have thought that the same class which is within the Income Tax charge is within the Death Duty charge. No doubt there are fewer people who pay it, because it is collected about once every 30 years and not every year. I think the same class that is in the Income Tax charge is also in the Death Duty charge.

63,278. The people paying the Death Duty charge are included in the class, but still the numbers of the class who pay the Death Duties are comparatively few?—No. Not those who are affected by the Death Duties—I should not have said so. If you take all the people with incomes above 160*l.* a year I should think the great majority of them, in the course of their lives, were affected by the Death Duties, more or less.

63,279. But still that does not make the incidence of the tax at all like the incidence of the Income Tax, which is paid every year by everybody?—I differ. I think there is a great similarity between the incidences of the two taxes in the long run.

63,280. That is to say, if the Death Duties are continued at the same rate for an indefinite period—but as we know they are continually changing?—Say for a considerable period. I myself regard the Death Duty as equivalent to an extra Income Tax on property, and as the answer—I see you differ—to the complaint which is often made that the taxation of this country is unfair, because it charges incomes equally whether derived from property or from personal earnings. If the Income Tax stood alone that would be a just accusation, but inasmuch as there is a special Property Tax which falls only on property, and not on personal earnings, I think it does away with that injustice, which would exist if the Income Tax stood alone.

63,281. Have you not seen the argument that Death Duties should be considered as out of the category of ordinary taxation altogether, as being imposed by the State on property passing at death and really falling upon the man who is dead, and not upon the living?—I do not agree with that view.

Method of levying estate duty upon property of intestates.

63,282. (*Chairman.*) If a man dies leaving half his property in land and half his property in personalty, how is the Estate Duty levied, I assume that he makes no direction by his will. Is the Estate Duty paid out of the Personalty or is one half of it charged, so to speak, upon the land?—Its share is charged upon the land.

63,283. (*Mr. Everett.*) That would be within the option of the executors, would it not?—Yes, the executors could pay out of the Personalty for the land.

63,284. (*Chairman.*) They can if they like?—Yes, if they like.

63,285. Do they do so as a rule?—Very often they do. Where there is a small amount of Realty the executors generally pay.

63,286. If there is a large amount of both would they not pay the whole of the Estate Duty out of the Personalty?—No, I do not think they do as a rule, where there is a large amount of both.

63,287. Then if the property is left by will, the land to one person and the Personalty to another, has the executor discretion on which to pay it or not?—The executor can always pay, but in that case the owner of the Realty would ultimately pay his share.

63,288. He would ultimately pay it?—Yes.

Valuation of land.

63,289. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Passing to the second table, you have given some explanations of your reason for what seems to be a very low number of years' purchase at which you take land; is there anything further you could add as to the details of your information on that subject?—No, it is an average based on a very large number of individual calculations. The lowness of it rather surprises me.

63,290. Did these calculations include land in all parts of the country?—Yes.

63,291. Residential land?—Yes, some residential land.

63,292. And land which is about to be taken for building, which has a special value?—Yes, there is some of that in it, too, but of course that is at a much higher rate.

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63,293. You think that you have got a fair average?—Yes, I think so, because there is so much of the agricultural land which is even less, you see, than this 18 years' purchase. But of course another year or two's experience of the Estate Duty would help me a great deal.

63,294. You would admit of course that it is a much lower valuation than anything you have ever seen before for that number of years' purchase of land?—Yes, very much lower, but not low as compared with many valuations that I have seen, as a matter of fact, in the case of recent deaths.

63,295. Of course it may be the case that the older valuations of the number of years' purchase were more or less justified at the time, and that the land is rather at a low number of years' purchase just at present?—I consider that the old values were justified at the time, but that there has been a revolution in the popular estimate of the value of land, which affects the price more than anything.

63,296. Have you looked at the number of years' purchase in different parts of the country; is there any difference in different parts of the country?—Yes, generally speaking, I should say that where the rents have fallen most, I suppose from alarm, or panic, or what not, the number of years' purchase of the fallen rents is much lower than the number of years' purchase of the rents which have not fallen so much.

63,297. So that in the Eastern Counties, Norfolk, Suffolk, and Essex, the number of years' purchase would probably be less than in Scotland, or in some parts of the west country where agricultural depression has been less severe?—I should say decidedly so; I am quite certain that is so.

Capital value of property yielding no annual income.

63,298. With reference to that item of 1,000,000,000*l.* that was referred to a little time ago, have you looked at any other figures beyond those of the Probate in arriving at your estimate of about 600,000,000*l.*, which you think would be a better figure?—No, I am going on Probate Duty figures very liberally enlarged.

63,299. Do you think that the Probate Duty figures are not quite up to the mark in respect to the returns which people make with reference to these articles?—Nowhere near the true figures.

63,300. Is it the case that nobody seems to die in the possession of cash in his house?—The item is a very small one.

63,301. And there are other articles which seem to suggest that people in making returns for Probate Duty interpret the thing very liberally in favour of themselves?—Yes.

63,302. You have not compared the figures, say, for instance, with the number of people engaged in making furniture and things of that kind?—No.

63,303. Or in supplying the contents of houses which seem to show that the trade is enormously bigger than would be represented by an annual value of 6,000,000*l.* falling in?—I have not.

63,304. You have not gone into points of that kind?—No.

63,305. I happen to know that some of the original estimates which were made were constructed after some consideration of the old Insurance Duty. The Fire Insurance Duty, when it existed, was charged at one rate upon houses and at another upon the contents of houses?—I have not inquired.

63,306. You found the proportion something like two to one, did you not, in these two things?—I believe it was two to one, but this is including stock-in-trade and the household goods.

63,307. But you have not looked into points of that kind?—No, I may say generally, that the time at my disposal has only just sufficed for me to draw conclusions from the figures which were, so to speak, specially within my knowledge and competence as head of the Inland Revenue, and not to make many investigations outside which would have been valuable checks and which I should have liked to make if I had had more time.

63,308. I am asking the question simply with reference to other calculations of this nature which

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have been made by proper people for understanding them. This is not really so much in contradiction of them as would appear to be the case when you say 600,000,000*l.*?—600,000,000*l.* is the maximum I can possibly infer from the things which come under my immediate knowledge.

Farmers' profits and capital.

63,309. Then for the same reason I should like to ask you above that 10,000,000*l.* of farmers' profits, and 200,000,000*l.* of farmers' capital. You have not gone minutely into that subject, or into the question of Schedule B.?—Schedule B. does not help me. That is my difficulty there. The Income Tax figures as they stand, are no assistance whatever, as to the estimation of farmers' profits.

63,310. Nor as to the estimation of profits under Schedule B. which includes something besides farmers' profits?—Yes.

Capital value of home securities.

63,311. With reference to that item of Income Tax on the home securities, I think your figure for the home securities is 498,196,842*l.* of capital?—Yes, taxed home securities.

63,312. Does that include the whole of the National Debt?—No, not the whole.

63,313. What is omitted?—There is a good deal held by public departments or owned by charities which is omitted.

63,314. But does that not pay Income Tax?—No. It is not the whole of the National Debt which is included in the table.

63,315. Of course I am asking you with reference to other calculations in order to have the whole thing kept in mind for the purposes of comparison?—Yes. There would be something like 160,000,000*l.* to be added to it, if you added the National Debt, which does not pay Income Tax.

Value of foreign investments abroad.

63,316. Then, I think, you say that you have made no estimate for foreign investments abroad which do not come into the Income Tax Returns?—That is so.

63,317. That may be a considerable item, but you think proper to disregard it for this purpose?—Yes, for the reason I have explained,—that it escapes taxation altogether. It is a very considerable item.

Capital value of incomes exempt under Schedule D.

63,318. Is there no other property that you could have taken notice of, that you have omitted, either rateable or non-rateable? I refer especially to the income of people from property under some part of Schedule D. if they were liable, but who were not assessed, because their income is under the lower limit. you have taken no note of that, have you?—I have in the case of trades and professions, I do not think there could be much property of that kind except the capital of small traders. I have made some allowance for that.

63,319. You have made some allowance?—Yes, you will find when you come to capital trades and professions, "One-fifth of Assessment to Income Tax, plus 25 per cent. for exemptions." I mean that 25 per cent. to represent the capital of exempt people, of course very roughly.

Distribution of taxes upon rateable and non-rateable property.

63,320. You quite admit generally then that if people were going over this list of taxes and distributing them differently the result might be a little different from what you have arrived at, and if they were to deal with such an item as Railway Property differently do you think the result might also be different from what you have arrived at; it all depends on the estimation that you have made?—I think I must distinguish a little there. I think with the exceptions which have been touched upon that the particular figures are as good as any figures of this kind are ever likely to be, but, of course, they are raw material for the Commission, and the Commission may redistribute them and re-arrange them as they like. I have arranged them in what seemed to me the most natural way, but if they were differently arranged, if, for instance, the Land Tax were treated as not being a tax at all, or if all the property of railways were regarded as Rateable Property it would make the most enormous differences.

Incidence of income tax and death duties on charges on land.

63,321. (*Chairman.*) I want to know what you include in the term land; is a charge upon land, land?—Certainly, I mean to say that when I have taken the annual value of land I have regarded the land apart entirely from the interests in it as if it was all absolute freehold.

63,322. Now take Table I. In describing the Income Tax, no doubt there in the case of land under the head of "Income Tax on Land" you include all the various charges and interest, mortgages included?—Yes.

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63,323. But when you come to the Death Duties I do not quite see how you include mortgages and charges?—I have made the most strenuous efforts to find out exactly how much of the charge under Death Duties falls upon exactly the same subject matter on which that Income Tax charge falls; that has been the object of all those adjustments.

63,324. Are we to understand then that in these items of Death Duties amounting to 878,000*l.* which are now received and which are now ultimately to be 600,000*l.* more, that they include the charge upon mortgages and other charges upon land?—Most certainly, because if they did not the whole comparison would have been vitiated. Inasmuch as when I state the annual value I am treating the annual value of the land, mortgages included, so I am bound, when I am dealing with taxation, to put in the taxation on the mortgages.

63,325. Then assuming that land is charged to and mortgaged to one half its value as is probably the case, or perhaps even more, those charges would pay not Succession Duty but Legacy Duty, and they would have paid Probate Duty?—In so far as they pay Probate Duty, the charge upon them has been put into the charge on lands.

63,326. Take a mortgage; a mortgage on land before the Act of last year would be paid as Personalty?—It pays now as Personalty.

63,327. Is it included in this list as land?—The value of the land includes the value of a mortgage, and the taxation on the land includes the taxation on the mortgage, so that the two things are made to correspond. Of course the whole thing would have been radically wrong if that had not been done, and there would have been no use in it at all. I do not know whether I have made it clear.

63,328. Does this 600,000*l.* increase, and this 210,000*l.* of the Estate Duty included under this head, include a great deal of property which apart for the Act of last year, would still have been paying Probate—namely, all the charges and mortgages?—It includes everything proceeding out of the land; it is the charge on everything proceeding out of the land.

63,329. It includes therefore a great deal of the property which ordinarily is called Personalty, namely, mortgages?—Yes, just as the 49,000,000*l.*, of the annual value of land includes a great deal which is ordinarily called Personalty.

63,330. (*Mr. Channing.*) Leasehold interests. do you mean?—No, they would be in "other Rateable Property."

Schedule B.

63,331. (*Chairman.*) With regard to the Income Tax, you state that under Schedule B., the Income Tax paid by farmers is becoming practically a farce?—Yes.

63,332. "Last year it only amounted to 190,000*l.*, or "little more than one per cent. of the total Income "Tax, and its tendency is still to diminish." I suppose that results partly from the change effected last year under which the assessment under Schedule B. was reduced from one-half the rent to one-third, and partly to the exemptions now which they benefit from equally with other people, namely, that incomes are not charged with Income Tax below a certain point?—Yes, it does result from these two causes in the main.

63,333. At what point of the rent should you say would a farmer who has got no other resources now begin to pay Income Tax?—If he has got no other resources, it is at 487*l.* 12*s.*

63,334. If his rent is below that, unless he has other income, he practically would pay nothing?—He would pay nothing under Schedule B.

63,335. If his rent is above that I suppose he would pay something, but even then it would be considerably less until he had reached a higher figure?—He pays on a third of his rent with an abatement.

63,336. At what point of the rent would he begin to pay the full Income Tax, assuming that he makes a profit equal to one-third of his rent?—At 1,500*l.* if he has no other resources.

63,337. Are you quite certain about that figure, because if not, perhaps you will fill up the correct figure

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when looking through your evidence?—Yes, but I think that is so.*

63,338. Unless his rent is 500*l.* the farmer practically would pay nothing, and between 500*l.* and 1,500*l.* he would receive some exemption?—Yes.

63,339. Only in the cases where his rent is 1,500*l.* a year, assuming he has no other resources, would he pay the full Income Tax?—Yes.

63,340. And then it would be upon one-third of the rent?—Yes.

63,341. (*Mr. Everett.*) Where do you get that 1,500*l.* a year; I thought a farmer was chargeable on a third of his rent whatever the amount of his rent was?—You see that a third of 1,500*l.* a year is 500*l.*, and then he comes under the full Income Tax charge. But if, for instance, his rent is 900*l.* a third of that is 300*l.*, and on that he is entitled to an abatement of 160*l.*, and he is only charged on 140*l.*

63,342. (*Chairman.*) Is he entitled to that abatement in cases where he has made a larger profit than one-third of his rent?—We do not know anything about his profits.

63,343. You do not?—No.

63,344. He would be entitled to claim that abatement?—Yes, certainly.

63,345. In respect of one-third of the rent, even though he has made a larger profit?—He is entitled to be assessed under Schedule B. if he pleases.

63,346. And to claim the abatement?—And to claim the abatement.

63,347. Even though his profits have been larger?—Yes.

63,348. Now under "Farmers" are there included a considerable number of people who are not farmers really, like nurserymen?—Yes.

63,349. They rank as farmers?—They would be charged under Schedule B.

63,350–4. I mean would they reckon under the rule that they are only charged upon one-third of their rent?—No. They are charged on their actual profits. They form an exception to the general rules of Schedule B.

Assessment to income tax, Schedule A.

63,355. Now with regard to the assessment of the Income Tax upon landowners is that based by the Local Assessment Committees upon the Rateable Value?—No.

63,356. Is it quite independent?—It is quite independent, but in very many cases it follows the gross estimated rental—never the Rateable Value.

63,357. It follows the gross estimated rental, but that is at the discretion I suppose of the Local Assessment Commissioners?—The Local Assessment Commissioners fix the gross estimated rental, but the Income Tax authorities are not bound by that gross estimated rental though they accept it whenever it appears reasonable. There are many cases where an Income Tax charge is higher than the gross estimated rental.

Assessment to income tax and rates compared.

63,358. Can you account for the fact that there is a very large difference between the value of the Income Tax assessment and the assessment for local rating—I am not now taking merely the net assessment, but am comparing it with the gross assessment?—The Income Tax value is considerably higher.

63,359. How do you account for that?—I do not know what the Local Assessment Committees do, but we are bound to get full annual value. Where the Local Assessment Committees fall below it, the Income Tax authorities make an assessment of their own.

63,360. I observe that for the year 1894, in the assessment for local rating, the gross estimated rental is 37,000,000*l.*, and the Rateable Value of all land in the country is 33,600,000*l.*; but for Income Tax purposes for the year 1893–94, the assessment is 40,000,000*l.*; therefore it is 3,000,000*l.*, above the gross estimated rental?—Yes, that is about it.

63,361. Is there any explanation of that?—I am bound to hold that the explanation is that the Union Assessment Committees who I think make the local valuation do not take the full annual value.

63,362. I have been making some calculations on the matter and it seems to me that the Income Tax Assessment when we work it out is exceedingly high. It works out for the whole country at something like 28*s.* 6*d.* or 29*s.* per acre of cultivated land; and looking at the present condition of things in the country it does seem to me that that is a very high valuation to put upon the land. Of course I admit that it includes a good deal of other property like woods and sporting rights, and the value of the gardens above half an acre, and so forth, but even taking into account all that it does seem to me to be a very high valuation to put upon the land of the country?—You know at every re-assessment it has gone down very much, and no doubt at the next re-assessment it will go down again, and even between the re-assessments it is going down every year.

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Assessment to income tax, Schedule A.

63,363. You talk of re-assessments; how often are those re-assessments made?—Every five years.

Re-assessments to income tax.

63,364. When was the last one?—1893–94.

63,365. That is only a year ago?—Yes, but something has to be knocked off for that even this year. It goes down in great jumps every five years.

63,366. I do not know whether this return for 1893–94 is upon the last re-assessment or not?—It is.

63,367. Therefore that must be the true assessment of the land for that year, at that period?—Yes, that is the assessment at the latest date.

Assessment appeals.

63,368. It does seem to me to be exceedingly high. I do not know whether it is worth while considering further what is the cause of the great difference between that and the Rateable Value. If a landowner thinks that his assessment is too high what is his remedy?—The appeal is to the Local Commissioners of Income Tax.

63,369. Is there a further appeal from them?—No, they are altogether independent of the Inland Revenue authorities. I mean we have no control over them, We—I am speaking now of the Inland Revenue—and the landowners are equally bound by their decision on a question of fact, and there is no appeal against their decision on a question of fact. They are local men.

63,370. And their decision is final without an appeal?—There is no appeal against them on a question of fact, but on a question of law there is an appeal.

63,371. I suppose if the landowner does not afterwards get that rent he has a right to appeal to you, or he only pays upon what he actually receives?—Not quite that. If he permanently reduces his rent his remedy is by an appeal to the Commissioners to have his assessment reduced even between the ordinary periods of re-assessment—that is in the case of permanent reduction. Where a landlord merely gives back a certain amount as temporary abatement he comes to us, and we give him back the Income Tax on the amount which has been abated.

Income tax on abatements and arrears of rent.

63,372. Or if his tenants fail to pay?—Yes.

63,373. Supposing in a particular year, owing to a bad harvest, the tenants are only able to pay 70 per cent. of their rent, and the other goes into arrear, recoverable or irrecoverable, I suppose the landowner for that year would be entitled to an abatement from his Income Tax in respect of the rent which he has not received?—He can only get an abatement on that which he gives up.

63,374. Only if it is well understood that he does not expect to get it?—Only if he writes it off, supposing that his tenant cannot pay.

63,375. Not if it is in the form of arrears only?—No.

63,376. Would he not pay upon it when he recovers it?—No, he would pay upon it now.

63,377. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) Whether he gets the arrears or not?—Yes, except I may say in the case of Ireland, where the thing got into such a hopeless condition that we have made now for Ireland for 10 years or more under a special Treasury concession an arrangement by which a landlord only pays on what he actually gets year by year.

63,378. (*Chairman.*) Would it not be fair to extend that to England?—I do not think it is necessary. In most cases the Income Tax is paid in the first instance by the tenant, and he can only deduct it upon the rent which he actually pays.

* 1,500*l.* in Scotland and Ireland, and 1,000*l.* in England. On the other hand, the English farmer enjoys a deduction of one-eighth in every case, whatever the amount of his rent, which is not enjoyed by the Scotchman or Irishman.

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63,379. There is not the same amount of arrear, but in some parts of the country there is a considerable amount; in fact, we know there are properties where there are considerable arrears of rent?—You see the tenant has previously paid the Income Tax; you must remember that.

63,380. He has paid it?—Yes.

63,381. Now, could you state what is the difference between the assessed value of Income Tax for the year 1893–94 and the actual Income Tax received on land—perhaps you will do that later if you have not got the figures?—I can get that figure. (*The witness subsequently furnished the following table.*)

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Assessed value of income tax and amount received; comparison.

ENGLAND AND WALES.

LANDS, 1893–4.

INCOME TAX.

		Annual Value.	Duty.	Annual Value.	Duty applicable thereto, at 7*d.* in the £.
				£	£
Gross assessment				40,065,831	1,168,587
		Annual Value.	Duty.		
		£	£		
Approximate. Statutory deductions and abatements.		4,924,178	143,622		
Approximate. Discharges and repayments by way of appeal, &c.		3,457,079	100,831	8,381,257	244,453
Net annual value and duty applicable thereto				31,684,574	924,134

63,382. Is there a considerable difference between the amount received and the assessed amount?—Yes, considerable; but then that also applies of course to every branch of the Income Tax; there is a considerable difference between the amount received and the amount assessed.

Incidence of taxation.

63,383. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think Sir Robert Giffen has taken some objection to these tables on the ground that it is an improper expression to speak of taxes as being levied upon certain classes of property. As a matter of fact, is it not the case that although these taxes are of course paid by certain persons, they are paid by those persons in respect of different classes of property, and that the amount of the tax is regulated by the amount of the property and the description of the property?—Yes.

Taxation on rateable and non-rateable property compared.

63,384. In all cases. And the result, if these tables are to be relied upon, is this, that if a man has agricultural property of the value of 1,000*l.* he pays a higher tax than another man who has Non-rateable Property of the same value of 1,000*l.*? That is the case I suppose, is it not?—I think so.

63,385. Then is not the result of that that a man is less inclined to invest money in agricultural land than in non-rateable property, and is not that to the detriment of agricultural land?—I think, practically, the difference is so small that it will hardly affect the purchaser much.

63,386. That is so far as Imperial taxation is concerned?—Yes.

63,387. But we have the fact here that rateable property is considerably less than half of the realised property in the country, and in addition to paying something more, admittedly something more, to Imperial taxation, the man who invests in agricultural land, if it is true that the owner pays any portion of the rates, has also to pay his share of between 30,000,000*l.* and 40,000,000*l.* of rates which fall entirely upon rateable property, and from which Non-rateable Property is entirely exempt? Is that not the case?—Yes, I think it is.

63,388. Then to the extent to which the owner of one class of property has to bear a heavier burden than the owner of another class of property, is that not to the detriment of the property that has to bear the heavier burden? Is it not to the detriment of the agricultural interest that heavier burdens should be placed on those who invest their money in land, whereas lighter burdens are placed on those who invest their money in Non-rateable Property?—Yes, naturally a man if he is investing money, and he thinks about taxation at all, will prefer to invest his money in the more lightly taxed instead of the more heavily taxed form of property.

63,389. Do you think that people who invest their money would not take that into account at all, notwithstanding the magnitude of the charges in the one case, and the lightness of the charges in the other?—They certainly take rates into consideration.

Effect of increased income tax upon value of property.

63,390. I think it was argued that if an additional Income Tax was placed on all classes of property, it would not in any way diminish their value. Should you be disposed to agree to that? Suppose for a moment an Income Tax of 240 pence in the £ were placed upon property, then property would become absolutely valueless; and does it not follow that the more you increase the Income Tax in any way, even by a penny in the £, it does diminish the value of the property on which the Income Tax is charged, although it is charged evenly over all classes of property?—It diminishes the value of the property I should think; but if it is equally charged it would not diminish the relative values of different classes of property.

63,391. No, but it would diminish the actual value very considerably?—I should think it would, certainly, because an Income Tax of 10*s.* in the £ would be transferring half of the property in the country to the State, as it seems to me.

63,392. I understood it was contended that it made no difference in the value of property, not merely in the relative values but in the actual value of property, and that a tax practically ceased to be a tax so long as it was charged upon all properties equally; but you would not agree with that?

(*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Is there not a difference between a moderate tax of 4*d.* or 6*d.* in the £ and a tax of 10*s.* in the £?—There is the greatest possible difference in that, in fact, but I should not think there was in principle.

63,393. I am asking the question, because I have put it in the City sometimes to people whether an Income Tax on a particular stock of a very moderate amount made any difference in the selling value and they were unable to say that it did make any distinct difference; but that was because the tax was of a moderate amount?—Yes, but they do not make such nice calculations in the City.

Rateable and non-rateable railway property.

63,394. (*Mr. Dalton.*) As I understand, exception has been taken to the principle which you have adopted of dividing railway property between Non-rateable Property and Rateable Property; is it not the case that the gross estimated rental which you have put down

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here as the portion of railway property, which is rateable, is the only portion of railway property which, legally, can be rated at the present moment for local rates as the assessments stand?—Yes, I suppose so.

63,395. And that, on the contrary, railways pay to the Income Tax on their profits?—Certainly.

63,396. And that no property is rated on its profits for local purposes—it is rated on its hypothetical rent?—Yes.

63,397. A man in fixing the rent he will give for premises for trade purposes will certainly expect to take some profit for himself, for he will not carry on the business without the expectation of any profit; if he thinks he is going to make no profit he will not give a rent which will absorb all the receipts; is that not the case?—Yes.

63,398. Therefore the law of rating a property being totally distinct from the law of assessing Income Tax on property, the principle that you have gone upon of taking a certain part of the railway as Rateable Property—taking that part of the railway as the part which is legally liable to be rated, and taking the other which may be supposed to represent the profits as Non-rateable Property, is the only possible way of dividing them, and is a fair and proper way of dividing them?—I hold that it was the only possible way in which I could, on the instructions before me, have dealt with the matter at all. But I see some force in the argument which Sir Robert Giffen advances that you might regard the whole property of railways as rateable; if so, you must carry it a long way, and regard the whole property of a great many other things as rateable also, and not merely the rateable portion of them.

63,399. As a matter of fact ——?—They are not rated.

63,400. And cannot be rated under the existing law—that is, the profits cannot be?—No.

63,401. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) But as a matter of fact they pay the rates?—Yes.

63,402. (*Mr. Dalton.*) If that principle were adopted, and the whole of the railways were put down as Rateable Property, the result would be that the portion of the taxation you would be throwing upon them here would probably be larger, and the result of these tables then would be even more striking than it is, would it not?—It would be very easy to calculate what it would be, but I should not like to say anything about the result without making the calculation.

63,403. Take, for example, the manner in which you have divided railway property for Income Tax. You have assumed that a certain proportion of the Income Tax paid by railways is paid by Rateable Property, and a certain proportion by Non-Rateable; if you take the portion that you have taken as Non-Rateable and put it into the column for Rateable, you would thereby considerably increase the amount of taxation that you are charging to Rateable Property?—Certainly; but then, of course, you would also considerably increase the amount of property which bears that taxation.

63,404. Yes, but in the Death Duties you would be taking a very large amount across from Non-Rateable to Rateable. Would it be possible to have a supplementary statement showing what would be the effect of making this transfer; or do you think it so absolutely clear that a certain portion only is rateable, that it is not necessary to do so?—I am in the hands of the Commission on that point; it is a mere question of clerical labour.

Rateable and non-rateable canal property.

63,405. Then with regard to certain other properties that are included, that have been divided in the same way as railways; take, for example, canals; it is even clearer in that case, under a great number of Canal Acts, that a very small portion is rateable, than it is in the case of railways, because there are some canals under the old Acts which only pay rates upon the value of the canal as agricultural land, and that is provided for in their Local Acts; but, I suppose, it is perfectly clear that they all pay on their profits to the Income Tax?—Yes, they pay on their profits to the Income Tax.

Taxation in the £ on rateable and non-rateable property.

63,406. With regard to the figures in Table II. in which the difference of the pence in the £ is shown as between Rateable and Non-Rateable, I rather understood, from a question that the Chairman asked, that as between lands and other classes of Rateable Property, he thought the difference would come to about 200,000*l.* Taking the figures in the bottom line on Table II. Non-Rateable Property pays 14½*d.*, speaking roughly, and lands pay 19½*d.* That is a difference of 5*d.* in the £. I have made a calculation by which it appears that if the proportion paid by lands was reduced from 19½*d.* to 14½*d.*, they would pay 1,000,000*l.* less than they are paying at present; and some of the results are still more striking when we take the capital value. I find that if the Non-Rateable Property were charged at the same proportion of a penny in the £ as the lands, the result, as far as I can make out, would be that some 12,000,000*l.* of extra taxation would be levied from them. Could we have a statement supplementing this table showing in the first instance what would be the result of bringing down the taxation on lands from its present contribution to the contribution which is paid on Non-Rateable Property, and what would be the result of taxing the Non-Rateable Property in the same proportion as the lands, and other Rateable Property, because it appears to me that it is a question of millions. It looks very small on paper to have a decimal of a penny difference, but when you take the amounts on which it is levied, it mounts up to millions very quickly. Do you think anything could be done to add to the table in that respect?—Yes, I think that is also merely a question of labour; the material is all there.

63,407. I make out at present that if Non-Rateable Property and Other Rateable Property were charged at the same rate as lands on their annual value the result would be that 7½ millions more would be paid by them to Imperial Taxation, but if they were brought up in the same way to the level of lands on their capital value, they would contribute some 12 millions more than they do at present to Imperial Taxation. (*Viscount Cobham.*) The preparation of this information would not involve much labour, would it?—No, nothing very serious.

63,408. I should think it can be got out of the figures we have in these tables?—It can be. (*See* Appendix A. XXXIV.)

63,409. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I have had them calculated; and I only mentioned the point because it might be considered, from some questions which have been put to you, that the difference would be comparatively trifling. I should like the calculations made in order to show first of all what would be the result of bringing the lands and other rateable properties down to the Non-Rateable, and secondly, of bringing the Non-Rateable and other Rateable Properties up to the level of the lands. Have the questions which have been put to you raised any serious doubts in your mind as to the accuracy of this statement approximately?—None as to the substantial accuracy of the various calculations. As I say you may distribute these figures very differently and draw very different inferences from the way in which you distribute them. I think the calculations themselves have not been very much shaken except in one or two cases in which, as I said from the beginning, the material did not exist for making them accurate.

63,410. If these different alterations that have been suggested had been made in them, do you think that the result would have been to show that lands do not pay more in proportion to Imperial Taxation than other properties?—I think that if the Land Tax is taxation—I am not speaking now of the Redeemed Land Tax but of the Unredeemed Land Tax—if that is taxation then no distribution of figures can possibly alter the fact that land pays rather more than other forms of property; of course if it is not taxation, the case for land paying more falls to the ground. **Land tax.**

63,411. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) If the Land Tax, that is to say, is not to be treated as taxation?—Yes.

63,412. But to be treated, then, as what?—That I do not quite know; but there are other ways of regarding it. Personally, I think it is a tax, but you must not ask me. I know the view exists that it is not one.

63,413. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Your personal view would be that it is a tax?—Yes.

63,414. And that it is a tax which has of late years weighed very much more heavily on the land in many agricultural districts than ever it did before—its rate in the £ has gone up very considerably?—Certainly.

63,415. With regard to the Redeemed Land Tax there can be no doubt of the fact, I suppose, that huge sums have been paid by landowners for the purpose of getting exemption from that Land Tax, and that if the question as to the fairness of land bearing the same proportion **Redeemed land tax.**

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of taxation as other property is to be considered, it is impossible to leave out of account the fact that something between 20 and 30 millions have been expended for the purpose of exempting the landowners from that tax?—It is a question how far you are going into ancient history, I think.

63,416. Part of the history is modern?—Yes, a small part.

63,417. If no account is to be taken of the redemption, it has been very much to the disadvantage of the landowner to redeem the tax—that is if it is to be considered that the moment he has done so, or within a reasonable time after he has done so, he has gained no possible exemption of any kind by doing it, then the money spent on the redemption has been thrown away in fact?—He has gained the exemption.

63,418. He has paid for the permanent exemption, but it has to go for nothing in the future if we are to leave altogether out of consideration that the Land Tax has been redeemed; there is at any rate, no other case where the owner of Non-Rateable property has paid for exemption from taxation in any similar way, is there?—I do not call any case to mind.

63,419. I am not quite sure whether you said we should have these tables also for the year 1893-94—before the Finance Act came into force; would that mean more than a little clerical work?—It would mean more than a little.

Capital value of land and other property compared.

63,420. I suppose that the result which has been disclosed by these tables has been to a great extent unsuspected by anyone until the calculations have been made. Is it not very much owing to the fact that lands have been steadily going down in value, while the Land Tax has remained unaltered, and that on the other hand steadily and imperceptibly the Non-Rateable Property has been increasing in value? Do you think that if we had similar tables for a series of years they would not disclose the fact that the case as against the land has been getting worse and worse year by year?—That is so certain that I do not think it is worth having tables to prove it. I do not suppose anybody disputes that for a moment. The yield of land has been getting less, the number of years' purchase given for the rent of land has been getting less, and at the same time the number of years' purchase for the other large classes of property has been growing larger. The capital value of land as compared with other forms of property of course has been enormously altered in the last 20 or 30 years; I am sure Sir Robert Giffen will bear me out in that.

Effect of Finance Act upon taxation of land and non-rateable property.

63,421. One reason why it might be useful to have a return for 1893-4, would be that you would see what were the relative proportions of Imperial Taxation borne by lands and other properties before the Finance Act came into operation. Do you think from what you see in these tables, that the result might be that land before the Finance Act was passed, was already paying a larger proportion of Imperial Taxation than Non-Rateable Property?—The effect of the Finance Act, for the year under consideration, upon the relative payments of land and other forms of property, has not been considerable, and I do not think the results would be materially altered by taking the year 1893-4, instead of the year 1894-5.

63,422. If it was the case in the year 1893-4 that lands were paying more than Non-Rateable Property towards Imperial Taxation—and it would be the case, would it not, the Finance Act would not materially affect the results, because these tables show that they are paying considerably more?—Yes, I think it would have given substantially the same result for the previous year.

63,423. By the Finance Act a certain quantity of the new Death Duty was thrown upon lands, and was it not the popular idea that that was done because lands and Other Rateable Properties were not already paying their fair share to Imperial Taxation?—I have always understood that it was because they were not paying their fair share of the Death Duties.

63,424. The popular idea, I thought, was that they were not contributing their fair share to Imperial Taxation; should you not think that was the popular idea? Of course, if you equalise the Death Duties as between different classes of property, but leave the Land Tax, and the Inhabited House Duty solely a charge upon Rateable Property, so far as Imperial Taxation is concerned, as a whole, you are not equalising, but adding to the inequality. Would that not be the case?—I think when land was put on the same footing as other kinds of property for the Death Duties, it certainly was entitled to be relieved from any special charges there might be upon it for Imperial Taxation, if there are such special charges.

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Land tax.

63,425. Including the Land Tax, which is un-redeemed, and leaving out of the question for the moment the Redeemed Land Tax?—Including the Land Tax, if it is a tax.

63,426. Who is to settle whether it is a tax or not?—The Commission, I should think.

63,427. It is nominally a tax, it is a tax imposed by an Act of Parliament and the only reason that has been alleged, as I understand, why it is not a tax, is that it has been been paid for a great number of years; but would you hold the opinion that when a tax has been paid for a certain number of years it ceases to be a tax?—No; put like that, I should not certainly.

63,428. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Is it not the case that the payment of a tax for a long time does tend to equalise it all over the country, and that it is not borne by the particular property on which it happens to be charged?—I should not like to commit myself to an answer to that.

63,429. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Surely it must be borne by the property, because it may be larger than the whole value of the property. We have heard of cases where this Land Tax is 4*s.* in the £ in Essex, in some parts of which the land has gone out of cultivation; in these cases it has fallen on the property with the most disastrous results, and the land has gone out of cultivation. Does it not fall on property; because, how can it fall upon anything else? The result of having an excessive tax upon land may be, undoubtedly, to put it out of cultivation; would you not agree to that?—Yes.

63,430. In those cases, certainly, as soon as you have an excessive tax upon land it certainly falls upon the land, does not that follow?—I am afraid I must respectfully decline to be led into very difficult and intricate economic questions which do not directly concern me as head of the Inland Revenue.

63,431. I would not have asked a question upon it, but you were asked a great deal upon the point whether these taxes fall on land or not, and I thought that as one side of the subject had been put to you, it was only fair to put the other?—The ultimate incidence of taxation is one of the most complicated of problems. It has never been settled, I believe, yet who pays the rates.

Land tax and inhabited house duty.

63,432. Perhaps on that I may ask whether the Land Tax and the Inhabited House Duty are not taxes in the nature of rates?—What is a rate?

63,433. It is raised locally, so much in the £ upon certain Rateable Property. Would not your view be, with regard to the Land Tax and the Inhabited House Duty, that they are local rates raised for Imperial purposes?—According to my view they are taxes on property.

63,434. Do they differ in any essential respect from rates? Is not the Land Tax practically raised by a rate of so much in the £, to which Rateable Property only contributes; is there any distinction between that and the local rate which is raised for purposes of local taxation, except that the one is applied after you have raised it to local taxation and the other to Imperial taxation?—They are charges on different parties. The Land Tax is a charge on the landlord, and the rate is a charge on the tenant.

63,435. That is assuming that the rate falls upon the tenant about which we have heard a great deal. It has been argued by many that it falls partly on the owner and partly on the occupier, and some have gone so far as to assert that a very large proportion falls upon the owner. But whatever is the method of raising the rates, the Land Tax and the Inhabited House Duty are in the nature of rates, I think. The Inhabited House Duty, to take that for example, is paid by the occupier, I believe?—Yes.

63,436. In what respect does that differ from a rate?—As far as he is concerned, in none.

Inhabited house duty.

63,437. What was the object with which the Inhabited House Duty was imposed? Was it assumed to be a tax on means and substance?—I believe it was intended to be a sort of graduated tax on wealth, in a sense, so that a man would be taxed more highly according to the value of his house which is a kind of rough test of his general means.

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63,438. Then it was assumed in imposing the Inhabited House Duty that it entirely fell upon the occupier and it was assumed in that case that the occupier paid the whole of it?—Yes.

63,439. If it is true that the occupier bears the whole of it, in the case of the Inhabited House Duty, it would also be true that he bears the whole of a local rate?—Yes; in so far as he bears the one he bears the other, I think.

Window duty.

63,440. I understand that the Inhabited House Duty was imposed in 1850 in substitution for the Window Duty; could you tell us when the Window Duty was first imposed?—I do not remember, but I could easily find out.*

63,441-3. Is this an ancient tax in any way like the Land Tax?—I am afraid I do not remember when the Window Duty was imposed.

Taxation on land.

63,444. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How much is the increase in the taxation of land, if you take into account the 600,000*l.* increase in the Estate Duties, and then also make the deduction of one-eighth, I think it is, for Income Tax?—It would be about half a million on balance.

63,445. So that the one-eighth of the Income Tax represents about 100,000*l.* a year?—No, it represents more than that. But then you see there has been some increase already, though not a very great increase from the Estate Duty in the year under consideration.

Effect of Finance Act on taxation of land.

63,446. What would be the ultimate effect?—I think the ultimate effect of the changes of last year was to throw between 500,000*l.* and 600,000*l.* a year more upon land, after setting off relief against increased taxation.

63,447. How many years' purchase do you usually take upon property in valuation for Probate Duty?—That varies according to the class.

Valuation of land.

63,448. Upon land?—Land, you see, has not been valued for Probate Duty. We have only got the Estate Duty experience.

63,449. Then I will take it for the Estate Duty?—It has been an average of 18 years of the Income Tax gross assessment.

Taxation upon articles of consumption.

63,450. (*Mr. Everett.*) In your brief in paragraph two of part 1 you state that more than half the Imperial Taxation falls, not upon property at all, but upon articles of consumption, such as tea, tobacco, spirits and beer; that is a fact, I believe?—Yes.

63,451. Half your taxable revenue comes from articles of consumption, not from property?—More than half.

Probate duty.

63,452. Then going to the "Death Duties," in the latter part of the second paragraph, is there not an error when you are speaking about the Probate Duty. "It should, however, always be borne in mind that "this sum, which amounted in 1894-95 to 2,140,000*l.* "(in future years it will probably be greater, say two "and a half millions) though raised from all property, "is devoted exclusively to the relief of Rateable "Property. It is raised, as will be seen hereafter, in "the proportion of 73·5 per cent. from Rateable to "26·5 per cent. from Non-Rateable." It should be exactly the reverse, should it not? Is that not a misprint?—Yes, it should be exactly the reverse.†

Schedule A.

63,453. Then I turn to the second table. The Chairman has already, to some extent, anticipated me there. You give there the amount of Schedule A. for 1893-94; that is what came into force I imagine on January 1st, 1894?—Yes.

Income tax assessments and value of land compared.

63,454. The Schedule A. assessment on lands actually amounted to 49,000,000*l.* You have admitted to the chairman that that probably is very considerably in excess of the Annual Value of lands at the present moment?—Not very considerably; if I said that I overstated it. They are continually decreasing, but I do not think the decrease is very large.

63,455. I have been sitting the last two days to hear appeals, in the county of Suffolk, as regards the County Rate basis. We have to spread the County Rate on the most equal ground we can find over the whole area of the county, and the rateable figures in the different unions being based on different lines we took Schedule A. of the Income Tax, according to the latest return that we could get, which is the same that you have used in your table. The appellants who came before us pointed out to us that in many cases in the time that has elapsed since that return the rental of land had gone down 50 per cent. There is no doubt that that is so in a county like Suffolk; the value of land since the 1st of January 1894 has gone down enormously, and in another year's time it will have gone down another enormous stride?—50 per cent. in one year?

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63,456. Yes?—That must be a very rare and exceptional case. I take the blackest view of the position of agriculture, but I cannot think that that is common.

63,457. Numbers of rents which have come to be re-set after January 1st, 1894, have been reduced one half?—*A propos* of Suffolk, might I point out to you that our assessment has gone down in 15 years from 1,500,000*l.* to 900,000*l.*

63,458. And I have no doubt that will go down another 400,000*l.* soon?—But Suffolk, of course, is one of the worst counties; Essex is another.

63,459. It would apply also to Norfolk, Cambridge, Huntingdonshire, and partly to Lincolnshire, I should think?—To part of Norfolk, I should say, not to the whole of it.

63,460. At any rate I wish to get this fact emphasized that this 49,000,000*l.*, which was under Sechedule A., was at the time probably set in excess of the actual value of the lands, and that since then the value of land has greatly declined, so that while the amount of Imperial Taxation levied remains the same the income of the land is considerably less. The general effect of the alteration would be to make your 19*d.* probably 21*d.* or 22*d.* as the taxation on the annual income of land. You would, I think, agree generally that at any time Schedule A. represents the very full of the value of the land, it is very much higher than that at which the Unions assess the land; it is an extreme figure?—I do not think that I can admit that it is extreme; I think it is assessed by people who have the best possible knowledge and no interest in over-assessing.

63,461. It is assessed generally, I believe, by the surveyor of taxes, and it is only revised if appealed against and people are rather slow to take the trouble of appealing; at least that has been my observation. At any rate in a time when the value of land is rapidly declining the Schedule A. of a year ago would represent a considerably higher value than the present to-day value?—Yes, for the reason which I have already stated which is that people do not directly reduce their rents when a bad year comes. They give an abatement. They do not pay Income Tax on the money they have given up, but Schedule A. remains unaltered. Perhaps they give abatements for several years, at the end of that time they get a new tenant. Then they have to reduce their rent, and then Schedule A. is for the first time altered. So that Schedule A. certainly is at the time of falling rents always rather higher than the actual rent received.

63,462. And with the very exceptionally rapid fall of lands that we have been having, it is usually in excess of to-day's value I expect, the effect of which would be that the extra burden of Imperial Taxation on land represents a still larger figure to-day than what you give here?—No, I beg your pardon. This is very important. I am giving here the actual amount paid. If you were to charge 8*d.* in the £, which is the present Income Tax, on the assessment, you would find that you would get a much larger figure than is actually put down in this paper. I am telling you in this paper what the land actually pays, and not what it would pay if it was charged 8*d.* in the £ on the assessment. That is important to observe.

63,463. The figure would not be very much altered if you take to-day's value of the land?—It would not be very much altered; the capital value might be, but not the tax paid.

Effect of excise licences upon value of property.

63,464. I was speaking of the taxes paid, and the annual value of the land. Sir Robert Giffen put to you a question as to whether you had taken note of Excise charges, that is, licenses as a tax upon the value of property; now is it not the case that the licensing system adds enormously to the value of property instead of taking from it? In regard to the drink trade at any rate that is so, for directly a property gets a licence, and becomes liable to pay for a licence, the capital value of it is trebled or quadrupled?—Of course the value of a property is often increased by the fact of its having a licence.

* The Window Tax became a separate duty in 1747. A house tax based on the number of windows in each house was imposed in 1696.
† The misprint in Appendix A. XXXIII. has been corrected.

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63,465. Instead of its acting as a burden, it acts as a very great addition to the value. Then in regard to the land tax, you are aware I have not doubt, that the land tax was formerly practically a property and income tax?—Yes.

Land tax.

63,466. And that rather less than a century ago it was made a fixed amount on every parish with a view to having it redeemed, because the Government wanted a lot of money. I imagine the making of that change did not really alter the incidence of the tax at all or the nature of it; the amount of it was limited, but it remained still what it had been, namely, a tax on the land?—Yes.

63,467. But a tax stereotyped, and in spite of that tax stereotyped upon the land, the land has since had to carry Income Tax in common with other forms of property; it has been dealt with, except as to the actual amount of the tax itself, as if it were not taxed. So it has really been carrying two Income Taxes—the old stereotyped Income Tax called Land Tax, and the new modern Income Tax altering from year to year?—Of course Income Tax is charged on the rent of the land after deduction of the Land Tax.

Mr. Goschen's report and witness' statement upon local taxation compared.

63,468. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would say that it is of some importance that we should bring our various materials on this matter into line; and the question I want to ask you is in relation to Mr. Goschen's report upon Local Taxation in which certain calculations are made as to the then incidence of Imperial Taxation on land. I am aware, in the first instance, that the statement you have put in to-day bases your calculations on a division, not between real and personal, but between Rateable and Non-Rateable Property?—Yes.

63,469. As I understand Mr. Goschen's calculations in his report on Local Taxation, his calculations of the Imperial Taxation which falls on Real Property are based somewhat on the same lines as your own. The question I want to ask you is whether you could briefly state to us the differences between the basis on which Mr. Goschen arrived at those results in 1870 and the basis on which you arrive at your results now. Mr. Goschen's calculation is based on an Income Tax of 4*d.* in the £, but supposing the alteration in the Income Tax to be made, his total of the taxes falling on Real Property at that time would have been 7,863,000*l.*, but it is actually put at 5,677,000*l.*; and your figures for the Imperial Taxation paid by Lands and other Rateable Property amount to nearly double that, namely, 13,616,000*l.*?—Yes, because by taking Rateable Property I have brought in railways, mines, quarries, and so on, which he was excluding in his calculation and treating as Personalty. If you were to follow Sir Robert Giffen's principle and bring in, not only the portion of railways which I have included, but the whole, you would get results still more unlike Mr. Goschen's calculation in 1870. I do not know that I make myself clear but this is rather important.

63,470. It is very important. I was going to suggest that it is so important that, perhaps, it would be desirable if you could put a brief addendum to your statement setting out the points in which your calculation differs from Mr. Goschen's?—Yes, I could do that, but I think it is all in the notes already. If anybody were to read the two side by side it would be apparent where my calculation differs from Mr. Goschen's. There are a number of small differences, but the big difference is this, that he is speaking of taxes falling on Real Property; and in Real Property, he does not include either the Real Property of public companies, or firms, or railways, canals, mines, waterworks, gas works, and all that great class of property which you see distinguished in any Income Tax return under Schedule D. from the other property which is under Schedule D. All this is excluded in Mr. Goschen's calculation.

63,471. That makes a big item of difference?—Yes, it does.

63,471*a*. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Then there are the Death Duties, too?—He does take them into account.

63,472. I mean the additional Death Duties?—Of course the moment I bring in all that mass of Rateable Property which is not in the ordinary sense of the word Realty or, at any rate, which is not charged separately as Realty, I have to bring in all the taxation upon it which includes a considerable portion of the Death Duties; and I again point out that if the other principle is followed of treating the whole of the property of the railways as rateable you would then again largely increase the Rateable Capital, and very largely increase the taxation of it.

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63,473. (*Mr. Channing.*) In the first place, you have to add the additional taxation in respect of the Death Duties, and, in the second place, you have to add a still larger item—a very much larger item—in respect of all these other classes of property like railways, and so on?—Yes.

63,474. A good deal of the total amount paid by Real Property or Rateable Property depends very much upon whether you consider property of the class of railways in the nature of Personalty or in the nature of Realty?—Yes.

63,475. That is the effect of the argument as compared with the argument based on previous calculations?—Yes. I would point out that it is easy to exaggerate the difference which would be made in the proportions borne by Rateable Property and Non-Rateable Property from the transfer of an item from one side to the other. You transfer the item, but you also transfer the duty it pays, so in calculating what proportion of the value the added duty represents, while you have swollen one element of the calculation, you must remember that you have almost equally swollen the other, so that really the disturbance in the proportion may not be so great, though the figures may be wholly altered.

63,476. Still it remains the fact, does it not, that whereas you have got in your Table 1, 13,616,000*l.* paid by this Rateable Property and 13,744,000*l.* paid by the Non-Rateable Property, that a very large proportion of that first figure, paid by the Rateable, is paid by Property which, it is in dispute among economists, whether it should be classed as Personal or Real?—No, not that.

63,477. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is not the dispute merely whether there is sufficient in the column of Rateable? Nobody denies that railways are rateable. I thought the question was whether more should not be added to that column, and whether you should not put the whole of the railways there. I do not understand that anybody has questioned the fact that every item which appears in that column as taxes borne by Rateable Property should be entered there; the only question is whether it should be added to, is that not so?—That is the only point that has been raised to-day.

Realty and personalty contrasted with rateable and non-rateable property.

63,478. (*Lord Rendel.*) I think the point which is raised now by Mr. Channing, and which I consider to be a very interesting one, is whether Mr. Goschen's discrimination as between Realty and Personalty was not a sounder basis, or was not a basis which was capable of perhaps better defence, than the discrimination on which the whole of these tables rest between Rateable and Non-Rateable Property?—On that I have a very strong opinion.

63,479. I hope you will give it?—I think the distinction between Realty and Personalty absolutely worthless for the purposes of any economic discussion.

63,480. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) It is a purely legal distinction?—Purely legal.

63,481. And means nothing economically?—That is so. I think the distinction between Rateable and Non-Rateable, or rather as I should prefer to put it between *mobilia* and *immobilia*, is a real economic distinction.

63,482. Mr. Goschen's distinction was really not between Realty and Personalty in the legal sense, but it put on one side land and houses as Realty?—Yes.

63,483. That was not the legal distinction?—No. That is a distinction you may well make. You may distinguish on the one hand between land and houses and All Other Property; that is valuable economically. Or you may distinguish *immobilia*, that is to say, land, houses, railways, canals, and so on, and *mobilia*; that is a valuable distinction economically. But the distinction between Realty and Personalty is not valuable economically.

63,484. (*Lord Rendel.*) In this sense may there not be some interest attaching to the distinction? I gather from these tables that an important point sought to be elicited or elucidated is that Rateable Property bears not only a somewhat higher proportion than Non-Rateable Property, but that *quâ* Rateable Property it has a very large local taxation to bear in addition?—Yes.

63,485. From which Non-Rateable Property is exempt and underlying the whole tables is that fact behind?—Yes.

63,486. Now, if we come to the distinction between Realty and Personalty, may it not have some economic bearing in this, that a very large proportion of property

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which is here described as Rateable and also as Non-Rateable is also subject to a most important branch of taxation, that is Customs and Excise. There may be some 1,600,000,000*l.* or 200,000,000*l.* of property here in the form of a wage fund property, that is to say, ironworks and industries of all kinds which largely pay, I admit indirectly, but which very largely find the labour fund, and, therefore, find the food taxes, which are enormously more important than those taxes which are under consideration in the tables. So I would like to suggest to you whether this point has been considered, that the discrimination between Non-Rateable and Rateable Property brings in an enormous mass of property which, unlike land, is paying indirectly to the larger proportion of our total taxation. Have I made my point clear?—Yes. But then wages, or any other earnings, everything, in fact, except property, is out of the table altogether.

63,487. Yes, and so I admit is local taxation, but local taxation is behind this table?—Yes, I think it is.

Taxation upon wages.

63,488. And ought not wages to be behind the table too?—No, I think wages are not taxed either locally or Imperially.

63,489. Surely it is an industry tax that is raised through the Customs and Excise?—No, it is a tax on the consumer, is it not? The consumer pays it.

63,490. The consumer is the industrial?—Yes. He may pay out of wages, but the duties are not taxes on wages.

63,491. Surely the base of the pyramid which represents that taxation is enormous as compared with the apex, and it is all common industry?—Yes, but I cannot hold that Customs and Excise can be regarded in any sense as a tax on property or on income derived from property.

63,492. Only indirectly if you bring within property under this description of Rateable and Non-Rateable all the iron industries and shipping industries?—Only for profit.

63,493. But the profits are charged with this tax?—They are charged with the tax after wages have been paid. When the ironmaster or the shipbuilder has paid all his wages, and other expenses of his business, there remains a certain balance, we will hope, for himself; that is what he is charged on, and all the money he has distributed in wages and so forth, does not come into our Income Tax at all.

63,494. Then in capitalising, you have capitalised solely on profits?—Yes.

Capitalisation of industrial profits.

63,495. Surely then you have made a very high capitalisation; surely the capitalisations of 20 years that I see here would be somewhat difficult to defend if they rested wholly on the capitalisation of profits?—I do not think so.

63,496. There must be a capitalisation surely on floating capital on industrial enterprise on the whole of the organization of labour to justify a 20 years' capitalisation?—I must say I should not have thought so.

63,497. I was only desirous of getting your opinions?—My intention of course was to exclude wages entirely.

63,498. I do not wish to express an opinion of my own, but only to call attention to that side of the question?—That is certainly the basis of the calculation—to exclude wages entirely.

Incidence of income tax upon terminable annuities.

63,499. May I go to one other small point about terminable annuities: do you consider that terminable annuities pay Income Tax upon capital as well as profit?—I am really not sure how terminable annuities are dealt with for Income Tax.

63,500. In point of fact they do, I think, pay upon their whole annual amount from beginning to end?—Yes, they do.

63,501. As the aggregate of the annual amounts must include the principal, they pay upon principal as well as upon income?—Yes.

63,502. I think the terminable annuities at present current amount to something like 60,000,000*l.*?—Yes, the amount is very large, but most of them are out of the Income Tax charge because they are held by public departments.

63,503. The public departments save themselves when they are the holders of the annuities, but they charge when they are the payers?—The terminable annuities held by public departments are not charged to Income Tax.

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63,504. But those that are held by private individuals are?—Those which are held by the public are.

63,505. You would not uphold that as fair equal dealing on the part of the State, would you?—Yes, I think so; I do not see why the State should charge itself anything.

Economic distinction between land and other property.

63,506. I want to ask you a question with reference to the distinction between Realty and Personalty, and you will forgive me if it is perhaps a question on rather a matter of theory than of fact. Do you admit for economic purposes any distinction between land as land and other forms of property? The question of the Land Tax has been referred to, and you, I understand, have stated that there is much difference of opinion as to whether the Redeemed Land Tax should be charged as a debit against property in hand?—Yes.

63,507. Because of course the current Land Tax is an admitted debit?—I should admit it myself, but I believe it is disputed. I mean to say it is affirmed that it is not a tax.

Land tax.

63,508. And you have not included tithe?—I have not included tithe.

63,509. So there is some principle under which you do not include tithe, but yet have included Land Tax?—"Imperial Taxation"; that was in the reference.

63,510. I am afraid I have been thinking of the burdens on land?—The burdens on land are a different thing. The reference was to Imperial Taxation, and Tithe is not Imperial Taxation.

63,511. So that Tithe is to be added to Local Taxation as one of the burdens that are behind these tables?—Yes.

63,512. Taking the Land Tax, do you set aside the old, perhaps obsolete, theories as to hereditary burdens on land?—I have tried to avoid being drawn into any discussion of that theory.

63,513. You do not look upon the State in any sense as a superior lord or superior owner of land?—No.

63,514. But you treat land as being as fully the property of the individual as any other form for this purpose?—Yes, I do.

Tithe.

63,515. (*Mr. Channing.*) In your papers are lands treated as including tithes as they are in Mr. Goschen's report?—Yes, that is to say, the value of the tithe is included in the value of the land as charged to Income Tax.

63,516. In that sense it comes in?—The tithe is not in the taxation, that is what I mean.

63,517. Not in the taxation, but it is in the value?—Yes.

Imperial and local taxation jointly considered.

63,518. (*Mr. Dalton.*) As reference has been made to Mr. Goschen's Report, may I ask you whether you concur with this paragraph in it: "Any view of the "burdens imposed upon Real Rroperty by Local "Taxation is incomplete, unless the case of Real "Property, as regards Imperial Taxation, is worked "out at the same time." Substituting Rateable Property for Real Property, should you agree with that statement of Mr. Goschen?—Yes.

63,519. In looking into the question of local taxation, our inquiry will be incomplete unless the case of Rateable and Non-Rateable Properties as regards Imperial Taxation is worked out at the same time?—I think so.

Incidence of taxation on land.

63,520. Then I notice that on the same page of Mr. Goschen's report, in which he says that, he uses a phrase to which great exception has been taken by Sir Robert Giffen to-day; he speaks of the taxes "falling on" Real Property. We have at any rate Mr. Goschen's authority for using that phrase, and I think you said you did not consider it an improper phrase?—No, it is a phrase that I should naturally use myself. I should say that the Income Tax on land fell on Rateable Property, fell on land.

The witness withdrew.

Adjourned to to-morrow at 12 o'clock.

(For Sir Alfred Milner's further evidence, *see* page 503.)

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One Hundred and Sixteenth Day.

Friday, November 22, 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

VISCOUNT COBHAM.
The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
The Right Hon. WALTER HUME LONG, M.P.
Sir ROBERT NIGEL FITZHARDINGE KINGSCOTE, K.C.B.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.

FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACY EVERETT, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Assistant Secretaries.*

Mr. W. C. Little.
22 Nov. 1895.

Mr. WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, a member of the Commission, further examined.

(For previous evidence, *see* page 456.)

Mr. W. C. Little.
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Increased expenditure in Wisbech Union.

63,521. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think in answer to Question 62,822, in which the Chairman asked whether you could assign "any reasons in your own case why you have "not benefited from the general decrease," you stated that you could not; but I think in your subsequent evidence, you gave certain facts which point to some reasons why you have not gained in the way that other districts have. In the first place, I understand, the Wisbech Union is one in which a very large amount of outdoor relief is given?—Yes.

63,522. Altogether an exceptional amount? — I believe so.

63,523. I find that for the last year, more than half the total expenditure on the poor in the Wisbech Union was given in outdoor relief, whereas if you take the average of the whole country, the proportion is about one-fourth; therefore you are in a somewhat exceptional union to start with, with regard to the relief of the poor?—Yes.

63,524. You are also in a county in which a very considerable increase has taken place in the county rate?—That is so.

63,525. I think that mere increase accounts for nearly 5*d.* in the £?—Yes, the county rate has increased by that.

63,526. Your highway rate has practically not gone down?—The highway rate has fallen very little indeed. I think I ought to say perhaps that the highways have been improved; as I said last Friday the main roads have. There has been a continual process of improvement going on.

63,527. But those are three causes which to a great extent explain why your union has not benefited so much as other unions in other parts of the country?—Yes, I think that they are the principal reasons.

63,528. I am not quite clear as to whether your farm is not also in the the Borough of Wisbech?—No, it is not.

63,529. You were speaking of a different farm then?—I was speaking of another farm, I have an interest in property in the borough, but I do not farm any land in the borough.

63,530. Is your farm in any urban district?—No.

63,531. Then those would be the three exceptional causes which have obtained in your union?—Yes, we have no school board rate and we have had no heavy sanitary rate.

Variation of rates.

63,532. To that extent you have been fortunate. Then the Chairman pointed out that there was very great irregularity in the amounts of the rates in different years, and you explained that there was nothing extraordinary in that, because the rates are very irregularly paid, and that is why you have not compared single years and why you think it is always dangerous to do so?—Yes.

63,533. But you would agree, would you not, that although that may be true as regards a particular parish it is not the case in taking the local taxation returns of the country as a whole? You would not find in one year as compared with another if you take the whole of the 16,000 parishes in the country that there was any great irregularity in the payments?—Of course the broader the basis on which your statistics are taken the less error there is between one year and another. I think that there are fluctuations, as you may see in comparing the total results between one year and another. By taking an average of three years you are always I think more likely to get at the real direction which things are taking either upwards or downwards than by taking a single year.

63,534. Irregularities in the payment of the rates such as three half year's rates falling due in one year and one in the next, could never apply to general statistics over a large number of parishes?—I do not think they would; but the Chairman asked me about a particular instance and he seemed to think it could not occur.

63,535. I am not finding fault in any way with what you said upon it, but I was anxious to draw that distinction between the statistics for the whole country, and the statistics for a particular parish. You would agree that that irregularity does not occur in the same way in the general statistics?—No, I quite agree there.

Incidence of rates.

63,536. I am taking the points in the order of the questions, and perhaps that is the most convenient way. At Question 62,907, you quoted from a draft report of Mr. Goschen to the Select Committee on Local Taxation on the question of how far the owner, and how far the occupier pays the rates; you are aware that that report was not adopted by the Committee?—I believe it was not.

63,537. I do not know whether you entirely acquiesce in the statement in that draft report upon the subject?—No, I do not. I put it forward as the strongest statement of that side of the question, but I do not agree that rates are fully taken into account in hiring a farm.

63,538. You would say that the passage in which it is stated that, "in the case of leases the average burden of "past rates invariably enters into account with other "outgoings." is putting the case too strongly?—I think so, certainly. Practically the calculation is not made.

63,539. At any rate it is not invariably made?—Certainly not.

State subventions.

63,540. Then on the question of subventions being given in aid of local taxation. I think nobody denies that in the first instance the tenant gets the benefit of them?—Of course he would.

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63,541. He gets the bird in the hand, and the two birds in the bush may be got hereafter by the landlord or may not be; in some cases they may, and in some they may not?—They might at some future time.

63,542. There is no certainty that they will then, unless the land is rack rented?—No. There was no revision of rent in 1890 and 1891, because the rates went down; in fact in my whole experience, I have only known of one single case where the rent was raised because rates had been decreased, and where that was made specifically the reason for raising the rent. That was in a parish which was benefited by the Union Chargeability Act. In the case of a small farm there, belonging to a tradesman in the town, the rent was increased on the ground that the rates had diminished. That is the only case that I ever came across in my life where the rent was raised specifically for that reason.

63,543. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) About what time was that?—1866.

63,544. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How much was the rent raised can you say?—I could not tell you that. I know the occupier told me that his landlord said to him, "You "are going to save so many pounds a year by this "Union Chargeability Act, and unless you give me "that, I shall give you notice to quit."

63,545. So that he practically took the amount of the increase?—Yes. But that, as I say, in my experience is the only case where the fall of rates has been the ostensible cause, specifically assigned for raising rent.

63,546. (*Lord Rendel.*) That might have been a very extreme case in its economic effect?—Do you mean that there was a very large reduction?

63,547. Under the Union Chargeability Act in some cases, there might be very considerable alteration?—There were very considerable alterations.

63,548. It was under the pressure of an extreme case possibly?—There were a great many more cases like it, but this was the only one I ever heard of where the rent was raised in consequence.

63,549. (*Mr. Dalton.*) In the other cases which occurred at the time of this extreme case, you did not hear of any alteration being made in the rent in consequence?—No, I did not hear of any other rents being raised because the burden was decreased. Of late years, amongst many things the tenants have had to urge, as reasons for the reduction of rent, the question of the rates has been mentioned, and must be supposed to be taken into account; but if you consider that very generally, on large estates, the reduction has been a per-centage, without any regard to rates which particular farms and particular parishes bore, you will see that it is not a nice calculation of how much the rates are, or how much they have increased or decreased; it does not enter into the question of rent to any great extent.

63,550. The past subventions have from time to time increased; sometimes they have increased rapidly and sometimes slowly; can you find any evidence anywhere that the landlord has got the benefit of those subventions?—Certainly not in existing tenancies or with old tenants. I should not be prepared to say that a landlord might not take advantage of an improvement, particularly if he were a grasping landlord. He might get some advantage from reduced rates in letting to a fresh tenant, but I doubt very much whether, while the tenant remains on the farm, the question enters into the rent at all.

Subventions.

63,551. Considerable additional subventions were given in 1889 on the passing of the Local Government Act?—Yes.

63,552. You have had very considerable experience in rentals of land; have you in those cases seen any evidence at all of rents having been raised in consequence of the large additional subventions that were given in that year?—No, but I think I ought to say that the times have been such when rent could not be raised under any circumstances.

63,553. Would that not be the same case now if any subventions were given?—Yes.

63,554. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Would the remissions of rent have been quite the same, supposing these subventions had not been granted?—I do not think it has entered into the calculation at all.

63,555. (*Mr. Everett.*) Perhaps you noticed that in the spring of this year, Mr. Goschen estimated that the subvention given under that Act, relieved land to the extent of 6*d.* an acre; is that an amount large enough to be likely to have entered much into the calculation of rent between landlord and tenant?—No, I am sure it has not.

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63,556. (*Mr. Dalton.*) That was the largest additional subvention given at any particular time, was it not?—Yes, I think it was.

63,557. And so far as you are aware it has not affected practically the rents in any way?—I think not.

63,558. Therefore, as regards past subventions you would say that any benefit which has been derived from them has been derived by the tenants?—I think so.

63,559. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Then you also say the benefit is very small?—When a farmer's action is criticised he is always told that he does not pay attention to small things, and that he ought to address himself to small economics, but when he wants taxation taken off he is told "it is so small you need not care about it." However small it is, I can assure you there are a great many farmers who would be very grateful for even 6*d.* per acre.

Inequality of rates on land.

63,560. (*Mr. Long.*) Is it not rather fallacious to ask whether reductions caused by subventions are great or small owing to the fact that the questioner is thinking of the general agricultural depression, whereas the agriculturist has regard only to the burden of the rate which he considers excessive apart from the amount of relief that may be given to him?—The ratepayer in the rural districts certainly feels that he is taxed inordinately for objects in which he has very little interest, and he derives some satisfaction from any assistance which the State may give, and from any reduction, however small, in the rate.

63,561. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Apart from the amount of relief and the pecuniary benefit that he derives from it, he, at the present time, whether rightly or wrongly, considers that he is unjustly treated?—He does certainly.

63,562. And the sense of injustice is not mitigated in any way by the fact that a very large sum is not at stake?—No.

63,563. His complaint is that he is unjustly treated, and the question to be decided is not so much whether removing that injustice will put him in funds, but whether or not the injustice does really exist?—I think that the argument which I should maintain is that, quite apart from any increase of the burden, or any absolute increase in the rates, we complain of an injustice; we feel an injustice in having to pay for many things which are thrown upon us. I should like to quote Adam Smith's theory of just Taxation. Adam Smith says: "The subjects of every State ought to "contribute towards the support of the Government as "nearly as possible in proportion to their several "abilities, that is, in proportion to the revenue which "they respectively enjoy under the protection of the "State." I do not suppose that that is intended to imply that all persons should pay the same per-centage on their income to the State, but I take it to mean that equal incomes, from whatever source they are derived, should pay at an equal rate for all public purposes, whether through Imperial taxation or local taxation.

Sir Henry Fowler's and Mr. Goschen's Reports. Rates in urban and rural districts.

63,564. I should like to ask next some questions with regard to your criticisms of Sir Henry Fowler's Report. Your evidence on that, begins at Question 62,936. I think you complain of certain figures in Mr. Goschen's report being embodied in Sir Henry Fowler's. You are aware of course, that Mr. Goschen's report was made at a time very much nearer than we are now to the years to which the tables related, that the figures were gone into very carefully by Mr. Goschen, and that Sir Henry Fowler's report, which was merely a continuation of Mr. Goschen's, necessarily adopted Mr. Goschen's figures without criticism?—Yes.

63,565. I may say that although they were adopted without criticism, and I think properly so, that was not done until after they had been examined; therefore though it may appear impertinent in me to do so, I wish to go into the criticisms that you have made of Mr. Goschen's figures. You would agree, in the first instance, I presume, that Sir Henry Fowler had no alternative but to take those figures?—I did not hold him responsible for them.

63,566. As I put them in before the Commission in my evidence, I think I am bound to substantiate those

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figures which I have put in, and on which I think you have thrown some doubt. You begin by giving the number of urban districts which are very small?—Small in population.

63,567. But large in number?—And large in area.

63,568. Large in area, but small in the aggregate amount of the rates collected there. What I want to point out with regard to that is that neither Mr. Goschen nor Sir Henry Fowler professes to give the amount of rates raised in urban and rural districts. They took the rural rates of the country as a whole, and urban rates as a whole, and in dealing, for example, with the poor rate they drew no distinction between urban and rural districts outside of London. They took the average poor rate for the relief of the poor for the whole of the country, and did not attempt to say whether it was higher in urban or in rural districts?—I admit that.

63,569. Our Chairman has put in figures from certain rural unions with the view of showing that the expenditure in those rural unions has diminished and not increased. (*See* Vol. III. of Evidence, page 558, *and Appendix I. of this volume.*) Sir Henry Fowler drew no such distinction, and I think you will admit that no hardship was done to the rural districts by taking them with the urban districts in the rate for the relief of the poor as a whole. It is exceedingly difficult to divide the two, because there are very few unions that have not got an urban district in them, and whether it is technically an urban district or not does not always make any very great difference. But you would admit that no injustice was done, and that the case was not in any way overstated as regards rural rates when the average for the relief of the poor was taken to be the same for urban and rural districts outside London as the urban rates were?—I do not think I complained of the statement, but I complained of the inference which would be drawn from the whole report. I said that one would gather from it the impression that urban districts, included only town populations and town ratepayers, and that rural districts really represented the case of the farmer and landowner with respect to rates. When we are told that urban rates have greatly increased, and that rural rates have decreased, I say that you must consider that many of these urban rates fall upon agricultural land. That is all that I maintain. I point out that there are a great number of these urban districts, which include a large quantity of agricultural land, and that they bear rates, and I say they have not benefited by this decrease in the rural rates which you show.

63,570. The course taken by Mr. Goschen and Mr. Fowler, was to take as I say, the poor rate for the relief of the poor on the average for the country outside London, giving the same average to an urban as to a rural district; so far you do not think that rural districts were unfairly treated?—No, I do not.

63,571. Our Chairman, as you know, maintains that they are lower in rural than they are in urban unions?—Yes.

63,572. Sir Henry Fowler attempted to draw no such distinction, and I think throughout the whole of his report, he intended where there was any doubt to give the benefit of it to the rural districts—I know those were the instructions given by him for the preparation of the figures. As far as the poor rate is concerned you would agree that that was a fair way of doing it?—Yes, it was a fair way, though I still maintain that average results are all very well for statisticians, but they leave out of sight the grievous hardships which individuals suffer; they minimise.

63,573. I do not think there is anything in Sir Henry Fowler's Report anywhere, to the effect that there is no rural district in which the rates have not risen, or that there is no urban district in which they have not gone down?—I know that it is not so stated.

63,574. It is not implied, I think?—I say that average results do minimise the extent to which individuals are affected.

Poor relief.

63,575. I want to go through the different rates that he has taken separately, and then to ask you whether there is any way in which you think they could have been more fairly taken to the rural districts. Now with regard to the relief of the poor, you would admit that the rural districts have not been unfairly treated?—I should think not.

County rate.

63,576. With regard to the county rate, you would say the same, I presume, for the county rate is laid over the whole county?—Yes.

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63,577. Then we come to the highway rate, which is an exclusively rural rate; that, of course, is assigned exclusively to rural districts, and there was no other way of dealing with that?—I do not know, I am sure, how it was in 1841; whether in urban districts they then had a highway rate.

Highway rate.

63,578. I mentioned in my evidence, that the earlier highway rate returns were to a certain extent curiously prepared. They clearly do not include all the urban highway rates, and they include a few of them in the most eccentric fashion, but I do not think the total amounts so included come to anything much. Since 1868, that is for the period which Sir Henry Fowler's report refers to, the highway rates have certainly been exclusively rural highway rates, and have always appeared so in the local taxation returns—they have been highway rates levied in rural districts?—Yes.

School board rate.

63,579. What Sir Henry Fowler did with them was to assign those to rural districts, as there was no other way of dealing with them. Then when you come to rural school boards a careful calculation was made. The rates were gone through parish by parish, and again the benefit of the doubt, where there was a district partly urban and partly rural, was undoubtedly given to the rural parish. I must ask whether you have examined the returns, and whether you doubt them?—I do not doubt that; in fact, I accepted it, but I say that a bald statement in a report which can be dealt with by newspapers, which asserts that the average school rate is only 2*d.* in the £, does lead the public to suppose that the school rate is a very small burden, whereas in some places, as I have said, it is as much as 2*s.* 11*d.* or 3*s.* in the £.

63,580. But I may venture to say that it was not a bald statement of that kind. I have read it out both in my examination and in your's, and I think you will agree that Sir Henry Fowler put it fairly?—I think it is stated fairly here.

63,581. That is the only place in which it occurs?—The newspapers do not take the trouble to give all the qualifying circumstances. They take out the statement that the charge was so much.

63,582. Is the report to blame for that?—No, I do not know that it is, but I am attacking inferences which are drawn from this report.

Rural sanitary rates.

63,583. The next point was that of rural sanitary rates; were not those properly assigned to rural districts?—Yes, I suppose they would be.

63,584. And all the urban rates were properly assigned to urban districts?—Of course there were no rural sanitary authorities in 1841.

63,585. I am speaking from 1868, and for the purposes of Sir Henry Fowler's report?—I was going to say that in those earlier times the sanitary regulations were carried out by the courts of the lords of the manor in many places. I think Mr. Elton will confirm me.

Comparison of rates.

63,586. Can you suggest any other method of treating these rates, when you are to get at the general average, than treating them in the way in which they were treated. Can you suggest any fairer method?—No, I cannot; and I have not the information at my command that you have at the Local Government Board, but I say that if you can show defects in a comparison, it is fallacious and misleading.

63,587. Have you shown any defects in this comparison? I mean for the purpose of getting at the average result, for nothing more was aimed at?—The average result may be right; I took the case of 1841.

Urban and rural rates compared.

63,588. I will go very fully into the case of 1841; on page 71 of Mr. Goschen's Report the rates, which as you say, amounted on an average to 2*s.* 7*d.* in the £, are all set out. The first, is the poor rate, which is 6,351,000*l.*; the next is the church rate, 506,000*l.*; the next the highway rate, 1,169,000*l.*, and the only remaining rates are certain metropolitan rates which are put down in the Table at 82,000*l.*, but to which I will refer again afterwards. You would admit, I suppose, that those clearly were not the whole of the rates in that year. No exclusively urban rates, such as the old paving and cleansing rates, and rates of that description enter into the Table at all. You will find under the head of No. 4, "General District Rates, *i.e.*, of Local "Boards (including also Improvement Commissioners)" nothing is entered for 1841. I am quite aware that there were no rates then called technically

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General District Rates, but very large amounts of rates were levied in urban districts for cleansing, paving, and lighting, and on page 13 of Mr. Goschen's Report those are estimated for this particular year at 450,000*l.*, but that 450,000*l.* does not come out at all in the 2*s.* 7*d.* rate. Therefore the 2*s.* 7*d.* rate which you are quoting for the whole country, on your assumption that the urban rate was higher than the rural rate is, I take it, too low a rate in the £ for the whole of the rates. We have no means of showing what it was because we have not got the urban figures. Of the purely urban rates you have got the poor rates for the urban districts, the church rates, and so far as they were calculated in the urban districts, the highway rates, but you have practically left out of that 8,108,000*l.* the urban rates?—I do not see that that would affect my argument; I am dealing with the rural rates.

63,589. Yes, but you were assuming that the 2*s.* 7*d.*, which we were putting as being the rural rate at that time was the rate for the whole country, and as the rates were higher in urban than in rural districts, therefore the average rural rate must have been lower?—No; higher with the addition of the urban rates. If the urban rates had been added there then the average rate for the whole would have been increased, because it would have included more urban rates.

63,590. Clearly?—But it would not have affected rural districts.

63,591. You were saying, as I understand, that you think in 1841 or in 1838 the rural rates came to less than 2*s.* 3*d.*, and you therefore called in question Sir Henry Fowler's statement that at no time for which statistics were available was the average rural rate lower than in 1891, when it was 2*s.* 3*d.*?—I said that for various reasons, I believe that in 1838 it must have been lower than in 1891, and therefore that I could not accept Sir Henry Fowler's statement.

63,592. Sir Henry Fowler's statement was that they were not lower for any period for which statistics were available; can you give any period for which statistics were available when they were lower?—No; there I must admit that that is the saving clause. "No period for which full statistics are available;" that is a very convenient phrase.

63,593. With regard to your opinion that in 1841 the rates were higher in urban than in rural districts, may I ask you to look at page 74 of Mr. Goschen's Report. That gives the rates county by county, and in 1841 taking merely the poor and the county rate they come on the whole to an average of 2*s.*; do you see that?—Yes, but I do not know whether that 2*s.* is a real average, or whether it is an average of 42 counties.

(*Sir Robert Giffen.*) You may take it that it is not the mean of the 42 counties, it is probably a true average.

63,594. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think there can be no doubt of that; if you look at the figures, on the face of them they will not come out to that as the average of 42 counties. Taking this poor and county rate only, in which you see the highway rate and the church rate are not included, I shall go through the counties, and see where they are high, and where they are low. You find Buckinghamshire, 2*s.* 9*d.*; Berks, 2*s.* 6*d.*; Dorset, 2*s.* 8*d.*; Essex, 2*s.* 8*d.*; Lancaster, an urban county, 1*s.* 8*d.*; Middlesex, undoubtedly an urban county, 1*s.* 10*d.*; Stafford, a manufacturing county, 1*s.* 3*d.*; Suffolk, 2*s.* 9*d.*; Surrey, 2*s.* 9*d.*; Sussex, 2*s.* 11*d.*; Wiltshire, 3*s.*; Worcester, 1*s.* 11*d.*; Cardigan, 2*s.* 9*d.*; Carnarvon, 3*s.* 2*d.*; Glamorgan, 2*s.* 3*d.*; Merioneth, 2*s.* 11*d.*; Montgomery, 3*s.*; and Pembroke, 2*s.* 3*d.* Do you think, looking down all those figures, you can possibly say that the poor and county rate was highest in the urban areas?—I should like to dissect each of those county reports; I think I could show you that in some of them—indeed I am sure I could show you—that the average was greatly increased by the rates in the small towns. In Cambridgeshire, I was looking at a return only the other day of what the rate in the £ was in different parishes about this period—I am not sure whether it was about 1838, or whether it was just before the passing of the new Poor Law. I found that the heaviest rates were in the small towns, and those were the towns which were so much relieved by the Union Chargeability Act; they were places like Wisbech, Ely, and Chatteris.

63,595. Do you mean to say that the rates in the small towns were so high that they would affect the whole average rate for the county to this extent?—Yes, I think so.

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63,596. Take Middlesex, where it is 1*s.* 10*d.*, Lancashire where it is 1*s.* 8*d.* and Stafford, a manufacturing district, where it is 1*s.* 3*d.*, do those figures not show that they were comparatively low in many of the large urban centres?—Certainly that I must admit, but I say that in the urban districts in these pauperised counties you will find the highest rates in the small towns and not in the rural districts. Wiltshire was full of small towns, and I believe the rates were very heavy indeed.

63,597. I do not at all want to say that they were higher in one than in the other, but all I want to ask is this: Do you consider that 2*s.* was a fair average for the poor and county rate, and that the rural areas were not unfairly treated in taking it so?—Of course I cannot dispute those figures, I have not the materials.

63,598. Must you not add to the poor and county rate, the highway rate, levied in rural districts? Do you think there is any case in any year for which we have statistics, where that highway rate was much under 6*d.* in the £ for the whole of the country?—I should have thought it was.

63,599. When?—I should have thought it was in the forties.

63,600. The highway rate?—I should have thought it was in many counties; I am sure it was in many parishes.

63,601. In particular parishes it may have been so?—I have known parishes within the last 15 years where the highway rate has not been 2*d.*; it used to be nothing at all.

63,602. In parishes no doubt, but take counties?—I do not think I should say counties.

63,603. You have also got to add the church rate to that 2*s.*, and the church rates averaged certainly over 1*d.* in that time?—Possibly.

63,604. To bring this rural rate down at that time below Sir Henry Fowler's 2*s.* 3*d.* you must assume that the highway rate was less than 2*d.* throughout the whole country; do you think that that was the case?—No, I do not; but then you are losing sight of the fact which I tried to urge, that the assessment was upon a very much lessened value.

Sir Henry Fowler's and Mr. Goschen's Reports. Periods selected for comparison.

63,605. I will come to the assessment directly; I will go into that question fully. Do you think, looking at these figures, that we have for 1841 and seeing that they only include, county by county, the poor and county rate, it was possible either for Mr. Goschen or for Sir Henry Fowler to have put them into the Report as the total rates county by county, or that we could have found out what the total rates for the year 1841 were?—I cannot say that you could and I cannot say that you could not.

63,606. I can say we could not?—I will take your word for it.

63,607. We have searched for them and we cannot find them; we have got no figures showing what they were then?—But that I cannot prove, and I will take your word for it.

63,608. Would you not say that the fact that we have such very small information with regard to the rates for that year, and the fact that the 2*s.* 7*d.* did not include the urban rates was a very sufficient reason for saying nothing more about that year in the returns?—I am prepared to admit that they made the full use of the materials they had in the years that were selected.

63,609. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Is it a correct phrase to apply to the dates, as to which Mr. Goschen gives information in that original report of his, the word "selection" when as a matter of fact every date was taken for which statistics were available?—I was not aware of that. Of course if the word "selected" is objected to I withdraw it. I do not wish to imply that those periods were chosen to support a particular conclusion, and I take it from you that they were the only periods that could have been taken for comparison.

63,610. Is there any evidence upon the face of the return that they were selected in any way?—I do not know that there is.

63,611. You could not mention any other dates, for which there was information available as to the county rate, for instance, showing the rate in each county?—No, I do not know of any, but I could not possibly have said whether there was or was not.

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Mr. W. C. Little. 22 Nov. 1895. Assessment to rates.

63,612. (*Mr. Dalton.*) On the question of assessment I think it is quite admitted that assessments have varied very much in different parishes at different periods. Your contention, as I understand it, is that these average rates in the £ were wrong, and probably state the rates in the £ too high as compared with those under the present assessments?—I think so.

63,613. You may remember that the first figures that were given—those for 1803—were taken from a return in which it was stated that on an average the assessment was three-fourths of the rack rental and I think you admitted that that was comparatively very much the same as it is at the present time?—I think that if taken upon three-fourths of the rack rental it would probably be a fair proportion.

63,614. The earlier years were taken not from the local assessments, but from the income tax assessments?—1841 could not be taken from the income tax assessment.

63,615. 1841 is not one of the years I mentioned, and it was one of the years which you took exception to as being left out. The years that were put into the table were the earlier years as to which I quoted in my evidence what Mr. Goschen said with respect to them, namely, that instead of being too high, he thought they were too low, because they were taken on the income tax—that is on the gross not upon the net assessment?—I am distinctly of opinion that a low assessment for the poor rates makes a low assessment for the income tax.

63,616. And that it did in those days?—That it did in those days.

63,617. On that point I have the evidence of Mr. Wood, who was Chairman of the Board of Excise in 1846. He says: "As the poor rate is believed to be "taken generally on a proportion of about two-thirds of "the actual rental, it may not be too much to take that "amount as a fair estimate of the value assessable to "land tax." That would point to the conclusion that the ordinary assessment—not the income tax assessment—speaking generally, at that time, was two-thirds of the rental?—That is houses and land; it includes houses.

63,618. He is speaking of the property liable to the land tax, and that, of course, would include some houses, but it would also include a very large amount of rural property. Sir George Cornewall Lewis, in his evidence before the Select Committee from which you quoted a passage, had this question put to him: "Did "you come to the conclusion that the assessments of "various parishes throughout the country approached "so nearly to an equality as to enable you to say that "the ratings upon those assessments were a fair "indication of the charges upon the parishes," and his reply was: "I should say allowing for compensation of "errors, that a fair inference might be drawn from the "ratings upon the assessments of the different "parishes, though there is no doubt the assessments "vary to a considerable extent"?—I do not think that carries you any further; it is only comparative.

63,619. Do you not think it shows that a fair inference might be drawn from the ratings on the assessments of different parishes. I quote that passage because it comes a page or two after the passage in his evidence, which you quoted, in which he came to the assumption that the rates in urban districts were higher than those in rural districts. The question I have quoted was asked him on that statement, and he says, "I should say, allowing for compensation "of errors, that a fair inference might be drawn "from the ratings upon the assessments of the "different parishes, though there is no doubt the "assessments vary to a considerable extent?—That is as compared with that time, but I do not think that is as compared with the present.

63,620. That was in 1850?—It was in 1850 that that evidence was given.

63,621. But you are aware, I think it appears from your evidence, that in some places they took the full rack rental, and in others they did not?—But that would be in very few, you will find. There were ten cases where they took a low value for one where they took the rack rental.

63,622. Would you find ten cases where they take a 10th or an 11th as you mentioned?—No; I will engage to say that in the return I referred to, in a very large majority of cases the houses were assessed at one-third of the value.

63,623. But these rates in the £ that were taken in Mr. Goschen's report, as I have pointed out, were not taken on the poor rate assessment but on the income tax valuation; do you think that there is any evidence, which, having regard to that fact that they were taken upon the gross, proves or leads to the conclusion that they were too high?—That the assessment was too high? No. *Mr. W. C. Little.* 22 Nov. 1895.

63,624. That the rates in the £ were too high?—Yes; I say that the low poor rate assessment affects the income tax assessment.

63,625. You do not think there was a uniform valuation in those times over the whole?—I am quite sure there was not.

63,626. But you see it was taken on the gross income tax assessment, so that even if the income tax assessment was too low you are allowing 20 per cent. to bring it up to the right assessment?—Certainly; in 1841 it could not have been taken on the income tax assessment.

63,627. I am not taking it in 1841, I am speaking of 1815 and 1816?—1815 and 1816 you must remember were very abnormal periods of famine prices.

63,628. You have quoted a passage from Sir William Harcourt's speech in the debates on the Education Act; that speech was made before any of the new rates arose?—Yes, it was made in 1870. Sir William Harcourt's speech, 1870.

63,629. Before the school board rate?—Yes.

63,630. Or the rural sanitary rate?—Yes.

63,631. Or the county council rates so far as they represent additional expenditure?—Or the additional expenditure under the county council.

63,632. A very large number of new rates have been thrown upon ratepayers since that date?—Yes, certainly, for new objects.

63,633. And the great mass of the new rates have been imposed since then?—A very considerable addition has been made to the objects for which rates are levied.

63,634. Therefore if there was an inequality in the system of local taxation then, it has since been very greatly increased?—Certainly.

63,635. If it was impossible to defend the incidence of local taxation at that date it would be doubly impossible to do it now?—I think so.

63,636. That is all I have to ask upon your evidence; but I think there are one or two matters in your brief which have not been bought out at present in your evidence. I think your contention is that apart altogether from the question whether there has been a rise or a fall of the rates in the £ the present system of local taxation is unfair?—I think so. The owners and occupiers of land complain that they are called upon to contribute towards the cost of objects of public utility and convenience; sums which are certainly disproportionate to the interests which they possess in those objects. If you reduce it to an income tax you will find what a terrible burden it is upon the landlord or the tenant, or both in many instances. I have in Table 10 of Appendix A. XXVII. given two instances reported by Mr. Hunter Pringle in his Report on Bedfordshire (page 82); they are in the parishes of Potton and Bozeat, one in Bedfordshire, and one in Northamptonshire. In the Potton case the rent of the farm is 175*l.* and the rateable value 207*l.* There you see the rateable value is 18¼ per cent. over the actual rent, and if there were any tithe it should be considerably less than the rent. The amount of rates paid in one year, 1893–94, was 57*l.* 4*s.* 1*d.* The assumed income of the landlord and tenant derived from the ownerships, and occupation of the land, I have calculated on the basis of the income tax. The landlord's income would be 153*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; the occupier's, 57*l.* 8*s.* 2*d.*; and the gross income of an occupying owner would be 210*l.* 18*s.* 8*d.* The local rates are equal to an income tax of 7*s.* 5½*d.* in the £ if the owner pays; of 19*s.* 11*d.* in the £ if the occupier pays; and of 5*s.* 5*d.* in the £ on the joint income of landlord and tenant, or of an occupying owner. The other case is not quite so striking, and it differs in respect to the rateable value. The rent is 156*l.* 10*s.*, the rateable value is 141*l.* 17*s.* 6*d.* about 90 per cent. of the rent; the amount of rates for one year is 31*l.* 14*s.*; the gross income of landlord and tenant, assumed for income tax purposes, is 188*l.* 5*s.* 9*d.*, and the tax if falling upon the Incidence of local taxation.

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owner is 4*s.* 7½*d.* in the £; if upon the occupier 12*s.* 4*d.*, or if upon the occupying owner 3*s.* 4½*d.* in the £.

The "hereditary burden" theory.

63,637. I think you also say in your brief, that assuming for a moment that the hereditary burden theory were true, "It is clear that it can only apply "to rates of long standing and ancient date," and that, "it could have no validity in respect of modern "rates"?—I think it does not follow even if you prove that land had always been subject, and, therefore, ought to be always subject to the principal part of the cost of maintaining the poor, if that were conceded it would not follow that a great number of things should be paid for out of the poor rate and collected on the same basis.

Total average rates.

63,638. You object, as I understand, to the taking of the average total rates together because such a fall as has taken place has taken place in the rate for the relief of the poor?—That is the main relief that we have got and the place has been taken by rates for other objects. If it had not been for these fresh objects, we should have had a sensible relief in our rates.

63,639. And it is not fair to say that because by good administration or by reason of provisions becoming cheap, the rate for the relief of the poor has diminished, that you should have in place of it other new rates, such as the education rate, and the sanitary rate, and the other rates thrown upon the land?—I go further, and I say it is monstrously unfair.

63,640. Would you say that whatever might be the case as regards the old poor rate, it has not been fair to put those new charges upon land?—Certainly.

63,641. And that it is no defence to say, that if you add them to the rate for the relief of the poor which has been diminished partly by the low price of provisions and partly by good administration, the total comes to the same?—It is no defence at all. I find wherever I go, the greatest apprehensions as to the consequence of the recent Local Government Act. In a great many parishes expenditure is contemplated which will fall very heavily upon the farmer and which cannot possibly be of the slightest benefit to him. If I have to pay a threepenny rate, and I quite expect that I shall be very fortunate if I escape with a threepenny rate, I shall have to pay some 12*l.* a year, and I defy the most ingenious person in Parliament or out of Parliament to discover any possible benefit which I can derive from the expenditure of the parish council.

Expenditure under the Parish Councils Act.

63,642. (*Viscount Cobham.*) For what purposes will the expenditure be applied in that case?—They will spend part of it in elections and various village improvements. You find in lots of villages that they are moving now for recreation grounds. I went into a parish only the other day which has only 500 inhabitants, and certainly not a village containing 250 inhabitants, where nearly all the property belongs to one man and where nearly all the voters are men who do not pay rates at all. They decided in a parish meeting to adopt the Lighting and Watching Act, and farmers three or four miles off will have to pay for lighting this village which has a street perhaps 150 yards long.

63,643. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) That is one set of people vote the money and another set of people pay?—Just so. That reminds me that I have been pressed on the subject of rates falling on the landlord or the tenant. I remember when the Local Government Act was under discussion in the House of Commons and people said the labourers who did not pay rates ought not to have a vote, it was said immediately that they do pay rates, the labourers do pay rates in their rent. Surely if the labourers pay rates the farmer must pay rates. Further, if the rate fell entirely upon the owner, I cannot conceive a greater injustice than depriving the owner of all share in the administration. The owner now simply has to pay, but he has no vote and he has no power whatever, but a number of people who pay nothing spend the money.

63,644. Does not that apply very generally to a great deal of local government, where the election of the people to administer is popular, and yet the people upon whom the burden falls have little to do with the election?—I am sure that that is and will be the case with parish councils.

63,645. (*Mr. Elton.*) May I ask one question on that exact point in reference to the Act: is not one of the possible expenses and one that you might dread the power given to the different local government bodies newly constituted, of litigating claims to old rights of way? Has that come under your observation?—I have heard of several cases where they are making inquiries as to rights of way and claiming all sorts of rights.

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63,646. Do you know that an old right of way, perhaps long disused, may be investigated by the parish council, who may make an application to the district council to take proper proceedings on the claim?—I have not heard of any of these proceedings but I know a great many parish councils are inquiring into these matters and calling upon owners to mend stiles and replace planks. In one case the owner was asked to gravel a footpath through a ploughed field.

63,647. I only wanted to get it on the notes that you agree that the parish council might instruct the district council to take proceedings in respect of rights of way?—That is quite possible.

63,648. Then I think by the Acts, if the district council refuses, the county council may be asked to take the matter up, to have the powers of the district council transferred to the county council, the obligation of meeting all the expenses to be re-transferred to the district council under which you would come?—Yes, no doubt there may be in the future some such expenditure, but I have not heard of any expenditure under that head at the present time.

Poor relief.

63,649. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Going back to the relief of the poor, one of the main reasons why the relief of the poor cost so much in the earlier part of the century was, and I suppose it is admitted by every one, the high price of corn?—It was partly that, but it was distinctly given as wages.

63,650. Yes; but one reason undoubtedly affecting it was the high price of corn?—Yes.

63,651. And the other cause was bad administration?—Yes. You may perhaps not include in bad administration what I was saying about paying rates in relief of wages. The farmer paid his men half price, and the parish paid the remainder of the wages, so that the farmer saved in wages part of what he paid in rates.

63,652. Would you contend that the fact that these expenses have now been brought down, partly by good administration, and partly by the cheapness of provisions, affords no ground for putting further and new burdens upon agricultural lands?—Certainly, that is what I wish to urge as strongly as I can.

63,653. The only reason that I ask is that I thought, although it was in your brief, it had not been brought out in your evidence. There is also another question which has not been put to you; I think you have had considerable experience, have you not, in local administration?—Yes.

Witness' experience in local administration.

63,654. Could you tell us what experience you have had?—I have been an overseer, and have been an elected guardian, and I was afterwards an *ex-officio* guardian; from 1879 until the passing of the Local Government Act and the creation of the county council, I took an active part in quarter sessions business, civil business particularly, and on the formation of the county council, I presented to our court of quarter sessions a complete abstract and analysis of our expenditure for 20 or 21 years, so that I had to acquaint myself pretty thoroughly with every item of detail and every item of expenditure. That was presented to the county council by the court of quarter sessions as a sort of legacy. On the formation of the county council, I was elected an alderman, I was vice-chairman for two years, and on the death of the chairman, I succeeded him, and I have been chairman ever since. I have also been Chairman of the Highways and Bridges Committee, from the first formation of that committee of the county council, and I am Chairman of the Standing Joint Committee of the Magistrates and of the County Council. Then from about 1877, I have been an Income Tax, Land Tax, and House Tax Commissioner, and since about 1881, I have been Chairman of the Income Tax Commissioners for a division of our county, which includes about 100,000 acres. I have also acted for another division occasionally. In that time since 1881, I do not think any important appeal has come before the commission which I have not heard and helped to decide upon; so that I have a pretty considerable acquaintance with the county finance, and with the income-tax assessment.

63,655. You have, therefore, not only made a study of all the reports and writings of authorities upon the subject, but you have, for a very long series of years, had practical experience in nearly every branch of local administration?—I have, I think I may say.

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63,656. And the views expressed in this paper of yours, which you wrote in 1870, you substantially hold to now?—I do.

63,657. After the result of all that practical experience?——I have not seen any reason to alter my views.

63,658. That paper will be put in an appendix, I suppose?—I have handed in some extracts, if the Commission choose to have them printed. I only value them myself as showing that I have not arrived at my conclusions without giving considerable attention to the subject. (*See* Appendix A. XXXII., 1.)

63,659. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Were they published in the appendices to the Report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission?—Not the extracts from a paper that I read, but one part of the appendix to my brief is extracted from the appendix to the report of the Duke of Richmond's Commission. (*See* Appendix A. XXXII. 2.)

Rating of personal property.

63,660. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I referred to the paper on local taxation which you read at a meeting of the Wisbech District Council in 1870, is there anything in that paper that has not been brought out in the cross-examination?—I do not know that there is. There is one point that has not been mentioned. I should like to say, though it is so familiar with a great many, that it seems hardly necessary to mention it, that personalty has never been formally absolved from its responsibility in respect to the poor rate; it is a suspended liability, but it has never been exempted.

63,661. Not by Parliament, you mean?—Yes. I think that seems to show that the House of Commons never could make up its mind fully to exonerate personal property from the charge. If once things were fairly adjusted, I imagine there could be no object in keeping on that form of exonerating personalty from year to year.

63,662. (*Mr. Lambert.*) To what legislative measure do you now refer?—The Expiring Laws Continuance Act annually suspends the liability on stock in trade and personal property for poor rates.

63,663. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think when that Act was originally made an annual Act instead of being made a permanent Act as was proposed when it was first brought in, it was stated that that was done pending the consideration of the whole question of local taxation?—I believe so. It was the consequence of some decision which made stock-in-trade or certain personal property rateable, and the enormous difficulty of enforcing the rate led to the passing of this Act, but it was passed for only one year, and never has been anything more than a temporary suspending Act.

63,664. (*Mr. Everett.*) The exemption being in the Expiring Laws Continuance Act, and that being done every year keeps alive the hereditary claim on personalty to contribute to the poor?—I think so.

63,665. (*Mr. Elton.*) They have taken in one bit of the personalty notwithstanding that annual Act; there is the Mines Rating Act; they did make an exception from the exemption there, did they not?—Yes.

The burden of rates.

63,666. (*Mr. Long.*) As I understand your contention it comes to this, that although rates may have been converted by subventions or other changes, yet they are much higher than they should be in relation either to the profit obtained from the land or to the ability of ratepayers?—I think they are.

Assessment to rates.

63,667. You have been asked several questions about assessment, and it has been pointed out to you, or suggested to you, that local ratepayers have not sufficiently availed themselves of the power of appeal to get their assessment reduced?—Yes, it has.

63,668. Do you consider that where it is the fact that it is to be traced to the knowledge that there is not sufficient variation of property in an agricultural district to make it worth their while to lower their assessment?—I think that is the cause—that and the fear of the great expense of a complete re-valuation. Where you have property all of the same character as, I think, I have stated already, to reduce it all in the same degree is simply to add to the poundage rate, and no advantage can be derived from it. If you take other property, such as buildings, you must diminish the value of that property by increasing the rates upon it; and the consequence of lowering the assessment on land will eventually be to lower the assessment on buildings. If a man pays an extra rate on his house he has a claim to have the assessment reduced, because the assessment is supposed to be the net rent.

63,669. Certain comparisons have been drawn here and elsewhere between rural and urban land; is that not rather misleading owing to the fact that urban is a technical term which describes a district governed by an urban council, whereas many of those so-called urban places are in reality purely agricultural?—Yes, that is a point I have urged rather strongly, and I can go much further into detail if anyone wishes. I will only say that one of those urban districts which has a small population covers 25,000 acres of land which must necessarily be either agricultural or pastoral. I am referring to Masham, in Yorkshire; it has 25,308 acres of land, and a population of 2,173; that is an urban district. Then Holme Cultram, in Cumberland, with 24,000 acres, has a population of 4,602.

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Urban and rural land.

63,670. (*Viscount Cobham.*) I daresay a great deal of that is moor land?—Yes. Then Holbeach, in Lincolnshire, has 21,469 acres; that, as you know, is all good agricultural land, and that is all subject to urban rates. Then there is March, in Cambridgeshire, which has 19,777 acres subject to urban rates.

63,671. (*Mr. Long.*) Over and above the actual characteristics of the district may it not be stated, as a fact, that the prosperity of what would be called in any such return as we have had presented to us here, urban is identical with the prosperity of the rural part?—I think so. I think that a very great number of these so-called urban places are purely agricultural, and dependent upon the prosperity of the agricultural land around them.

63,672. In many cases, I presume, a good deal of the prosperity in a so-called urban district is owned by people who are also themselves agriculturists and resident in the agricultural districts?—Yes, undoubtedly.

Taxation of land and buildings.

63,673. Therefore, to increase the taxation on what is called buildings, and to decrease it on the land, is merely to take the same man's money out of one pocket and to put it into the other?—I am not quite sure that it would be exactly that; it would be taking it out of one occupier's pocket and putting it into another. I am not prepared to admit that the owner would bear the whole burden, and does bear the whole burden.

63,674. I was not intending to discuss the question of the owner and occupier, I was merely discussing the question of the ratepayer whether he was owner or whether he was occupier. You would agree that it is rather fallacious in rural or agricultural districts to attempt to draw a distinction between agricultural land and buildings?—I think that there are a great many districts where, if the land was all reduced to its present value, some relief would be given; there are other districts where the relief would be so small, that it is scarcely worth while going to the assessment committee.

Sir Henry Fowler's and Mr. Goschen's Reports. Periods selected for comparison.

63,675. Perhaps this would be a convenient time for me to ask you one or two questions with regard to what has been put to you upon Mr. Goschen's and Sir Henry Fowler's returns. Am I right in believing, having read your brief carefully and listened to your evidence, that you had no intention of suggesting bad faith on the part of those responsible for either of these returns?—Certainly; I had no wish to impugn their good faith.

63,676. You did not either intend to suggest that dates had been arbitrarily selected because that selection would influence the return?—No. I said if I had used the word "selection," and it was thought to imply some unfair selection, I would willingly withdraw that word.

63,677. Is it your contention that the conclusions arrived at in these returns do not represent the facts which come within the practical knowledge and experience of local ratepayers?—I do not know that I can dispute the conclusions further than I have done, but I dispute the inferences; I do not accept the inferences which are naturally drawn from the reports.

The burden of rates.

63,678. Even supposing that you were to allow the conclusions arrived at, you would still contend that rates, though they may have been lowered, are still largely in excess of the capacity of the ratepayer?—Yes.

63,679. And that many are in themselves, having regard to their true proportions, much heavier than they should be?—Certainly that is my contention. It is one quite apart from the question of a rise or fall in rates; it is one of justice as between the owner and the occupier of one description of property and of another description of property.

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Mr. W. C. Little.
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Increased expenditure in rural districts.

63,680. Some questions were asked you about the increase of expenditure in rural districts and it has been suggested that this increase is in some measure due to the system of subventions. Do you think it can be at all traced to the tendency on the part of candidates at local elections to commit themselves at the time of their election to promises for local work?—I have not had much experience of that. I did say that as regards boards of guardians and district councils candidates were vieing with one another in promises to give liberal out-door relief; but that is the only instance that I know of. I think the much more popular cry is that of economy.

63,681. But that attitude of the candidates would of itself tend to a considerable increase of expenditure?—Yes, and out-door relief is the great blot I think on the administration in our neighbourhood.

63,682. Do you think there is any foundation for the fear that in regard to the election of district councillors, attempts may be made to press upon them the desirability, for instance, of adopting the Lighting and Watching Act or of carrying out an extensive system of drainage?—I think there is a very great temptation to these electors, who are not ratepayers, to vote for candidates who will go in for spending money.

63,683. Do you think it will be desirable to alter the system by which the basis of assessment is arrived at at present?—I think that it is very desirable that some better mode of assessment of property for rates and taxes should be devised. I do not think that the present assessment committee is at all a satisfactory body.

Assessment to rates and income tax.

63,684. At present there are practically three assessments, are there not; the assessment by which Income Tax Commissioners get at the income tax; the assessment by the county authority for the county rate basis; and the assessment by the union assessment committee for union rates?—Yes, but the county rate assessment is only an assessment of parishes, and it does not go into details.

63,685. But there is, as a matter of fact, a triple system of assessment?—Yes.

63,686. And three assessing authorities?—Yes, and as was admitted by Mr. Robinson, when he was giving evidence here, one of those, that is the income tax assessment, is to a considerable extent based upon the poor rate assessment. You will know, no doubt, that in assessing land for which no return has been made, or for which no satisfactory return has been made, the Income Tax Commissioners are absolute judges, and there is no appeal against their decision. One of the things which does guide them very much in their conclusions is the assessment for poor rate purposes.

63,687. (*Lord Rendel.*) Though in practice that is the case, are you aware whether in the past there was a distinct provision made that the Income Tax Commissioners were not to take into consideration the poor rate assessment?—I cannot imagine that that can have been the case. Until very recently the surveyor of taxes had to examine the poor rate assessments; he had to select from the poor rate assessments a number of typical farms and houses to get the actual rentals, and to compare those rents with the assessments, and from those typical cases to arrive at some conclusion as to whether the parochial assessment was fair or unfair, and he had to state to the Income Tax Commissioners that in such a parish the assessment was perhaps only 53 per cent. of the value, in another parish, 65 per cent., and so on, and to ask the Income Tax Commissioners to bear that in mind in taking the poor rate assessment and to add so much because the poor rate assessment was low.

63,688. I am aware that that is the practice, but I had reason to ask the question, because I remember that in an inquiry by the House of Commons into the whole question of the income tax, evidence was at that time—I think about the year 1868—given to show that the practice of referring to the poor rate assessment was not a practice justified in the administration of the income tax?—I can assure you that the instructions to assessors and surveyors until very recently contained the particular instruction which I have referred to; and that you will find in Mr. Robinson's evidence.

63,689. (*Mr. Long.*) I ought to have said just now in my question, ought I not, that there are four assessments, because in addition to the three I mentioned, there is also an assessment for the land tax?—Yes, and I am afraid that is a very unsatisfactory one indeed.

63,690. You referred just now to the fact that there is no appeal against the decision of the Income Tax Commissioners?—That is so on a matter of fact.

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Appeal against income tax assessment.

63,691. Is there not a general feeling that the whole right of appealing is involved in so much difficulty, that people make very little use of it?—I do not know. I have found a great many people avail themselves of the opportunity of appealing against income tax assessments, or for a return of income tax. We have a great many appeals as to the income tax.

63,692. I beg your pardon, I meant rather in regard to appeals on general assessments?—I think that there is; I have known of several people who have said, "I "shall never take the trouble to appeal again; I got "no relief; I got no hearing."

Assessment authority.

63,693. Then do you think it would be an advantage if these various authorities could be reduced so that there should be assessing authority for the area of a county?—I think it very desirable that there should be one assessing authority, and I go so far as to say I should like to see the introduction of an official valuer.

63,694. Your object being, I presume, to secure uniformity?—To secure fairness—to secure uniformity. I have always felt that to relieve one man too much, is to throw taxation upon others; therefore in hearing income tax appeals, I have always refused to grant relief where I thought it was not really due, because it is only throwing the burden upon another person. I think an official valuer would be able to deal fairly between one property and another, and to make a better valuation than is at present in existence.

63,695. You mean similar to the system, for instance, in vogue in the metropolis, and applied in Scotland also?—I am not familiar with the system adopted in the metropolis, and therefore I could hardly say as to that, but from what I have heard of the Scotch system and from evidence we have heard, I think the adoption of some method of assessment like that would be an advantage.

Basis of assessment.

63,696. Do you think it would be desirable that ratepayers should have the opportunity of stating their position, and claiming to be assessed upon their declared income supported by affidavit?—Do you mean their income from the property rated?

63,697. From the property rated solely for the purposes of assessment for local rates, that is what I am talking of now?—I think then you would get the rent, and I am not prepared to admit that rent is the true criterion of value for assessment—it is not the absolute criterion.

63,698. It has been suggested that there is some considerable variation owing to the fact that rent is taken in some cases, and not in others, would it not lead to great injustice, if rent were to be taken as the basis for assessment invariably?—I think so. The circumstances under which rent is greatly reduced in some cases, and is only slightly reduced in others are so different. You have in one case perhaps a landowner who cannot farm the land, who has not the money to pay the tenant his inventory, and who has not got the money to farm the land. So he submits to a reduction which another man would not submit to, because that other man could take the thing into his own hands, and might run the risk of not getting a tenant. Take the case of a trustee for ladies of advanced age, who are merely life-tenants; they have no capital; they could not raise any money upon the estate; they could not possibly farm the land, and therefore if the tenants give notice, the trustee is obliged to take what rent he can get.

63,699. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Could he not get another tenant if the present tenant quitted?—He dare not run the risk.

63,700. (*Mr. Long.*) Is it your view that whatever may have been done, or whatever may be done in the future with regard to contributions, in aid of local rates, justice will not be done until the whole system of assessment is satisfactorily dealt with?—I do not think it is so corrupt as that, but I think it would be a great improvement if a more fair assessment were made.

National character of local expenditure.

63,701. Do you desire to present to the Commission that your view of local expenditure is that it has recently become far more national in its character than it used to be?—A large part of the expenditure raised by local rates is certainly national in its character, and as people move about more and are less tied to their

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birth places, I think that the interest which a locality has in many objects of expenditure is less than it was.

63,702. Take, for instance, the poor rate—I mean the rate for the maintenance of the poor—do you hold that that very often is a burden upon the locality, although the pauperism which it meets has been created by circumstances outside of the locality?—That is the case I believe in many instances. Depression of trade throws a great mass of pauperism on unions, which have not benefited very much from the trade when it prospered.

63,703. Is it within your experience that able-bodied men go away from the rural districts, give the best years of their lives and of their strength to labour in towns or in other parts of the country, and come back and are often compelled to seek relief in their own homes where they have given none of their best days' labour?—I cannot say that that is my experience. We have had a great many who have left, and I think none of them come back; at least I cannot remember any. A great many left our neighbourhood in the bad times of about 1850 to go to the cotton districts, and even when the cotton famine came not one of them came back.

63,704, (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) How long is it after they leave that they lose the right of settlement?—I forget what the law of settlement now is, but it is very little resorted to.

63,705. (*Captain Owen-Thomas.*) Twelve months I believe?—I forget.

63,706. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) So they would regain a settlement by coming for a short time again?—Yes.

63,707. (*Sir Nigel Kingscote.*) It is 12 months now, is it not?—I think it is, but I really could not speak with authority.

63,708. (*Mr. Long.*) At all events whatever your experience may be, it would be possible under the law as it exists at present, for a man to leave his own native parish at 18 or 20, to remain away say for 25 years, giving the best of his labour in the home of his adoption, and to return to his own parish and acquire a settlement and become chargeable to the union in which that parish is?—Yes. I have said that the facilities for moving about, and the way in which people do move about, have made poor relief a much more national object than it was.

Highway rate.

63,709. With regard to the roads, that burden is felt to be unfair, is it not, in view of the fact that whereas the turnpike roads used to be maintained by those who used them, the roads now are maintained out of the rates; subject only to the relief they get from Imperial subventions?—Yes, it is a very great complaint with farmers that the roads are used much more by outsiders, who pay no rates to the particular district where they use the roads.

63,710. Is it not also alleged that complaints as to the condition of roads, and requirements for much better roads, emanate frequently from the stranger, and not from the local ratepayer who has to maintain them?—Yes; the bicycle riders who come from a distance are very loud in their complaints if you do not give them a perfect road to wheel upon.

63,711. It is the practice in some places for these bicyclists to come down and select a level mile, and race over it, and then complain if there is a small hole in it, is it not?—They have stopped that.

School board rate.

63,712. I think, with regard to the education rate, you have been asked several questions?—Yes, I have.

63,713. It is considered to be extremely unfair in a school board district, is it not, that the local ratepayers should have to contribute so large a sum?—It is a very heavy tax upon a farmer. A farmer said to me only yesterday, "In the last few years I have paid 250*l.* for "educating other people's children, and I do not get "any benefit from it. As soon as they are educated "they go out of the parish; they will not work on the "farms when they have been to a board school for a "few years. Off they go! It has cost me," he said, "in the last few years, 250*l.* for educating other "people's children."

63,714. Is it not also the fact that in this school board expenditure there is not as much discretion left to the local authority as there is with regard to any other form of local expenditure?—No, I suppose not; the Education Department is extremely exacting.

63,715. It is, in fact, the Education Department which lays down what shall be done in building and maintenance?—They are never satisfied; they always have a new fad.

63,716. Therefore it is left to the school boards to find the money, while a public department says how much is to be spent, and how it is to be spent?—Yes, and that also affects the voluntary schools. The Education Department compels you continually to expend money in making children much more comfortable at school than they are at home.

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63,717. That of course is not recovered by rate, but has to be provided by subscription, which comes to the same thing?—It is a burden as I have attempted to show.

63,718. It comes out of the same pocket?—Yes.

63,719. (*Viscount Cobham.*) Does the Department ever interfere to limit expenditure?—That I could not say. I have had no experience on a school board, and do not know whether they do limit expenditure.

Assessment authority.

63,720. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) When you say you would prefer one assessing authority, and would go so far as to say that you would like to see an official valuer, I suppose that means that the official valuer is to be called in as an assessor, as an aid to the assessment committee, not that he is to make the assessment himself?—I am not sure how far one would go in leaving the assessment to an official, but I certainly would have an official a member of the assessment committee, or whatever it might be.

63,721. Whom do you propose to call in as an official valuer?—For myself I should be satisfied to take the surveyor of taxes. I think you want someone to fight the case as between one ratepayer and another. Men have a very great objection to saying anything against the value of a neighbour's property. I will tell you what happened in my own case, as it is an illustration of this point. When we had a new valuation of our parish by a professional man, one of my neighbours complained to me. He said, "He put me up ever so "much, and he put you down," "Well," I said, "you "can appeal." He made inquiries, and did not appeal. I said, "Why did not you appeal?" He said "Well, I "found that I should very likely put you up, but I should "not get my own valuation brought down, and I was "not going to do such an unneighbourly thing." That is a very strong feeling; people in the country have a very great objection to going and saying, "So-and-so's "farm is not assessed at enough," when they know the fact perfectly well.

63,722. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) That is a very ancient experience of appeals in these matters, is it not?—I should think so.

63,723. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) You do not go so far as to say that justice cannot be done till a new basis of assessment is to be made, but what I do understand to be your view is this: that you think a new assessment by which there should be one assessment instead of the numerous assessments that are made now would be a great improvement?—I think so. I said that I did not think the system was so corrupt now as to cause any great injustice, but that it would be a great improvement if a more correct assessment could be made.

63,724. On the ground, I suppose, of general convenience?—Yes.

63,725. Do you see any great difficulty in carrying out such a proposal as you suggest?—I think there was formerly a very strong feeling. You may remember that once or twice a Bill has been introduced into Parliament for giving the surveyor of taxes a place on the assessment committee, and the country gentlemen very strongly resisted that proposal, but I believe that now there would be much less opposition to it.

63,726. You think that feeling has very much died away?—I think so.

63,727. Of course it would involve very considerable alterations in the present system, but you see nothing in that to make it impracticable?—I do not.

Assessment in Wisbech Union.

63,728. Or a question which might not be undertaken?—I think it might be undertaken; I should welcome it myself. As the Chairman is now present I should like to make a correction. I promised to inquire into one circumstance, that is as to the reduction of the assessments on houses in Wisbech Union; I said that I had a very strong impression that the consequence of reducing the assessments on land was that the house assessment was also reduced. I wrote to the clerk to the Board of Guardians, and he says: "In March 1881 "the assessment committee resolved to instruct the "overseers to prepare fresh valuation lists, and "instructed them to take 15 per cent. off agricultural

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"land. It is true that an appeal was made by Wisbech "St. Peter's Parish to the committee to adopt the same "principle of reduction in the case of house property, "but it resulted in nothing, and no order was even "made for the reduction of the assessments on house "property in this union." I undertook to enquire whether I was right or wrong, and that is the result of my inquiry.

63,729. (*Chairman.*) Then, in point of fact, the assessment on houses was maintained?—Yes.

63,730. And the assessment on land was reduced 15 per cent.?—Yes.

Reduction of assessments.

63,731. I suppose that they were ready to entertain any individual appeals in case of it being shown that rent had been reduced?—They are bound to hear an appeal.

63,732. I suppose some land in the union has not been reduced by more than 15 per cent.?—Some land has not come down in value at all.

63,733. The fact is that the depression has told very unequally?—Yes.

63,734. In the case of accommodation land near to towns for fruit and market gardens and so on for a few miles around, when they have the advantage of a near market, the rent has not fallen?—That is so.

63,735. Beyond that, the rent of land of different qualities has been reduced in different proportions?—Yes, we have a great variation of character there.

63,736. Is it not the fact that the reductions of rent on poor land have been relatively much greater than on good land?—Certainly.

63,737. Therefore it would be almost impossible for an assessment committee to apply one general rule of reduction to all?—They have applied it, that is the point, they have applied one uniform scale of reduction.

63,738. When I say it is impossible, it must be subject to this; that those tenants who have had their rents reduced in a still greater proportion ought to apply for a still further reduction of the assessment; otherwise the thing would be unequal?—I am not sure that they would get it.

63,739. As a matter of fact they are entitled to get it, are they not?—I think not. If the assessment committee says "We assume that the value of this land is greater than the rent, you give" they may refuse that and then you can appeal to the quarter sessions.

63,740. But still if the tenant can show that the rent he has paid is the true value of the land he is entitled to have the assessment reduced in proportion?—If he can make the assessment committee believe that it is the true value then they will relieve him.

63,741. If the assessment committee do not agree then he can appeal to the quarter sessions?—If they do not give him what he asks then he can appeal to the quarter sessions; but that is a process that I have never known resorted to by any private individual, because it involves employing counsel and a great expense.

63,742. (*Mr. Everett.*) Is it not the case that some assessment committees refuse to reduce the assessment on a farm which has become reduced in value by bad farming, on the principle that if they did it would simply put the rates of that farm on to the one which is farmed well by the side of it?—I think it is possible that that would be a consideration influencing a committee, but I do not know that I have ever heard of that particular case. It is an argument which might be adopted. Then there is another point; the Chairman challenged me at Question 62,878 to bring forward any instance where buildings had been reduced in the assessment:—"Do you know yourself of your own experience "any case where the value of town property in an "urban district like that has really decreased in "value at the same time that the agricultural land "has decreased in value; for my part I never heard of "such a case?" In the return which the Chairman has so frequently quoted from and shown to us, I find that there are 23 unions in England where the assessment of buildings decreased between 1870 and 1894. In Thingoe, in Suffolk, the buildings have been reduced by 36·1 per cent. in value; in Reeth, Yorkshire, by 28·7 per cent.; in Helston, Cornwall, by 24·6 per cent.; in Okehampton, in Devon, by 23·8 per cent.

Assessment of town property in agricultural unions.

63,743. (*Mr. Lambert.*) What is that figure for Okehampton?—It has been reduced from 7,099*l.* to 5,401*l.*, which is a reduction of 23·8 per cent.

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63,744. Are you perfectly certain that those figures are accurate?—I can only go by the Parliamentary return which the Chairman has put before us.

63,745. (*Mr. Everett.*) That includes houses, I suppose?—Yes.

63,746. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Houses in the Borough of Okehampton?—No, in the union. Then in Mildenhall, in Suffolk, there is a decrease of 21·3 per cent.; Howden, York, East Riding, 19·8 per cent.; Dore, Hereford, 16·0 per cent; Hoxne, Suffolk, 15·7 per cent.; Northleach, Gloucester, 13·3 per cent.; Walsingham, Norfolk, 13 per cent.; Hartismere, Suffolk, 9 per cent.; Hensland, Norfolk, 8·3 per cent.; Westward, Westmoreland, 7·1 per cent.; Saffron Walden, Essex, 6 per cent.; Buntingford, Herts, 5·1 per cent.; Glendale, Northumberland, 4·2 per cent.; Ellesmere, Salop, 3·5 per cent.; Bridgnorth, Salop, 3·4 per cent.; Spilsby, Lincoln, 3 per cent.; Bicester, Oxon, 2.1 per cent.; Cleobury Mortimer, Salop, 2 per cent.; Aylsham, Norfolk, 2·7 per cent; and then there are two or three others where the reduction is somewhat less.

63,747. Does that include all the buildings in the union?—It does not include farmhouses.

63,748. Does it include all the cottages, say, in a village in the union?—Yes. But I am not responsible for this return. This is the Chairman's own return.

63,749. (*Chairman.*) It shows that there have been, out of the whole 670 unions, or whatever the number is, a few in which there has been a reduction?—Yes, there are 23, but I was distinctly challenged to find a single one.

63,750 Some of them—of very small amounts—two per cent.?—Yes, and some of them of considerable amounts.

The "hereditary burden" theory.

63,751. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) Leaving aside for the present, your objections about the equity of new rates I should like to ask you whether you object altogether to the hereditary burden theory as not having anything in it at all?—I think I should not accept it at all.

63,752. Do you think that in no case is it a fair consideration for the Government to say that a special tax upon a special property through the lapse of time, ceases to have the nature of a tax at all because it is allowed for in every transaction, and it becomes really in the nature of a rentcharge upon the property?—No, I cannot admit that. If it applies to one tax it applies to all it seems to me.

63,753. I am speaking from the point of view that it does apply to all?—Would you say to income tax?

63,754. I am just going to discuss whether income tax is quite of the same nature as a special tax upon a special property?—Take the house tax.

63,755. I think we had better confine ourselves to special taxes upon special property?—The house tax is a special tax upon a special property.

63,756. Is there not a question about the house tax, namely, that it is really in the nature of an income tax upon householders generally?—That is a refinement that I do not quite appreciate.

63,757. Still it is a matter which may have to be considered that all taxes are not necessarily of the same nature?—I am sure that it will be considered, because those whose interest it is to maintain the present state of things will take care that it is considered; but it does not convince me.

63,758. Take the case, then, of a special tax upon special property as compared with income tax, is there not this material difference between them that whereas an investor can protect himself against the special tax when he makes his investment, he cannot protect himself against the income tax because it is quite universal?—I can see that there is a distinction to be made between a poor rate and an income tax, but I cannot admit that the fact of a poor rate having been levied for a great many years makes it no rate at all. If that were so I do not think Parliament could have been justified in imposing the rate upon parishes which never had one for the benefit of other parishes.

63,759. Would it not be the case that a great deal of mischief and confusion has arisen from Parliament not recognising the true doctrines of the incidence of taxation and assuming that the incidence is one way,

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whereas as a matter of fact it is another way?—I do not understand how that may be.

63,760. You have not gone into the general question of what economists call the refercussion of taxation?—No, I have not.

63,761. Is there not a general theory of economists that old taxes by their very nature tend to become equalised because they have existed a long time, and, in addition to that, special taxes upon special property tend to become in the nature of rent charges because they are allowed for by every individual in his transactions?—I cannot admit that an injustice because it has been perpetrated long enough becomes justice.

63,762. It becomes just in this way: that the injustice was perpetrated upon some man who was dead and gone long ago and there is no injustice upon the present individuals. Is that not so?—I think that like all other taxes it is subject to the equities of the case, and that a man has a claim to relief from exorbitant taxation whether it is an old tax or a new tax.

63,763. Take, for instance, the actual mode of dealing with things; the land tax is not deducted from mortgages and charges in the same manner as the income tax?—No, it is not.

63,764. The same with the tithe rentcharge?—The tithe rentcharge would stand against the mortgagee.

63,765. And rates the same?—Rates would stand against the mortgagee.

63,766. Then is there not an essential difference between taxes of that kind and a tax in the nature of an income tax, which is not a special charge upon any one kind of income or property?—Income tax would be charged upon the mortgagee.

63,767. It would be dealt with differently from the land tax?—I do not know; I do not see how it would be dealt with differently.

63,768. Is it not as a matter of fact dealt with differently?—I do not understand how it is.

63,769. The receiver of rent under a mortgage has to pay income tax?—Yes.

63,770. But he does not pay the land tax?—He would if he were in possession.

63,771. That is to say, if he had become the owner and not the mortgagee?—It is paid out of the margin between the mortgage interest and the value.

63,772. Then you do not allow that the dealing with property for generation after generation subject to a particular burden causes that burden to cease to be in the nature of a tax, so that it is no contribution from the owner of the property, out of his means to the general burdens of the country?—No, I cannot see it myself; it may be my density.

63,773. But you admit that it is so argued by a very large number of people who have studied these questions of taxation?—I admit that it is argued.

63,774. And that the general economic opinion is rather against you?—I do not think that Parliament can have taken that view, or it never would have redistributed the burden as it has done.

63,775. But may it not be the case as I was putting it to you that Parliament has acted upon a view contrary to the actual facts of the case, and that mischief and confusion have arisen in consequence?—I should rather have said that Parliament had taken a common sense view, and had not looked at it from a purely theoretical point of view.

63,776. But this may have been one of the cases where the theory would have been very properly looked at, and good results would have arrived from looking at the theory?—You will see that all the time that land was subject to this charge personalty was also by law subject.

63,777. Not all the time. Was not the difficulty this: that the law having imposed a certain charge upon land and personalty, it was found as a matter of fact that while the charge upon land and other real property remained, you could not impose it upon personalty; and that has been the experience in other countries as well as in this country?—In theory—and we are dealing now with theories—personal property still remains liable.

63,778. But it could not be applied, as a matter of fact?—It was applied in some instances.

63,779. Not successfully, as a general rule?—No, not successfully.

63,780. That is to say, in spite of all the Legislature attempted, the actual disposition of human nature and the losses of business were such that whereas the tax upon real property remained, and, as I maintain, because in the nature of a rentcharge upon the property and so could be levied, you could not apply the tax at all to personalty, and the legislators were altogether wrong?—I must not be supposed to accept all that, because I have not considered it, but I am willing to admit that the tax upon personalty was not enforced.

63,781. You are willing to admit also as between one investment and another, that people when they invested in land, were always able to take care of themselves as against the land tax, and as against the tithe rentcharge, and as against rates substantially?—No, I do not think that they could guard against rates which are fluctuating in their amount. They could only deal with the experience of the past, and when they bought land which was subject to no rates, Parliament still might pass a Bill which would impose a rate upon them. In the same way they might have bought subject to a very low rate, and their rate might have been increased by the Union Chargeability Act, or they might be taken out of one parish into another, and their rate so increased; all this is for the convenience of the public, and not for the convenience of individuals.

63,782. I was leaving aside for the moment, the question of new rates. Suppose the Legislature had acted upon the belief that the incidence of old rates was necessarily different from the incidence of new rates, might they not have been able to legislate much more wisely?—Possibly, but we have to take legislation as it has been, and I say that Parliament has dealt with these rates as if they were not an hereditary burden. I am interested, and have been interested in some land which was extra parochial; we have had evidence here from witnesses about land which was extra parochial which paid no rates whatever, and Parliament in its wisdom decreed that those lands should pay rates. Now I say it is impossible to maintain the hereditary burden theory and to justify that.

63,783. Yet as a matter of fact the hereditary burden theory may have been true, and the Legislature may have been wrong in its idea?—It is quite possible, but I prefer the practical view which Parliament took.

63,784. Is it not also the practical view of business men, speaking as a matter of common sense in reference to what business men do that a new investor in land would not pay the burden of the land tax and the tithe rentcharge, and the rates at all; he would allow for it all in the price he pays for the property?—He buys it with the equities—if I may say so—the right which every man has to claim that he shall only pay a fair proportion of taxation for public objects.

63,785. But, as a matter of fact, he judges that this special charge is upon the property and he allows for it in his investment; he knows as a matter of fact that such and such things are very likely to happen, and he makes a shot at it, so that he does not bear the burden of the rates after his investment?—I say that the case to me appears analogous to that of a man who buys Consols knowing that for 10,000*l.* he will not get 275*l.* odd; he knows that he will have to pay so much income tax out of that. By that argument he really pays no income tax, and you ought to begin to tax him again. If you maintain the hereditary burden theory and carry it out to the extreme on every change you must assume that the man pays no rates at all, and you must begin to rate him afresh.

63,786. Is that quite so with reference to the income tax? I put it to you that as between different kinds of property the income tax does not divert an investor from one kind of property to another, but the rates and the tithe rentcharge and the land tax do, and therefore there is an essential difference between those taxes and the income tax?—Then if you argue that a man who buys land subject to rates pays no rates, why do you not begin to rate him again. You would eat up the whole property in that way if the property only changed hands sufficiently often.

63,787. That was not the point, I think; you do not begin to rate him again, as that would be unjust from the very nature of the tax?—If he pays none that would be only just.

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63,788. You make him pay income tax again—— ?—Excuse me, if he pays no rates it is only just that he should pay them. You said that providing he has bought land subject to rates he pays none.

63,789. Not if it is in the nature of a rentcharge; that would be departing from the idea of a rentcharge?—You may call it what you like I call it an outgoing, a deduction from value.

63,790. I am merely trying to point out that there is an essential difference between that and the income tax?—It may be so.

63,791. You admit it?—No, I admit nothing.

The Parish Councils Act.

63,792. In referring to the parish councils I think you, in answer to a question of mine, have said that the money was voted by one set of people and paid by another set of people?—Yes, to a great extent that is the case.

63,793. Is it not the case really that that is one of the essential difficulties of popular local government as we have it now, that one set of people votes the money, and owing to the way in which the money is raised by taxes upon a special kind of property, another set of people pays the money?—Yes, that is undoubtedly the case and that is what gives such great dissatisfaction with the Parish Councils Act. For myself I do not hesitate to say that it is the most iniquitous piece of legislation which I ever remember. The power is put entirely into the hands of people who pay no rates directly. I am not here to argue that some of the rate does not eventually fall upon them, but they contribute nothing directly to the rates and they do not feel the fluctuation in the rates. Entire power is given into their hands and they have every interest in promoting expenditure, and they can go away immediately that the rate falls upon them and escape the burden.

63,794. Would not the remedy for that be that as local revenue is necessarily almost entirely derived from certain kinds of local property the local government should be associated in some way with the owners of that kind of property?—Yes, I think that was one of the particular points of injustice of the Local Government Act, that it deprived the owner as such of all share in the administration.

63,794*a*. (*Mr. Everett.*) All share?—As owner.

63,795. But he has a vote?—He has no vote as owner.

63,796. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Not for the parish council?—No.*

63,797. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) So that as long as local income is derived from the sources from which it is at present derived it would be desirable that local government should be to some extent put into the hands of the people who pay the rates in order to promote good management, is not that your opinion?—I am strongly of opinion that some effort should be made to impose the rate directly upon those who have a vote, and I am not afraid to say that I would limit the vote to those who paid rates directly. I think it could be arranged. Then upon the question of owners having a vote, I speak under correction in the presence of gentlemen who must know better than myself, but I should be very much surprised to find that an owner of property who may own the whole of a parish, who may pay the whole rates of a parish, has a vote unless he is an occupier and resident in the parish.

(*Chairman.*) Of course the owner, unless he applies for his vote, may not have got one. He does not come on to the list of voters as a matter of course, but if he applies for his vote in respect of his ownership as a freeholder he would get it. There is no doubt that an owner is entitled to vote in respect of his freehold property for the parish council.

Rates on agricultural land.

63,798. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Can you say what is the amount of rates per £ upon agricultural land in England?—No, that is impossible for me to say, I do not know whether Mr. Dalton could, but I am sure I could not.

63,799. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I suppose Mr. Lambert means at the present moment. Of course we have back figures for past years, but the local taxation returns are very much in arrear?—It is almost impossible to distinguish agricultural land from other property; there is not a union in the kingdom where there is not accommodation land attached to houses in the immediate vicinity of villages and towns occupied by tradesmen and others which can hardly be considered as agricultural land, and you cannot separate them.

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63,800. (*Mr. Lambert.*) How much do you think would be necessary to put prosperity in land, upon a fair rateable basis with other property?—Do you mean for local rates?

63,801. For local rates?—I do not see how you can localize other property, that is the difficulty.

63,802. How much do you think it would be necessary to hand over to local authorities, in order to place the land upon a fair rateable basis?—I cannot possibly say. My argument is, that you ought first of all to ascertain what are the respective contributions of the different descriptions of property, to objects which are of national or Imperial interest, and then endeavour to make the contribution for all purposes fair to the possessors of all sorts of income.

63,803. You would not be able to say now how much it would take?—No.

Basis of assessment.

63,804. I would now like to ask you whether rent would not be a fairer criterion of the value of a farm than the judgment of an assessing committee?—I do not think so as between man and man; I am not speaking as between landlord and tenant, but as between one property and another for taxation purposes.

63,805. Does between man and man enter into it; is it not a case as to how much a property is fairly entitled to be assessed at?—Certainly that is the question. If owing to the mismanagement or the want of means of either landlord or tenant, this property is reduced in value for a time, and therefore cannot find a tenant; if for these reasons it is let at a nominal sum, as was remarked by Mr. Everett, then to assess that property down to its present value, is to put a premium upon bad farming, and to fine the owner and the occupier who keep up the land in good condition.

63,806. That may be true, but still in the majority of cases would not the rent which was paid for that impoverished land be somewhere near its true value?—It might be its true value for one year, but the principle of assessment is what it will let for one year with another, and therefore that involves the question of the inherent capacity of the land—what the land is capable of doing. If a man puts his land to a bad use, to reduce his assessment to half the value of that of a man who puts his land to a good use, is, I should say, a very unwise and even unjust proceeding.

63,807. Do you think any man would for the mere purpose of reducing his assessment, impoverish his land?—No, I do not think that for a moment. But I say that a man does it for various reasons, amongst others want of money, why should the burden of his rates be thrown upon another man, because you cannot exempt that man without throwing the burden upon someone else.

63,808. What is the special capacity of the assessment committee to assess a farm, or to find out its annual value, better than putting that farm in the market, when it gets its competitive rent?—The assessment committee is frequently, and I should say generally, composed of men who know the whole district, and are capable of forming an opinion, on broad lines, as to the average value, one year with another, of properties.

63,809. Do they know each particular case in each particular farm?—Some one does.

63,810. Is it the case that someone does, is it the fact?—I should think so, but really, I cannot answer for all the assessment committees in the kingdom.

63,811. I want to get this out because, in your evidence in answer to Question 62,867, you said that assessment based on rent is essentially bad?—I said that, based on rent entirely, it was bad on the face of it, and that is by a decision of a court of law.

63,812. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You may have in a town, and frequently do have a row of houses of practically the same size, and practically in every respect the same value, but if you were to ascertain at what rent they were let would you not find that it varied very considerably in that row?—I have no doubt you would, but I am so very little acquainted with towns.

63,813. Assuming that to be the case, and I think there is no doubt about it, would you think it very wrong in that row of houses to take the assessment of each according to the rent?—I would.

* The witness desires to withdraw this statement, which is incorrect.

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63,814. And would you fix what you thought was the fair assessable value for that row if those houses were exactly alike, and would you assess each at that value, which, in many cases, would differ from the rent?—Yes, that is what I contend is the principle of the assessment. This is the judge's decision in a case where the overseers had taken actual rent as the absolute criterion of value:—"In assessing premises,* "the overseers should proceed on the estimate, not of "the rent actually paid for the premises by the occu- "pier, but of the rent at which they might reasonably "be expected to let from year to year."

63,815. (*Mr. Lambert.*) In the majority of cases would not the rent which the owner receives, be the rent which the premises would reasonably let for from year to year?—Yes, I think it would; on the average it would.

63,816. In the great majority of cases?—Yes.

Assessment authority.

63,817. Have you thought out the matter about the official valuer that you mentioned just now as to what his duties should be, or who should appoint him, and such like?—I take the suggestion which was made in various Bills that have been submitted by different Governments, I believe Governments on both sides have submitted Bills to Parliament providing for the presence of the surveyor of taxes on the assessment committee, and I may say that, though at the time I was strongly opposed to the idea, experience has convinced me that it would be desirable to have someone of that character. I do not bind myself exactly to the surveyor of taxes, but I think he is in a position to know what is paid for different properties, and the comparative value of different properties, and he would be in a position which no individual who is not an official likes to take up, namely, of being able to object to the low assessment of certain properties. In the past you find very remarkable evidence in some of those reports I have referred to—I cannot give you the exact reference now—of an immense quantity of property which has entirely escaped assessment by favour of the overseers or others. I have myself come across pieces of land which had never paid, until recent times, any rate or tax of any kind; they have been omitted, I suppose, by favour. There is a case reported in Parliament in one of these reports, and I can give you the reference of it, where a property worth 20,000*l.* had been exempted from rates by favour of the overseers.

63,818. Is that the whole change that you would make in the body for assessing property?—No, I cannot say that I have formed a scheme for setting up an assessment board for all purposes. I was asked by the right honourable gentleman, the President of the Board of Agriculture, if I did not think one assessment would be desirable. I say I think it would, but I am not prepared to say what sort of a board should be set up for assessment. I am prepared to recognise the necessity of having someone in an official capacity who will not be afraid to speak the truth about properties that are assessed below value.

63,819. (*Mr. Everett.*) Who would be impartial?—Yes.

The "hereditary burden" theory.

63,820. (*Mr. Dalton.*) It has been suggested with regard to the hereditary theory doctrine that a burden although unjust originally becomes just by effluxion of time; that I think has been one of the arguments adduced in favour of it?—That I understand to be the argument, and my sense of justice revolts against it.

63,821. Taking the land tax, which has always been taken as the extreme case in justification of the hereditary burden; has not the result been exactly the opposite; is it not the case of a burden that may have been just originally, but which has become unjust by effluxion of time?—It was more just originally, because it not only included land, but it included personal property.

63,822. It was a tax on means and substance?—Yes, and it was in fact a sort of income tax, but personal property evaded that tax as it evaded local rates. Of course, as property has increased in some places a hundred fold and in some places ten fold, I should say what might have been just—I will not say it was just—but what might have been just a hundred years ago has become very unjust now.

* Hayward *v.* Brinkworth, 10, L.T., 608.

63,823. I think we heard that Hertfordshire bears twice the amount of land tax that Lancashire does?—That is so.

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63,824. Is that not a case of a tax which, although it might have been just originally, has become not more just by effluxion of time, but far more unjust?—Certainly, I think so.

63,825. Then if the land tax is not a tax, but is merely a rentcharge, what possible justification can we have now in altering the law with regard to it? We have had various recommendations by which the land tax may be mitigated in various districts, but if it is not a tax, what right has the Commission to make any recommendation upon it?—I suppose we can recommend what we like?

63,826. But you would agree that if we make a recommendation on the subject——?—I should treat it as a burden; I should refuse to bring my mind to consider it as anything but a burden upon the land.

63,827. Then with regard to that, we have been told that various eminent authorities have come to the conclusion that it was not a tax. Do you remember how it was dealt with by Mr. Goschen in his report on local taxation?—I believe it is treated as a tax falling upon real property.

63,828. On page 30 of his report he says, "the "taxes falling on real property are as follows and the "first of those is 'the land tax amounting, for Eng- "land, to 1,082,000*l.*'" Is not that a clear indication that he considered it was a tax?—I think he must have done.

63,829. And had not then ceased to be a tax?—I think so.

63,830. It is afterwards spoken of there amongst the burdens borne by real property; do you think it can be argued that anything has happened since that report to make it cease to be a burden on real property?—Certainly not; rather the other way.

Compounding.

63,831. (*Mr. Channing.*) Have you any experience of the effect of compounding; has it led to the assessment of houses in urban districts being lower than in the neighbouring rural districts?—No, I cannot say that I have any experience of urban districts.

63,832. That has not been the cause of the lower assessments in the towns in Cambridgeshire, that you have referred to?—I do not think I referred to lower assessments in towns, did I?

63,833. (*Viscount Cobham.*) You referred to 23 unions, did you not?—I gave 23 unions where buildings had decreased in value, but I did not give any details.

63,834. (*Mr. Channing.*) You do not attribute that to compounding?—Compounding is no new thing. I think myself that in view of the powers given to labourers under the Local Government Act, that the Small Tenements Rating Act ought to be repealed, and that no compounding should be allowed.

63,835. But you are not in a position to give any information as to whether the practice of compounding has led to any unfair assessment of one class of house property as compared with another?—No, I know that the discount, if I may call it so, allowed in different parishes varies very considerably.

63,836. Is that considered and allowed for, do you think, by assessment committees?—I do not know, and I could not answer that question.

63,837. Then what is your view with regard to compounding and the parish council? Would you abolish compounding or merely prohibit those who compounded from voting?—I would not care which way it was. I would not like to disfranchise a man unnecessarily, but I think it should be a condition of his being an elector that he should pay rates directly.

Collection of rates.

63,838. Do you think that the difficulties of collection that were pointed out, I do not know whether you are familiar with them, are to be got over or not?—I think they should be got over in some way. I am quite sure in rural parishes it would not be a difficult thing, but it may be where there are a great number of lodgers and lodging-houses in a town. I remember being in the gallery of the House of Lords one night when I heard Lord Balfour of Burleigh say that the loss which the Glasgow people sustained from rates uncollected was less than the discount which is allowed in a great many English parishes for the collection of rates and that they could afford to lose some rates.

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63,839. In spite of that argument the House of Lords practically decided in the other sense?—Yes.

63,840. The difficulties were not insuperable?—That is so.

Expenditure under the Parish Councils Act.

63,841. Just one question with regard to the expenditure of parish councils; if that expenditure is shown to check rural depopulation by making village life more bearable to the inhabitants and to supply farmers with a better class of labourers, the rates would not be wholly expended in an unproductive manner, would they?—That is such a purely hypothetical question, I really do not see how any expenditure of the parish can do that.

63,842. You do not deny that recreation grounds and allotments are an inducement to labourers to remain in a village, do you?—I cannot see the necessity for recreation grounds in a village such as nine out of ten of our villages are. People go about in the fields wherever they please. They can always get a pitch for cricket or a field for football, and many of them have got a village green. To provide recreation grounds there appears to me to be simply looking out for a way of spending the ratepayers' money.

State subventions.

63,843. That is your view of it. Then your general case as far as I understand it, is that although there have been very heavy grants in aid and subventions, they do not meet and relieve the immediate pressure on individual landowners and occupiers; I suppose that is your general contention?—My general contention is that subventions have been made which have arrested the growth of rates for a time, but as, you will see, only for a time, and that Parliament while it has given with one hand has thrown increased burdens upon us by the other hand. All the subventions that we have got will be absorbed by new objects of expenditure. We are constantly having fresh things brought upon the county council which cause us to spend money, and I imagine that the whole subventions which we have had since 1889 will be swallowed up by these new objects and by the Parish Councils Act in a very short time.

63,844. Is it an objection which some people take to grants in aid that they really alter the principles of the incidence of taxation locally?—I do not believe for one moment, they have had the effect which is attributed to them of increasing expenditure, but the expenditure is growing naturally and from the variety of objects that are thrown upon the administration of the county council.

63,845. I do not mean that quite so much; I mean that the principle of grants-in-aid does not really touch the principle of the incidence of these classes of expenditure on the persons you are concerned for?—So far as subventions are derived entirely from property which does not contribute to local taxation they are a benefit, but so far as they are subventions made out of the general fund of the Exchequer to which rateable property contributes they may serve to disguise the rise of expenditure, but they really come out of the purse to which the ratepayer contributes.

Areas of taxation.

63,846. Exactly. The question I am leading up to is this: whether you do not wish to alter the principles of the incidence of local taxation?—I am not at all satisfied. I think that you want to limit the areas within which certain taxes are raised. I cannot imagine there can be any justice in levying a rate upon a man who lives four miles from a village for the purpose of supplying water to the inhabitants of that village; in the same way, as has been pointed out by several witnesses here, that a farmer pays for draining the cottages and houses in a village six or seven miles away, and he has to drain his own.

63,847. (*Mr. Everett.*) At his own expense?—Yes.

Recommendations.

63,848. (*Mr. Channing.*) I do not want to go into the question very largely, but you made certain suggestions to the Richmond Commission as to which I was asking you when your examination was interrupted the other day, and you summed those up under four heads; how would you expand or qualify them in the light of the experience of the last 12 years?—I think I said when I came here that I was not going to suggest remedies, that I thought that would rather come from me in the discussion on the report as a Commissioner than as a witness here. I do not know that there is anything that I recommended there which I should not adhere to, but I do not think, considering the changes which have been made since the date of that report I ought to be bound by recommendations which I made then.

63,849. I will ask one question, if it will not trench on the report, and that is whether you are in favour of introducing anything like the system which the Scotch have tried for a number of years but which I think they have practically rejected, I mean the system of some form of local taxation on personalty and other kinds of property?—In answer to the Chairman I said I was not at all prepared to recommend an income tax upon property locally, that is to localise the income tax.

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Scotch system of classification.

63,850. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I am speaking from recollection, but I think that one of your recommendations was rather in favour of the Scotch system of classification?—Yes, I am distinctly in favour of that. I think that the system in Scotland is perhaps too elaborate for our English habits, and that we cannot expect our assessment committees or any similar bodies to adopt such complicated scales as many parishes have adopted in Scotland. But I am entirely in favour of the classification of property for rating purposes, that is of a higher rate upon one description of property than upon another. For myself I know I should rather like to see a classification of rates, and some examination of rates for the purpose of determining which of those rates are national in character, which of them are what I may call of a provincial character, in which a larger area than a parish is interested, and which of them are so purely local that a parish might be asked to bear them, and then in the parish which of them only affect houses or a limited area of the parish.

63,851. (*Mr. Channing.*) You would apply this principle of the classification of property and also of the classification of rates in order to produce what you consider to be the equitable incidence of local expenses on every class of local property and interest?—Of course you cannot arrive at an exact equality, but anything which would tend to equalise the burden in proportion to the means of bearing it I think would be a decided improvement.

Reduced assessment of land.

63,852. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Do you see any objection to assessing land at a fourth?—I see a great objection to assessing it at anything for some purposes, I think that land beyond a certain limit should not contribute to such purposes as the drainage of a town and the water supply to a village; I do not think it ought to contribute to those. But for other purposes it might fairly contribute one-fourth of its value, or rather one-fourth of the rate. It would be much better to say distinctly that the rate is one-fourth on land and not to say that the assessment is one-fourth.

Division of rates.

63,853. (*Mr. Channing.*) One great evil, of course, has been the sudden coming of large rates for specific purposes, and in connexion with that, are you prepared to support what was recommended by the Richmond Commission; and carried out by the Duke of Richmond on his own estates, namely, the division of the rates between the owner and the occupier on some equitable basis?—I have for many years been an advocate for the division of rates between owners and occupiers at the termination of the present engagements. I advocated it before the Richmond Commission, on the ground that all classes would have a direct interest in the administration, but I think that recent legislation has taken away so much of the power of the owners that it would hardly be fair to them that they should pay half the rate.

63,854. But supposing a new rate, of relatively oppressive character, were imposed during the course of a lease, do you not think it would be just that that rate, not having been contemplated in the original bargain, should be divided at the time, and not at the end of a lease?—I do think so. The precedent that was adopted with regard to the cattle plague rate might be followed. You will remember that a special rate was laid upon certain counties for losses in connexion with the cattle plague, and half of that was recoverable by the tenant from the landlord. That is in an extreme case of a sudden and unexpected rise of rates for a particular purpose.

63,855. My question was rather with regard to a new rate which was not contemplated at the time of the bargain?—Yes, I understood.

Imposition of new rates.

63,856. (*Mr. Dalton.*) You object, I understand, altogether to the imposition of new rates on rateable property?—On the old basis.

63,857. Without personalty contributing to them?—Certainly, so long as the basis of taxation is what it is.

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63,858. And you think that an unintentional injustice was done by the Education Act of 1870, which was supposed to impose a rate of only 3*d.* in the £, but which has turned out to be the imposition of a rate, in some cases that you have mentioned, of 2*s.* 11*d.*?—Yes, I think it is a very great injustice, and, as I said on the first day that I gave evidence, I think that Parliament has shown very great callousness as to the hardships which individuals may suffer. I remember a case of a farm where during the lease, by the Union Chargeability Act, the rates were increased 10*s.* an acre; an additional rent was therefore imposed upon that tenant for the remaining years of his lease of 10*s.* an acre.

63,859. (*Mr. Everett.*) What do you take as your county rate basis in the county you are chairman of?—We have taken the rateable value from each union.

63,860. Rather than Schedule A.?—We have not taken Schedule A.

63,861. I suppose Schedule A. in your county would be higher than the union assessment, as a whole?—Yes, it would be higher than the rateable value; it is so everywhere. I imagine the difference is greater where there is a larger proportion of house property, because the deductions which are admissible in the case of rating and are not admissible in the case of income tax, are much greater in the case of house property and buildings than they are in that of land.

Expenditure under the Parish Councils Act.

63,862. (*Chairman.*) You expressed some alarm about the expenditure by parish councils, I think?—Yes.

63,863. Is that rather in the nature of a prophecy or is it founded upon experience of the year that the Act has been in operation?—It is rather from going about the country and from hearing what is contemplated and being canvassed.

63,864. Is there anything which has led you to believe that already the parish councils have shown an indifference to expenditure?—I gave an instance of a parish of 500 inhabitants, with perhaps 200 or 250 people in the village, agreeing to adopt the Lighting and Watching Act, and I said that the great majority of the electors there were people who did not pay any rates at all.

63,865. Would you go on to say that the thing was unreasonable?—Yes.

63,866. That it was not wanted?—Certainly.

63,867. Should you say, generally speaking, from the experience you have had, that there has been an indifference to economic questions?—I think it is too early to judge.

63,868. So far as it has gone at present, my experience is in the other direction. I think that they are extremely unwilling to spend money in the parish councils, and that is what I hear generally, namely, that they are very unwilling to spend money?—I know that there are some very ambitious projects canvassed among them. I know in our parish which is one of 11,000 acres, there is only one farmer upon the parish council, and they have had some very ambitious projects—I cannot say they have adopted them.

Expenditure by county councils.

63,869. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is it not your experience of local administration, that when a new body is first formed its expenditure does not at once run up very highly, but that it gradually swells and increases year by year; has that not been the case with the county rate in your county since the constitution of county councils?—There is no doubt it was the case with the county council. I do not know that individually the members of the county council are a bit more extravagant in their ideas than the magistrates were, but certainly the expenditure has very greatly increased. You have got a large body of 50 or more members, and frequent meetings, which you must have, and expenses increase.

63,870. But you would not find that immediately after the passing of the Local Government Act that the county council rate rushed up?—It did.

63,871. You found it gradually increase, did you not?—The increase was almost immediate.

63,872. The fact that the parish councils have not at the present moment raised high rates must not be taken as an indication of the expenditure that may be thrown on the local rates ultimately by them. Was it not the case that when the Elementary Education Act came into force there were none of these high school rates, it being several years before the high school rates became common?—I think it was.

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63,873. And now they are growing more common every year?—I point out to you that our rate for the last year of the magistrates' control was 5¾*d.*; for the first year under the county council, 7*d.*; the next year, 7*d.*; then we had three years at 9*d.*; then we had 10*d.*, and then 11*d.*

63,874. That is my point, that it is progressive?—I is so.

63,875. At starting you had an increase of about 1½*d.* in the £?—Yes.

63,876. It has now arrived at an increase of 5*d.* or 6*d.* in the £?—Yes.

63,877. Is that not invariably the result of the formation of a new authority that you do not feel the full effect of it at once on the rates?—Yes, but I have only had experience of that one, and I cannot say "invariably," therefore.

63,878. You would find that in the case of the history of the school board rates?—Possibly.

63,879. For some years after the Act of 1870 there were none of these high school board rates?—Possibly, I do not know.

63,880. But you see they are becoming commoner every year, and growing higher every year?—Yes. I see in the Report of the Education Department that the per-centage of those districts which have a high rate increases from year to year.

63,881. (*Chairman.*) But still, is it not necessary to go a little further and investigate the question whether this expenditure was justifiable and necessary or not? it is not an argument entirely conclusive to show that the rates have been rising. In order to justify the conclusions you aim at it would be necessary to show that the expenditure has been unnecessary, would it not?—Yes.

Expenditure under the Parish Councils Act.

63,882. You have expressed your alarm at the prospect of the future of the parish councils, because you have said we have given the expenditure of those rates to a number of people who are not interested in paying the rates themselves?—Yes, and it was not only my alarm and impression; it was the alarm which I find all over the country. It has been my business in the last few months to go into a great many parishes and everywhere I have heard the same tale.

63,883. That alarm was a good deal expressed in Parliament, I think too, during the discussion?—Possibly.

63,884. But Parliament passed the Act notwithstanding?—Yes.

63,885. Is your own parish a purely rural parish?—Yes.

63,886. No town in it?—No.

63,887. Is there any village?—It is divided into three ecclesiastical parishes; there is an almost continuous line of cottages extending for about a mile and a half and then there is an open tract of country for eight or nine miles.

63,888. I suppose the valuation of land in that parish would enormously exceed the valuation of buildings; have you got the valuation?—I have got the total rateable value which is 18,757*l.*; and then the rateable value of railways, tramways, waterworks main, and a canal and everything of that character amounts to 1,603*l.*

63,889. Out of how much?—Out of 18,757*l.*

63,890. You do not know how much of the remainder belongs to the land?—No; if the instructions of the Local Government Board were carried out and the returns of lands and buildings were accurately observed, I should think that the buildings would be a very small part of this, that is to say, that the farm houses and farm buildings being assessed in with the farms, the other buildings must be of very small value. There are about 1,700 people, so there would be about 350 houses, and possibly those houses might not be—the greater part of them—assessed at more than 3*l.*, that would mean 1,000*l.*; then if you put a few places of business I should think 1,200*l.* would cover it, apart from the farm houses, but I do not know.

Taxation in rural parishes.

63,891. What is the possibility of re-arranging the system of taxation in a parish of a purely rural character like that, what property is there on which you can throw the burden other than land?—I do not imagine that you could revert to a parish liability, I imagine you would go on a union.

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63,892. If there is to be a parish council, which is to undertake any expenditure, I presume it must raise the rates?—Yes.

63,893. If there is a school board within the parish, it must raise the rates?—Yes.

63,894. Inasmuch as the school is limited to that parish, you could not call upon other parishes to pay?—No.

63,895. Of course there is a question whether the contribution from the State might be extended, but still, whatever we do in that direction, there must still be a considerable sum raised in the parish?—Yes.

63,896. Under those circumstances, how could you throw that burden upon any other property than land in a purely agricultural parish?—For parochial purposes, you could only throw it upon the property existent in the parish.

63,897. Practically, in most of these rural villages, there is nothing but the land, the farmhouses, the owner's residence, and the cottages—and in an ordinary typical rural parish, those cottages belong to the landowner?—They do in many, of course; they do not in ours.

63,898. But in most rural villages they belong to the landowner?—In many; I should not say in most, because I do not know, but certainly in many.

63,899. At all events, in a great many?—Yes.

63,900. And they form but a very small item in the rates of the place?—Not a large one.

Incidence of rates in rural parishes.

63,901. How could you alter the system of rating in a parish like that so as to relieve the land considerably?—Of course, the relief would be very much less where there is no other property to contribute, but even then, it seems to me, it would be placed upon the right shoulders.

63,902. Would you not have to enormously increase the rate in the £ on the house property, if you took it alone?—I think, very largely.

63,903. Probably triple, or quadruple the amount?—Possibly.

63,904. Then in many rural parishes that would have to be paid ultimately by the landowner, too?—No, I do not admit that rates are paid by the landowner.

63,905. Not even a portion of them?—I was saying, before you came in, that when the subject was discussed in the House of Commons as to the labourers' votes, it was maintained most strenuously that the labourer did pay rates in his rent.

63,906. I think the better opinion now is, that in the case of house property, the occupier pays a portion of the rate, but not the whole of it?—Possibly, I am willing to admit that as a compromise, but it is just the same with land.

63,907. In the case of land, ultimately, it falls wholly or nearly wholly upon the landowner?—"Ultimately" is the point where two parallel lines meet; it is as distant as that.

Assessment authority.

63,908. On another point, I was not here when you gave your evidence about a new authority for assessing property for rates; am I to understand that you expressed the opinion that there should be one assessing authority both for local and for Imperial purposes?—I think that one assessment for both local and Imperial purposes is a desirable thing.

63,909. And that the assessor should be one person, I rather gathered?—No, I did not say that; I said an assessment board with the assistance of an official.

63,910. With an official to assist them?—Yes.

Assessment to income tax and rates.

63,911. I do not know whether you were here yesterday when Sir Alfred Milner was examined?—I was not, and I regretted very much that I could not be present.

63,912. I examined Sir Alfred Milner with reference to the very great difference between the assessment of land for income tax purposes, and the assessment of land for local rates; and I asked him whether he could explain why it was that the assessment of land for income tax purposes was so very much higher than for local purposes, the difference being about 7 per cent.?—Is it only 7 per cent.?

63,913. I think it is 7 per cent. or 8 per cent., but I am not quite certain. I am now taking the gross estimated rental, not the rateable value; the rateable value is a great deal more. If you take the gross estimated rental for local purposes and compare that with the income tax assessment, you will find the income tax assessment outside London, is 7 per cent. higher. Now, I asked Sir Alfred Milner whether he could explain that, and he was unable to give any sufficient explanation. He said that the assessment authorities for income tax purposes generally, take as their basis the local assessment, and that they make such other changes as they think fit, for they are not absolutely bound by the local assessment. Therefore, it would appear that the Commissioners for assessing the Income Tax have taken the assessment for local purposes, and have added 7 per cent. to it?—Will you allow me just to explain. Gross estimated rental is a column in the rate book which is regarded very differently by different overseers. These rate assessments are made by the overseers of parishes, and I have had to look into their assessments. I find that in many cases they deduct the tithe rentcharge before arriving at the gross estimated rental, which, of course, is wrong. The gross estimated rental should afford the means of comparison between two pieces of land of equal value, one of which may be subject to tithe rentcharge, and other charges, the other of which may be free. In the gross estimated rental column they should appear as of the same value if they are of the same gross value, but I find very frequently that they are entered at a different value, and that the tithe is deducted before the gross estimated rental is arrived at.

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63,914. Of course there may be mistakes of that kind in some places, but that does not account for the great difference?—May I ask whether this is the value under Schedule A. after the deduction for repairs?

63,915. It is the gross value?—The gross estimated of course should be the same.

63,916. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The tithe mistake, if it were general, would account for 3,000,000*l.* of this?—Yes, but I do not suppose it is universal.

63,917. That cannot be a general mistake, but it may be done here and there?—It is very common, I fancy.

(*Mr. Everett.*) It is more likely to be made if the landlord pays the tithe.

63,918. (*Chairman.*) The only question I am pointing to is, whether the landowners might not go further and fare worse—whether, if there was a true valuation of the whole country—and one would think the income tax valuation on the whole, is likely to be the truest one—the assessment might be put rather higher for local purposes than it is now?—I think the landowners and farmers too would be satisfied if the assessment was made on all upon equal terms. It would not matter then whether it was high or low.

63,919. It would matter as between the value of the land, and the value of other property?—But I am supposing something extending to other property.

63,920. The gross estimated value of land for rateable purposes, is given in the return before me as 37,286,000*l.*, and the rateable value at 33,654,000*l.*; and the assessment on land only, for income tax purposes is 40,062,000*l.*, and therefore there is a difference of nearly 3,000,000*l.* in comparing the income tax assessment with the gross estimated rental; and, of course, a very much larger difference when you compare it with the actual rateable value.

63,921. (*Mr. Dalton.*) The three millions might be practically covered by the tithe. Assuming that the rateable value only allowed for a deduction of one-ninth from the gross estimated rental, then they must, in arriving at the gross estimated rental, make certain deductions?—I believe that in lots and lots of unions, as far as my experience goes, the gross estimated rental is a column that is very little regarded; the rateable value is the practical point to which they direct their attention. I know that in one case where a parish was valued the value is arrived at the rateable value, and then created the gross estimated rental from the rateable.

63,922. (*Chairman.*) Still if we take the rateable value instead of the gross estimated value there would be a difference of nearly 16 per cent.?—That you can very well understand.

63,923. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Ought it not to be 16 per cent. below the gross estimated rental after the proper deductions?—I should have thought it would be more. If you take the gross estimated rental it includes tithe rentcharges, and, in our county, drainage rates and expenses of that kind. The deduction from the gross

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estimated rental to form the rateable value would be a very large one; in some places it would be 40 per cent.

63,924. (*Chairman.*) The gross estimated rental includes tithe ultimately?—It should, and drainage too.

63,925. And so does the rateable value include tithe?—Yes, the gross.

63,926. It is included in both because you are speaking of the actual value of the land, no matter by whom the rate is paid. Of course the landowner would have to deduct the value of the tithe when he pays his rates?—Yes.

63,927. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I should have said that the 16 per cent., which would be the difference between the income tax valuation and the rateable value, was not at all an unfair deduction to arrive at the rateable value?—I am only surprised that it is so small.

63,928. We were discussing this afternoon an assessment of 1803; that assessment showed that it was raised upon an actual value of three-fourths, which would be a deduction of 25 per cent., and I think you agreed that that would be a fair deduction at the present time, but the deduction shown by these figures is only 16 per cent. and not 25.

(*Chairman.*) All I say is that that figure is far beyond the figures which any county authority or rating authority has given as the amount of their deduction which they allow in the case of land.

63,929. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Would that be within your experience?—I should have thought that the percentage deduction from the gross estimated rental was more than that.

63,930. Is not the amount allowed for the purposes of the income tax one-eighth for repairs?—Yes, 12½ per cent.

63,931. That is 12½ per cent. straight off allowed for the purposes of the income tax?—Yes.

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School board rate.

63,932. (*Mr. Chaplin.*) With regard to what you were saying just now about the education rate you were asked, how you could throw it on other property in existence in the parish if the land was to be relieved from it. But is there not another alternative; have you not often heard the claim made that the education rate ought to be a national charge altogether?—Certainly, and I quoted Sir William Harcourt last week on that point.

63,933. That you would approve of as the right alternative, I understand?—I imagine that if you have local administration some part of the burden must fall upon the locality. But I was asked by Mr. Dalton if I would not approve of some effective limit being put to the amount of the taxation, and I said that I thought I should.

63,934. Whatever relief is to be given in that respect I understand you contemplate should be given from national sources, and should not fall upon the other descriptions of property in the parish?—Certainly.

Division of rates.

63,935. You advocate, and I remember that you always did advocate, the division of rates between landlord and tenant; ought such a division, in your opinion, to be accompanied by some additional representation for the landowners?—Yes. I said that I was not so strong upon that point now that the owners have so much less power in the administration of affairs, but I think if they are to pay rates they ought to have distinctly a power of having their views represented.

63,936. Then I rightly interpret your views, I think, if I say that this division of rates between landlords and tenants which you advocate, ought to be be accompanied by, and ought to be contingent upon, some additional representation for the landlords?—I think so certainly.

Adjourned to Friday next at half-past 11 o'clock.

One Hundred and Seventeenth Day.

Friday, December 13, 1895.

PRESENT:

THE RIGHT HON. GEORGE JOHN SHAW-LEFEVRE IN THE CHAIR.

The Right Hon. BARON RENDEL.
The Right Hon. HENRY CHAPLIN, M.P.
The Right Hon. WALTER HUME LONG, M.P.
Sir ROBERT GIFFEN, K.C.B.
CHARLES ISAAC ELTON, Esq., Q.C.
Captain OWEN THOMAS.
FRANCIS ALLSTON CHANNING, Esq., M.P.
JOHN CLAY, Esq.
CORNELIUS NEALE DALTON, Esq., C.B.
ROBERT LACEY EVERETT, Esq.
JOHN GILMOUR, Esq.
GEORGE LAMBERT, Esq., M.P.
WILLIAM CUTLACK LITTLE, Esq.
CHARLES WHITEHEAD, Esq., F.L.S.

HERBERT LYON, Esq., *Secretary.*
R. F. CRAWFORD, Esq., ALAN MACKINNON, Esq., } *Assistant Secretaries.*

Sir A. Milner. 13 Dec. 1895.

Sir ALFRED MILNER re-called and further examined.

(*For previous evidence, see page* 471.)

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Income Tax. Assessment returns. value of.

63,937. (*Chairman.*) The question I want to put to you is one which I neglected to put the other day in reference to the Income Tax assessments on land. Do you think the Income Tax assessments on land afford a fair method of comparison for different periods, and for different parts of the country, and if not, is there any other test of comparative value?—I do think they afford a fair test for different periods and for different parts of Great Britain. I should not like to say the same of Ireland. I am speaking especially of Schedule A.

63,938. And in that part of the Schedule A. referring to land, I suppose?—Yes, I think it is the best index we have of the value of land, both positive and relative, but I should like to add that it may not be absolutely up to date. With rising values Schedule A. indicates something less than the true value at the moment; with falling values it indicates something more.

63,939. (*Mr. Everett.*) Would you object to put the word "considerable"?—I should object to put the word "considerable."

63,940. (*Chairman.*) When you say not absolutely up to date, are you referring to the fact that the valuation is, in the main, a quinquennial one?—Partly to the fact that it is a quinquennial one, and partly to the fact that with falling rents, whatever we may do, there is a tendency for the value to fall below the actual book assessment; but the main point of course is, that it is a quinquennial assessment.

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63,941. The last quinquennial valuation was in 1893-4?—It was; it represented the value of land in 1893.

63,942. Then at that quinquennial valuation there would only be one disturbing cause, namely, that which we have already referred to, that rents may not have fallen quite to the full amount?—The assessment may not have been reduced even then quite as much as it should have been, for the rents were falling all the time. Even at the period while the assessment was being carried out, the fall was going on.

63,943. But still at that period the assessment approximates very closely to the amounts in 1893?—I have no doubt of that.

63,944. Between one quinquennial valuation and the other, there is an opportunity to the landowners to appeal against the assessment on the ground that rents have fallen in the interval?—They can only appeal against the assessment, and the assessment can only be altered between the periods where there is a permanent reduction of rent. But as I explained, the landlords may not be paying upon the full assessment, because they may get abatements where there are temporary reductions of rent; the assessments are only altered where there are permanent reductions of rent.

63,945. Mr. Robinson, the vice-chairman of your board, in his evidence before the Commission, spoke of the quinquennial valuation taking place next year, I think?—Yes, but that is not so.

63,946. I think he must be mistaken in that respect; he must have mixed it up with the valuation of London, which would take place next year?—I have no doubt he thought the question referred to London. A new assessment comes into force next year for London; it has been already made.

63,947. But the valuation of the whole country in land would not take place till the next quinquennial valuation in 1898-9?—In the course of the year 1898 the valuation will be made, and the new assessment will come into force as from April, 1898.

63,948. You do not know of any other return of land existing in different parts of the country, at different times, except the income tax assessment?—No.

63,949. Or none so good?—None so good.

63,950. (*Mr. Little.*) Do I understand you to contend that the income tax returns afford a fair basis of comparison as between county and county?—I think they do.

63,951. Do you think that the exact rate of fall would be found that we might safely take the returns of, say, Essex, where the fall has been 40 per cent., and Cambridge 30 per cent., and so on; and take that as an absolute criterion?—I do not like to say that it is an absolute criterion, but I think that it is a fair criterion.

63,952. Would it afford a fair comparison?—Yes, a fair comparison.

63,953. You would admit that where rents have been largely abated, the income tax assessment does not show those abatements?—No, it does not.

63,954. Where those abatements have been considerable, there has been considerable depression?—Yes.

63,955. Where agriculture is more flourishing those abatements would not be made?—No.

63,956. Consequently the relative position of the two counties would hardly be shown by the assessment which remains at the full. Suppose in one of two counties abatements of 25 per cent. are made, and in another no abatements are made; the assessments would remain the same, but the facts would not be the same?—Well, I should think that the assessments would not permanently remain the same.

63,957. But for the five years they would remain the same?—In the intervals between the quinquennial assessments that would be so.

63,958. Then the income tax assessment would not show where a very large expenditure has been made upon an estate in order to maintain the rent?—No.

63,959. It may be in consequence of the depression in some counties that a large expenditure on drainage or buildings has to be made, and the income tax assessment has not been altered?—That is so.

Assessment of mortgaged property.

63,960. Is there not a great difficulty with some landowners in appealing against the income tax on account of the mortgages they have upon their property?—I am not aware of that difficulty.

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63,961. You cannot get the assessment reduced below the mortgage; is not that so?—As a matter of administrative convenience we should keep the amount of the mortgage in charge; the landowner would not pay it; the mortgagee would.

63,962. He gets it from the mortgagee?—Yes.

63,963. It is a fact that you cannot reduce the assessment of the estate below the mortgage, is it not?—I believe it is so, and it clearly ought to be so.

63,964. (*Mr. Lambert.*) Supposing a mortgage was double the value of the property, what would you do then?—As long as the mortgagee gets his interest, why should he not pay the tax?

63,965. (*Mr. Long.*) Supposing the mortgagee does not get the full rate of interest, would it then be impossible to get the reduction?—No, it would not be, but I should not like to answer right off how it would be managed.

63,966. (*Chairman.*) Perhaps you will add that to your evidence later?—Yes.*

63,967. (*Mr. Little.*) You are aware that in the depressed districts the mortgages are very considerable, and approach closely to the value of the land in many instances?—Yes, in many instances.

63,968. (*Mr. Everett.*) And greatly exceed it in many instances?—I think that is an over statement.

63,969. (*Mr. Little.*) The owner of a property who has very little margin over the mortgage is not very likely, is he, to go to the Income Tax Commissioners and prove the real value?—Why not?

63,970. I should have thought the reason was obvious that the mortgagee might foreclose, or give notice to pay off the mortgage?—Do you not think that the mortgagee knows the position of affairs already?

63,971. That may be, but you do not find landowners run down the value of the land which is mortgaged if they wish to hold it?—I thought they were all running down the value of land as hard as they could.

63,972. Not below the value of the mortgage, I should think. You would admit that the existence of mortgages tends to keep up the assessment on land?—To a slight extent.

63,973. Not to a considerable extent?—Not to a considerable extent.

63,974. You are aware that many small properties are kept on the assessment on account of the mortgage, that is to say, that the only tax that is paid is paid in respect of the mortgage?—Very likely.

63,975. And the owner in that case has no inducement to appeal against the assessment, whatever it may be?—That is so.

63,976. The assessment remains the same from time to time on a great number of small properties?—Yes.

Income Tax on unpaid rent.

63,977. I think you said in your evidence that a landlord could get back the Income Tax on rent which was not paid, is that so?—On rent which was not paid?

63,978. Yes, he could get it on an abatement, but I do not understand that that is so if the tenants fail to pay. You say, "Where a landlord merely gives back "a certain amount as temporary abatement, he comes "to us, and we give him back the Income Tax on the "amount which has been abated"?—That is where he himself has paid the Income Tax.

63,979. At Question 63,372 you say: "Or if his "tenants fail to pay. (*A.*) Yes"?—That is qualified, I think, later on, is it not? He can only get an abatement on that which he gives up.

Income Tax and local assessments.

63,980. That is only on an abatement. Then you admit, I think, that the Income Tax assessment is very largely affected by the parochial assessment or the union assessment?—I think the converse would be equally true.

63,981. That the union assessment is affected by the Income Tax?—Yes, because the pressure of the Income Tax authorities to get even assessments for their own purposes has, I think, affected the union assessment.

63,982. You mean that unions base their assessments on Schedule A. to some extent?—I think that in a case where we were so dissatisfied with the union assess-

* Where property is kept in charge to the amount of the mortgage interest, but the rent falls short of such interest and the interest is not paid in full, the landlord can obtain repayment of the tax on the difference between the amount assessed and the amount of rent received and paid to the mortgagee.

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ment that we took our own course about Schedule A., that might have an effect upon the union.

63,983. But of course the parochial assessment is the foundation of your assessment?—But we are quite independent of it, we are not bound by it in any way.

63,984. You are bound by the decision of the Local Commissioners?—Yes, by the Local Commissioners of Income Tax.

63,985. You are bound by their assessment of value?—Yes.

63,986. And do not you think that they are influenced by the parochial assessment?—To some extent they may be.

63,987. Very largely?—I should not like to say they would be largely influenced by it, if there was reason to suppose that it had been badly made.

63,988. Is not the argument frequently used at those Commissioners' meetings, "Oh, here is an assessment "made by men in the neighbourhood; it is likely to be "something like a fair value as compared with other "lands"?—I daresay it is.

63,989. Of course, where there is no rent, and a man occupies his own land, you must refer to some local estimate of value?—Yes.

63,990. Then if the Income Tax assessment is considerably influenced by the parochial assessment, would it not follow that in those counties where there has been no revision, or a very slight revision, of the union assessments, there has been a very slight alteration consequently in the Income Tax?—I should not like to answer that question without inquiry. You see there is a great difference between the Income Tax assessment and the gross estimate for Poor Law purposes—a large difference.

63,991. The present assessment, I suppose, has a 12½ per cent. taken off, that is allowed for repairs?—In my figures the 12½ per cent. was taken off.

63,992. In your total—I mean in the county figures for which we have a return?—No, it is not; it has not been taken off in the return for the separate counties.

63,993. (*Chairman.*) That will not be taken off the assessment?—No; it is technically not taken off the assessment, it is taken off the payment. The owners pay seven-eighths of the duty.

Income Tax assessment returns, value of.

63,994. (*Mr. Elton.*) I understand that the returns of valuation, of which we have been speaking, give a good measure of the value of land, especially with reference to Schedule A., as between county and county?—I think they do.

63,995. Now that gives, to some extent, a measure of the depression as between county and county?—Yes.

63,996. When you come within a county, do you think that they would give such a good measure of the depression in the different districts in that county?—I think they would.

63,997. Take an imaginary county, where there is a lot of very bad land, and a certain amount of accommodation land; do you think that the statistics would give any measure of the average depression in the bad land?—Not if you take the figures for the whole county, which might be kept up by the high figures of the accommodation land; you would have to analyse the figures to make them applicable.

63,998. You would analyse the returns instead of averaging them. If you average them you might go wrong; if you simply divide it by heads or acres or any other measure except by inquiry into the local circumstances you might go very wrong?—Certainly.

63,999. Is it not the fact that when the valuation is by counties or by districts analysed out of counties in that way, and the depression is dependent upon physical circumstances of soil, the Income Tax valuations would be a very difficult instrument to work to measure the particular district which had gone wrong, because the soil and other circumstances would have to be taken into account?—Not if the district was properly defined. It is of course misleading to draw conclusions as to a particular district from the average of the county. You may have a county in which, generally, there is a very small fall because there is a lot of accommodation land, and in which you may have a particularly poor district in which the fall is enormous.

64,000. I agree?—I quite agree with that.

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64,001. You ought to extend your inquiry so far as to say, to this extent: This is a county which has a deep clay district, and in which you ought to grow corn, and this cannot be compared for any statistical purposes with the land round the villas at the other end of the county, so as to produce a figure that will show depression in that deep clay district?—No.

64,002. At least it would be misleading to say, "My "good Sir, you have not lost very much, because the "Income Tax returns of your whole county only show "a loss of 10 per cent."?—It might be very misleading.

64,003. And there might be a loss of 90 per cent.?—Yes.

64,004. (*Chairman.*) And there may be a district which has suffered more than another, for in nearly every county there would be accommodation land which would not have suffered?—Yes.

64,005. (*Mr. Elton.*) But every county consists of several varieties of soil one worse than the other. Essex, for instance, has three Essexes, we have been told, with different qualities of soil, and of course the depression affects each geological zone?—Yes.

64,006. And therefore my question was not to apply only to town parks and accommodation lands?—No. Essex is a very good instance, for, taking it all round, the fall is enormous; yet at the same time you know that there are considerable districts in Essex where there is no fall or depression because of their proximity to a town or more favourable conditions of soil. Therefore the fall in the worst part of Essex is far larger than the average shown for the county.

64,007. (*Chairman.*) The Income Tax assessments do not show the full amount of depression in the purely agricultural districts, because they contain a great deal of property of accommodation character, land near the town, and also property like woods, game, and things of that kind, which are included, and which, if subtracted, you might then get a better measure and a truer deduction of agricultural land?—Yes.

64,008. (*Mr. Elton.*) You also take into account counties with bad soils and with good soils, and so on?—No doubt.

64,009. And there are differences of circumstances in every county which have to be analysed and taken into account before you can give an answer?—Yes.

Assessment of mortgaged property.

64,010. (*Lord Rendel.*) Reverting to mortgages: a mortgagor invariably deducts the Income Tax from the interest that he pays, does he not?—Yes, he has a legal right to do so.

64,011. And, therefore, in cases where land may be mortgaged close up to the profits, or even beyond the profit earned, the mortgagor gives himself the credit, not in relation to the profit, but in relation to the interest?—Quite so.

64,012. Then, consequently, it would follow, I presume, that the Inland Revenue would refuse to give relief to a mortgagor who might have paid Income Tax beyond the amount of his profit on the ground that he had really taken credit in the interest that he was paying to a creditor?—Certainly; the creditor actually pays.

64,013. The landowner does not pay?—There is no question of repayment in the case.

64,014. (*Mr. Everett.*) Are you aware that in the county of Suffolk, in a great many cases, the rents of farms to-day are 30, 40, and 50 per cent. lower than the Schedule A., on which the Income Tax was calculated in 1894?—I am not aware of it; I do not say that it is not so.

64,015. I am painfully aware of it as I am sitting on a Committee of Appeal for the County Assessments. Are you also aware that in many cases in Suffolk the mortgages exceed the value of the property—indeed, in many cases the property is not worth half or a third of the amount of mortgage; there are lots of cases like that?—I am not aware of them, I do not say that it may not be so. I am confident, if I may be permitted to say so, that the Commission would go wrong if they thought there was very much in that point about the mortgages, because however numerous may be the cases in which the value of a mortgage exceeds the value of the land, I feel confident—from what we have seen of Estate Duty Returns, in which, of course, the mortgage is always deducted to the full amount by the person presenting his return—that taking the land of the country as a whole, the quantity of land which is mortgaged above its value is a small proportion.

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Income Tax assessment returns, value of.

64,016. (*Mr. Dalton.*) I think you say that rising values on assessments are always something less than they should be, and that they are something higher than they should be with falling values. Could you give us any estimate of the per-centage we should allow for that in arriving at the actual fall that has taken place in the different counties from the maximum assessment?—I am afraid I could not.

64,017. But you do not regard it as anything very considerable, or should you regard it as something considerable?—You must define "considerable"; in the absence of a definition of the word "considerable" my answer would be misleading.

64,018. Would it be 3 or 4 per cent., or anything of that kind?—I should think the value of to-day might be 3 or 4 per cent. below that of 1893, the year of assessment.

Redeemed Land Tax.

64,019. I want to ask you one question with regard to the inclusion of the Redeemed Land Tax for the purposes of the table. Is it not the case that the payments which have been made for the redemption of this Land Tax have been capital payments on account of persons who have made the payments—they would be treated as capital payments on their part?—Yes.

64,020. How have they been treated when they have been paid into the Imperial revenue—have they gone in reduction of the National Debt;—Yes.

64,021. They have?—They have entirely.

64,022. Then the National Debt is now reduced to the extent of the capital which has been paid for those redemptions. The State is still deriving the benefit of the millions that have been paid in this redemption; is that so?—Of course, as it is deriving the benefit of all the millions paid in redemption of debt.

64,023. I think you said it was not for you but for the Commission to determine whether this Redeemed Land Tax should be included in the table; but is not that a matter which should be taken into account in coming to the decision?—But it is not for me to come to any decision.

64,024. But we want facts. We may take it as a matter of fact that the State is still deriving the same benefit or nearly the same benefit from those redemptions that it would have received from the payment of this tax by the owners if they had not redeemed it; they are paying so much less interest on debt instead of raising it in the shape of tax; is not that so?

(*Chairman.*) That is an argument which you are putting now, because the witness has refused to give an opinion upon the main point and you are now putting it in the form of an argument bearing upon that topic and asking the witness to answer that argument without committing himself to the full extent.

(*Mr. Dalton.*) What I was anxious to bring out, and I was not aware whether it was so or not, was the fact that the debt has been reduced to that extent.

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(*Chairman.*) I am quite ready that the witness should go into the whole subject.

(*Witness.*) If I did it would not in the least enlighten you.

64,025. (*Sir Robert Giffen.*) It would not make any difference to the reduction of debt, or anything else; the State has got the benefit of it?—The State has got the benefit of it.

64,026. (*Mr. Elton.*) A great deal has gone as part of a general surplus?—No, I beg your pardon. I do not mean that the sum paid in redemption of Land Tax goes into the general surplus; it is paid directly to the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt for that special purpose.

64,027. (*Mr. Dalton.*) Is it possible to state what the total amount of capital is, that has been paid in redemption in this manner?—Quite possible.

64,028. Could we have that?—Yes. *

64,029. (*Mr. Elton.*) Do you know how many Land Tax charges are kept up as charges on the estate?—I do not know.

64,030. You can only tell by the slow process of seeing the Estate Returns?—Yes.

64,031. Surely a considerable number of land charges are kept up for the benefit of the person redeemed?—I think they are.

64,032. Could you get us that information?—I am not sure; I will see.†

Income Tax assessment returns.

64,033. (*Mr. Long.*) Do you consider that Schedule A. is a better indication than Schedule B. at the present time?—Well, they are almost the same; as assessments there is very little distinction between them, but in respect of payment I think the payment under Schedule B. is a complete farce—a complete and absolute farce.

64,034. The payment of Income Tax?—Yes.

64,035. That would lead to this, would it not, that those who would pay under Schedule B. have no inclination to attend to the assessment, whether it is above or below the value, because they do not pay on it?—They do occasionally pay upon it, but a great many of them do not.

64,036. (*Chairman.*) The great bulk of farmers now pay nothing?—They pay nothing.

* The total amount of stock cancelled with money paid in redemption of Land Tax is 30,805,771*l.* This sum, however, is not identical with the amount paid by the persons redeeming, which could not be stated without an examination of all the contracts.

† There are 247 cases still existing of "Land Tax redeemed but not exonerated," *i.e.*, where the tax is kept in charge and collected, but paid over to the redemptioner or his representatives. Besides these there were originally 2,073 cases of Land Tax converted into fee farm rents, but some of these have probably been extinguished. There are no means of ascertaining the number of rentcharges created in lieu of Redeemed Land Tax.

The witness withdrew.

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MR. CHARLES W. RADCLIFFE COOKE, M.P. for Hereford, and Chairman of the National Association of Cider Makers.

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MR. AUBREY SPENCER, Assistant Commissioner, reported on the Counties of Oxford, Gloucester, Berks, and Wilts, the neighbourhood of Taunton, Somerset; and on the Vale of Aylesbury and County of Hertford.

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MR. JOHN SPEIR, Assistant Commissioner, reported on the counties of Ayr, Wigtown, Kircudbright, and Dumfries

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Mr. GEORGE FREDERICK BAKER, tenant farmer and miller, in Northamptonshire.

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Mr. LANGFORD LOVELL PRICE, Treasurer of Oriel College, Oxford.

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Mr. R. HUNTER PRINGLE, Assistant Commissioner, reported on the counties of Bedford, Huntingdon, and Northampton; also on South Durham and North and East Ridings of Yorkshire.

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Mr. JAMES HOPE, Assistant Commissioner, reported on the counties of Roxburgh, Berwick, Selkirk, Peebles, Linlithgow, Edinburgh, Haddington, Banff, Nairn and Elgin.

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Mr. GEORGE EDWARD BRISCOE EYRE, landowner in the New Forest.

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MR. WALTER WHEELER BERRY, Hop Grower and Farmer, Kent.

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MR. ERNEST SAMSON, Secretary of the National Association of Cider Makers.

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MR. ARTHUR WILSON-FOX, Assistant-Commissioner. Reported on the counties of Lincolnshire, (excepting the Isle of Axholme), Suffolk, Cambridge, and Cumberland.

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COLONEL HUGH ROBERT HUGHES, agent for Sir Watkin Williams Wynn, and owner of land in Wales.

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MR. JAMES BLACK, Tenant Farmer and Landower in the County of Elgin.

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MR. JAMES FYSHE, Tenant Farmer in Fifeshire.

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MR. JOHN BALLINGALL, Tenant Farmer in East Fifeshire.

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MR. JOHN MITCHELL, Tenant Farmer in North Fifeshire.

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MR. ANDREW SMITH, Tenant Farmer in East Lothian.

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MR. GEORGE RIDDELL, Grazier in East Lothian.

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MR. ALEXANDER CAMPBELL, Tenant Farmer, and representative of the Breadalbane Agricultural Association.

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MR. WALTER RUTHERFORD, Tenant Farmer in Perthshire and Agent in Roxburghshire.

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MR. WILLIAM McCONNELL, Farmer in Wigtonshire.

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DR. R. S. GIBB, Farmer in Berwickshire.

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MR. THOMAS RUSSELL, Chairman of the Teaching and Staff Committee of the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College, and Chairman of the County Council of Buteshire.

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MR. R. PATRICK WRIGHT, Professor of Agriculture in the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College.

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MR. THOMAS ROBERTS, Tenant Farmer in Carnarvonshire.

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MR. EDWARD MIALL NUNNELLY, Farmer in East Northamptonshire.

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MR. RICHARD BRITTEN, Tenant Farmer in Northamptonshire.

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MR. GEORGE W. FINN, Farmer and Auctioneer and Valuer, Faversham.

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MR. BLANDY JENKINS, Landowner in Glamorganshire.

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MR. PHILIP PENNANT PENNANT, Landowner and Chairman of Quarter Sessions in Flintshire.

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MR. OWEN WILLIAMS, Tenant Farmer in Denbighshire.

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MR. THOMAS JONES, Tenant Farmer and Valuer in Merionethshire.

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MR. JOHN THOMAS FISHER, Tenant Farmer in Pembrokeshire.

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MR. THOMAS DUTFIELD, Farmer in Monmouthshire.

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MR. WILLIAM DAVIES, Tenant Farmer and Valuer in Denbighshire.

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MR. ALFRED DARBY, Land Agent in Essex, and a Land Office Inspector under the Board of Agriculture.

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MR. ROBERT E. TURNBULL, a Member of the firm of Alfred Mansell and Co., Land Agents, Auctioneers, and Valuers, Shrewsbury.

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MR. OWEN PRICE, Farmer and Valuer in Breconshire.

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Mr. GRIFFITH JONES ROBERTS, Farmer in Anglesea and in Carnarvonshire.

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Mr. JOHN JENKIN DAVIES, Tenant Farmer in Cardiganshire.

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Mr. DUDLEY W. DRUMMOND, Agent for Lord Cawdor in Carmarthenshire, and an Inspector under the Land Improvement Acts of the Board of Agriculture.

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Mr. JOHN GIBSON KIRBY, Farmer in Glamorganshire.

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Mr. JAMES GRIFFITH, Tenant Farmer in Pembrokeshire.

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Mr. PARKER NORFOLK, Farmer and Land Agent in the West Riding of Yorkshire.

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Mr. CHRISTOPHER MATTHEWS, Tenant Farmer near Chelmsford.

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Mr. JOHN POWELL, Farmer and Valuer in Worcestershire.

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Mr. EDWARD BROWN, Lecturer on Aviculture at Edinburgh University and at other Colleges.

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Mr. JOHN CARY LOVELL, Member of the Firm of Lovell and Christmas, Provision Merchants, West Smithfield.

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I.

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MEMORANDUM with reference to proposed ALTERATIONS in the MODE of ADMINISTERING the AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS ACT.

May, 1895.

1. The country should, for the purposes of the Act, be divided into, say, five divisions, viz.: (1) the eastern district, comprising the three Lothians, Berwick, Peebles, Roxburgh, and Selkirk, 7; (2) the western and southern district, comprising Lanark, Renfrew, Dumbarton, Ayr, Dumfries, Bute and Arran, Kirkcudbright, and Wigtown, 8, being those more immediately devoted to the dairying industry; (3) the midland counties, comprising Fife, Forfar, Stirling, Perth, Kinross, Clackmannan, and Kincardine, 7; (4) the north-eastern counties, comprising Aberdeen, Banff, Elgin, and Nairn, 4; and (5) the northern and north-western district, comprising Inverness, Argyll, Ross, Cromarty, Sutherland, Caithness, Orkney, and Shetland, 7.

2. An official valuator to be appointed and paid by the Crown for each of these districts.

3. Each valuator in his own district to adjudicate in the first instance upon all claims and questions based upon the Agricultural Holdings Act.

4. These valuators should also determine all questions arising between landlord and tenant as to the necessity for the execution of all permanent improvements of the nature specified in Part I. of the Act of 1883.

5. At the commencement of any tenancy, the district valuator could, if desired by either landlord or tenant, be called in to furnish a report upon the condition of a farm. Such a report to have attached to it a sheet of the ordinance survey showing the farm; and the general state of each field should be shortly described, either with reference to cleanliness or the general condition of fertilily and cultivation. The report should also set forth a general description of the buildings, fences, and drains, and specify whether they were or were not in tenantable condition and repair. This report to be deposited in a public office, and to be available to both landlord and tenant either during the currency of the lease or at the end of the tenancy.

6. In the event of either landlord or tenant being dissatisfied with any order, finding, or report of the district valuator, the five valuators should be created a Court of Appeal for hearing and determining all appeals, and their decision should be final. Three to be a quorum.

7. For the due carrying out of the above suggestions, a public office, or branch of the Board of Agriculture, should be opened in Scotland, with a permanent official, who would keep records of all work officially performed by the valuators, and who would prepare and issue all orders, findings, and reports, and have the custody of all official papers.

8. The valuators to receive a fixed salary, and a scale of fees to be paid by parties employing them to be prepared under the sanction of the Board of Agriculture.

The above memorandum has been prepared for the purpose of suggesting the adoption of a system having for its object the securing of greater economy and efficiency in administering the Act, as well as the removing of well-founded complaints as to great dissimilarity in awards pronounced under the present practice.

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Appendix A. II.

II.

Post Office Savings Banks.

(From published Returns.)

(Handed in by Mr. G. E. Briscoe Eyre. See Question 48,641.)

Statement of Offices situated in the New Forest and Vicinity, the Number of Depositors, the Amount to their Credit on the 31st December 1894, and the Proportion of Depositors to Population.

Name of Office.	Year of opening.	Number of Depositors on 31 December 1894.	Amount to credit of Depositors on 31 December 1894.	*Proportion of Depositors to Population.
			£	
Beaulieu	1861	211	3,153	1 in 4
Bramshaw	1875	170	1,584	1 „ 4
Bransgore	1883	84	740	1 „ 11
Brockenhurst	1869	227	3,084	1 „ 6
Burley	1893	7	1	1 „ 86
Cadnam†	1883	136	1,581	—
Downton	1861	373	6,536	1 in 9
Emery Down	1885	70	1,039	1 „ 6
Exbury	1890	29	183	1 „ 11
Fawley	1861	183	4,105	1 „ 7
Fordingbridge	1861	941	17,987	1 „ 3
Hordle	1892	34	89	1 „ 35
Hythe	1862	270	4,555	1 „ 3
Landford	1881	162	773	1 „ 2
Lymington :—				
Head Office	1861	2,418	51,296	1 „ 2
Everton	1893	15	34	
High Street	1885	51	558	
High Street East	1893	26	91	
Lyndhurst	1861	637	12,765	1 „ 3
Marchwood	1871	83	401	1 „ 8
Milford-on-Sea	1871	147	1,764	1 „ 7
Minestead	1893	12	18	1 „ 71
Mudeford	1894	1	24	—
Nursling	1879	177	1,074	1 in 5
Pennington	1894	17	13	1 „ 58
Ringwood :—				
Head Office	1861	1,290	24,072	1 „ 3
Christchurch Road	1890	18	10	
Red Lynch	1890	77	536	1 „ 15
Rockburn†	1890	87	269	—
Romsey	1861	1,980	37,623	1 in 3
Sopley	1886	60	188	1 „ 14
Sway	1894	14	156	1 „ 61
Totton†	1861	496	8,240	—
West Wellow†	1885	87	264	—
Whiteparish	1881	85	902	1 in 12
		10,675	185,708	1 in 4*

* General proportion of depositors to population in England and Wales—1 in 5.

† These Post Offices are on the borders of the Forest, and the depositors undoubtedly represent the Forest population. But as for the purposes of the Census the places in question are included in the Town Districts of Southampton, Salisbury, and Romsey respectively, it is impossible to give any proportion of depositors to population.

	£	s.	d.
Note.—This Return shows an average amount to each depositor's credit of	17	7	11
The average amount for the whole of England and Wales is	14	12	2

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III.

STOCK-KEEPING BY SMALL HOLDERS IN THE DISTRICT OF THE NEW FOREST.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF RESULTS OBTAINED.

(Handed in by Mr. G. E. Briscoe Eyre. See page 82.)

1.—*Results of Stock-keeping on a House Plot of* 2 *to* 3 *roods, with turn-out on Forest or Common.*

Very poor cottagers state that they make off the house plot, *i.e.*, garden and orchard only—supplemented by the use of the Forest or of the commons—from a single cow an average of 4 to 4½ lbs. of butter a week all the year round, but they explain that they devote all their resources to this object. One said, "As I live by the cow, I live for the cow."

2.—*Results of Stock-keeping on a House Plot* (see above) *and* 1 *acre of Land with Common Rights.*

B. E.—The occupier, an agricultural labourer in regular employment at from 9*s.* to 12*s.* per week, and having a family of 10 children, was able in middle life to take "a little place" of about 12 acres. A son succeeded to the old home at 25 years of age and married; after seven years he has taken "a little place" of 7½ acres.

3.—*Results of Stock-keeping on a* 2½*-acre Holding with Common and Forest Rights.*

C. B.—The occupier, the son of an agricultural labourer at 10*s.* per week, at the age of 26 married and took a cottage and 2½ acres of land on a common connected with the Forest. After five years, during which he reckoned that he cleared from 12*s.* to 13*s.* a week, he was in a position to take "a little place" of 5 to 6 acres.

4.—*Results of Stock-keeping on a* 4½*-acre Holding, with Forest Rights, during a series of years.*

G. W.—The freeholder estimates that he has made 30*l.* annually by his Forest rights for more than 20 years, and has thus recovered the original cost of his freehold.

5.—*Results of Stock-keeping on a* 6*-acre Holding situate on the edge of the New Forest, with Forest Rights, during a series of years.*

Stock.—Cow-kind - - - - - -	3 cows. 1 heifer. 1 weanling calf.
Stock bought in - - - - - -	24 pigs.

R. F.—After charging labour hired for haymaking, emptying pens and styes, and for all rough work, the maximum net profit in a single year was 77*l.* 5*s.* 11*d.*, and the minimum net profit, 59*l.*

6.—*Results of Stock-keeping on an* 8½*-acre Holding, situate on a Common connected with the New Forest, with Common Rights, but without Forest Rights.*

B. H.—The occupier, then a married man 26 years of age, succeeded his father about 10 years ago, having made a living previously in London. The father, formerly a dairyman at 12*s.* per week, and then occupier successively of "a little place" of about 6 acres, with common rights, and of the above holding, moved late in life with another son into a Forest farm of about 70 acres, where his family is doing well.

7.—*Results of turning out Heifers in the Forest for the Summer-run only.*

H. A.—An occupier of land having Forest rights, 25 years ago a labourer at 9*s.* a week, has been able for some years to buy in and turn out upon the Forest from April to November, and then sell, between 20 and 25 heifers. He reckons his average net profit at 50*l.* per season.

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Appendix A. IV.

8.—*Instances of Freeholds bought with money "made off the Forest or the Commons."*

(*a.*) M. D.—17 acres bought with money saved from 20 head, more or less, kept on the Forest. (*Select Committee of House of Commons on the New Forest*, 1875, *Q.* 3174–76.)

Compare *ibid.*, Q. 2052. "A labourer at 12*s.* a week died worth 600*l.* to 700*l.*"

(*b.*) C. K.—The lifeholder of a cottage and plot of about 1¼ acre on a common connected with the Forest, bought in middle life, though he had a large family, two 5-acre lots of freehold land for 300*l.*, paying for them by instalments, and owned them free of all encumbrance. In 1887, after his death, his representatives bought the reversion of their home.

IV.

PRICES of DEAD POULTRY at LEADENHALL MARKET in 1882. (From the "Times.")

(*Handed in by Mr. R. H. Rew. See Question* 48,816.)

—	Capons.	Pullets.	Fowls.	Chickens.	—	Capons.	Pullets.	Fowls.	Chickens.
1882.	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*	1882.	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*	*s. d.* *s. d.*
Jan. 7 -	6 6 to 8 0	5 0 to 6 0	3 6 to 5 0	2 0 to 3 0	July 15 -	7 6 to 9 0	5 6 to 7 6	4 0 to 5 0	1 9 to 3 6
14 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 0	4 0 „ 5 6	1 9 „ 3 6	22 -	7 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 6 „ 6 0	2 0 „ 4 0
21 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 6	29 -	6 6 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 6 6	4 6 „ 5 6	2 0 „ 3 6
28 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 6 6	4 0 „ 5 0	2 3 „ 3 6	Aug. 5 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 6 6	4 0 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
Feb. 4 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 6	12 -	6 6 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 7 0	4 0 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 6
11 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 0 „ 5 0	2 3 „ 3 6	19 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
18 -	7 0 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 0 „ 6 0	2 4 „ 4 0	26 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
25 -	7 6 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 0 „ 5 0	2 6 „ 4 6	Sept. 2 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
Mar. 4 -	6 0 „ 8 6	5 6 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 6	9 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 0 „ 6 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
11 -	6 0 „ 10 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 6 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 6	16 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
18 -	6 6 „ 8 6	5 6 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 6	23 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 7 0	4 0 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 6
25 -	6 6 „ 10 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 6 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 5 0	30 -	6 6 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	1 9 „ 3 0
Apr. 1 -	6 6 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 6	Oct. 7 -	6 6 „ 10 6	5 0 „ 7 6	4 0 „ 5 0	1 9 „ 3 6
8 -	7 6 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 6 „ 6 0	3 0 „ 5 0	14 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
15 -	6 0 „ 10 0	5 6 „ 8 0	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 5 0	21 -	6 6 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
22 -	7 0 „ 10 6	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 6 6	3 0 „ 4 6	28 -	7 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
29 -	7 6 „ 10 6	6 0 „ 8 0	4 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 0	Nov. 4 -	6 0 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
May 6 -	7 6 „ 12 6	6 6 „ 8 0	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 0	11 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
13 -	7 6 „ 10 6	5 6 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	2 6 „ 4 0	18 -	5 6 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 0	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
20 -	7 0 „ 10 0	5 6 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 6	25 -	6 0 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
27 -	7 6 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 0	Dec. 2 -	6 0 „ 8 6	5 0 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
June 3 -	7 6 „ 10 0	5 6 „ 7 6	5 6 „ 6 6	2 0 „ 4 6	9 -	6 6 „ 8 0	5 6 „ 7 6	3 6 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 0
10 -	7 6 „ 10 0	6 6 „ 9 0	5 0 „ 6 0	2 0 „ 4 6	16 -	6 6 „ 10 6	5 6 „ 8 0	3 6 „ 5 6	2 3 „ 3 6
17 -	7 6 „ 10 6	6 0 „ 9 0	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 4 0	23 -	8 0 „ 15 0	7 6 „ 10 0	4 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 3 6
24 -	7 6 „ 10 6	6 6 „ 8 6	5 6 „ 7 6	2 6 „ 4 0		and 21 0	and 15 0		
July 1 -	7 6 „ 9 0	5 6 „ 7 6	4 0 „ 5 0	2 0 „ 3 6	30 -	7 6 to 10 0	5 6 to 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 6 „ 3 6
8 -	7 6 „ 10 0	5 0 „ 7 6	5 0 „ 6 0	2 0 „ 3 6					

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V.

(Handed in by Mr. W. W. Berry. See Question 49,245.)

COMPARISONS of THROUGH RATES from some CONTINENTAL PORTS to LONDON (showing also the Rates for the transit by Sea between those Ports and the English Ports through which the articles are brought) with Rates for the same article from (1) the English Ports through which the articles pass, and (2) some Intermediate Competitive and Non-competitive Stations to London.

As the Rates appeared on 16th May 1895 in the Rate-books kept by the Railway Companies at the English Ports in question (as regards the Through and Sea Rates) and in the Railway Companies' printed lists (as regards the Intermediate Competitive Stations).

SOUTH-EASTERN RAILWAY.

Article (the undermentioned Descriptions are those to which the Through Rates are stated to be applicable apparently to any quantity.	Through Rate from Boulogne to London, per 1,000 kos.	Sea Rate, Boulogne to Folkestone, per 1,000 kos.	Leaving, out of Through Rate, for Rail Carriage from Folkestone to London, 68¾ Miles—	Rate (for Traffic arising at Folkestone) from Folkestone to London, 68¾ Miles, per Ton.	Class.	Difference in favour of the imported Goods, per Ton.	Rate from an Intermediate Competitive Station to London, per Ton.	Rate from an Intermediate Non-competitive Station to London, per Ton.
Butter, salted, and clarified.	17*s.* 6*d.*	15*s.*	2*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 2*s.* 7½*d.* per ton.	In casks, baskets, or boxes, or in cools with wooden lids. 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	2	9*s.* 7½*d.*	Maidstone, 41¼ miles, 7*s.* 10*d.* E.	
Eggs - - -	30*s.* 6*d.*	26*s.*	4*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 4*s.* 9*d.* per ton.	e.o.h.p. 25*s.* 8*d.* -	4	20*s.* 11*d.*	Canterbury, 69 miles, 25*s.*	Staplehurst, 2 miles, 17*s.* 11*d.*
	18*s.* O.R.*	18*s.* O.R.*	Nil - -	In hampers or sieves 22*s.* 1*d.* O.R.	4	22*s.* 1*d.*		
				In boxes, cases, or crates 21*s.* 4*d.*	3	21*s.* 4*d.*	Chatham, 33½ miles, 12*s.* 7*d.*	Etchingham, 46¼ miles, 16*s.* 4*d*
Onions, dry - -	14*s.* 5*d.*	10*s.* 10*d.*	3*s.* 7*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 3*s.* 9*d.* per ton.	In bags or boxes less than 2 ton lots, or e.o.h.p. 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	1	8*s.* 6*d.*	Rochester, 30½ miles, 7*s.* E.	
Potatoes, old, in sacks	13*s.* 9*d.*	8*s.* 4*d.* O.R.	5*s.* 5*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 5*s.* 8½*d.* per ton.	Less than 1 ton lots 9*s.* 9*d.*	1	4*s.* 0½*d.*		
				1 ton and upwards 7*s.* 9*d.*	—	2*s.* 0½*d.*	Canterbury, 69 miles, 10*s.* E. 2 ton lots.	
Pears and apples, fresh.	32*s.*	No entry	1*s.* 8*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 1*s.* 9*d.* per ton.	12*s.* 3*d.* E.	1	—		
	15*s.* O.R.	13*s.* 4*d.* O.R.			1	10*s.* 6*d.*	Strood, 30 miles, 7*s.* E.	
Cabbages - -	25*s.*	18*s.*	7*s.* per 1,000 kos. or 7*s.* 4½*d.* per ton.	Packed or loose in 1 ton lots 10*s.* 6*d.* E.	C.	3*s.* 1¾*d.*		
				Loose less than 1 ton lots 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	1	4*s.* 10¾*d.*		
Sugar, raw - -	Less than 1 ton 15*s.*	In bags, 10*s.*	5*s.* C.R., or 5*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	Raw or refined in bags 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	1	7*s.* less difference between C.R. and O.R. about 5 per cent. to 10 per cent.		
Meat, fresh - -	32*s.* 6*d.*	18*s.*	14*s.* 6*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 15*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	25*s.* 8*d.*	4	10*s.* 5*d.*	Maidstone, 41¼ miles, 14*s.* 10*d.* E.	
Cheese, dry or loose -	16*s.* 8*d.*	10*s.* 10*d.*	5*s.* 10*d.* per 1,000 kos. or 6*s.* 1½*d.* per ton.	In boxes, casks, or hampers, 18*s.* 3*d.*	2	12*s.* 1½*d.*	Canterbury, 69 miles, 17*s.* O.R., E.	
				Loose 18*s.* 9*d.* E., O.R.	3	12*s.* 7½*d.* plus difference between C.R. and O.R.		
Poultry, alive -	35*s.*	20*s.*	15*s.* per 1,000 kos. or 15*s.* 9*d.* per ton.	29*s.* 10*d.*	5	14*s.* 1*d.*	Ashford, 55 miles, 25*s.* 2*d.*	Marden, 38¼ miles, 19*s.* 9*d.*
„ dead -	25*s.*	15*s.*	10*s.* per 1,000 kos. or 10*s.* 6*d.* per ton.	25*s.* 8*d.*	4	15*s.* 2*d.*	Ashford, 55 miles, 21*s.* 10*d.*	Marden, 38¼ miles, 17*s.* 2*d.*,

* O.R. means at owner's risk. Unless as marked the rates quoted apply at Company's risk. The allowances made by railway companies in the rates for eggs and seeds when the owner takes the risk vary (according to their published table) from about 10 per cent. in the case of goods least liable to damage, to about 20 per cent. Sugar, apples and pears, onions, potatoes, and vegetables, are not included in the articles to which the table is stated to be applicable nor is it stated if the table is applicable to through continental traffic.

Sea Rate.—It is not stated in the rate book if these rates include terminal accommodation and services at the English port. If so, the rates on traffic arising in England must be reduced to compare like with like, by the terminal charges at one end of the transit. The full parliamentary maxima for these services are for sugar, apples and pears, onions, potatoes, vegetables, seeds, and hay from 1*s.* 8*d.* to 3*s.* 2*d.*; for butter, eggs, and straw from 3*s.* 2*d.* to 4*s.* 8*d.* per ton.

E. means exceptional rate. All rates (except the through continental rates) not so marked are the ordinary class rates.

Through rates.—An additional charge of 2*s. per consignment* is made in the case of all continental traffic. In the case of large consignments this charge would, of course, amount to but a small sum per ton.

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Appendix A. V. and VI.

LONDON, CHATHAM, AND DOVER RAILWAY.

Articles (the undermentioned Descriptions are those to which the Through Rates are stated to be applicable, apparently to any quantity.	Thro' Rate from Calais to London, per 1,000 Kilos.	Sea Rate Calais to Dover, per 1,000 Kilos.	Leaving, out of the Thro' Rate, for Rail Carriage from Dover to London, 74¼ Miles—	Rate (for Traffic arising at Dover) from Dover to London, 74¼ Miles, per Ton.	Class.	Difference in favour of the Imported Goods, per Ton.	Rate from an Intermediate Competitive Station to London, per Ton.	Rate from an Intermediate Non-competitive Station to London, per Ton.
Sugar, in bags or cases.	15*s.*	In bags, 10*s.*	5*s.* per 1,000 kos. =5*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	Raw or refined in casks, cases, or bags, 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	1	7*s.*		
		In cases, 10*s.* 10*d.*	4*s.* 2*d.* per 1,000 kos.=4*s.* 4¼*d.* per ton.	——	—	7*s.* 10*d.*		
Butter, fresh - -	20*s.*	15*s.*	5*s.* per 1,000 kos. =5*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	In casks, baskets, or boxes, or in cools with wooden lids, 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	2	7*s.*	Rochester, 30 miles, 7*s.* E. Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 11*s.* 9*d.* E.	Fawkham, 27¼ miles, 6*s.* 6*d.* E. Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 9*s.* 7*d.* E.
Eggs - - -	29*s.* 3*d.*	26*s.*	3*s.* 3*d.* per 1,000 kos.=3*s.* 5*d.* per ton.	In boxes, cases, or crates, 22*s.* 7*d.* E.	3	19*s.* 2*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 21*s.* 10*d.*	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 17*s.* 3*d.* E.
				E.p.h.p. 27*s.* 2*d.*	4	23*s.* 9*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 25*s.*	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 20*s.* 6*d.*
	18*s.* O.R.	18*s.* O.R.	Nil per 1,000 kos.=nil.	O.R. 23*s.* 4*d.* -	4Y	23*s.* 4*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 21*s.* 3*d.* O.R.	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 17*s.* 11*d.* O.R.
Apples and pears, fresh.	15*s.* O.R.	13*s.* 4*d.* O.R.	1*s.* 8*d.* O.R. per 1,000 kos.= 1*s.* 9*d.* per ton.	12*s.* 3*d.* E. -	1	10*s.* 6*d.*	Maidstone, 40¼ miles, 7*s.* 10*d.* E.	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 9*s.* 7*d.* E.
Onions, dry - -	14*s.* 5*d.* O.R.	13*s.* 4*d.* O.R.	1*s.* 1*d.* O.R. per 1,000 kos.= 1*s.* 1¼*d.* per ton.	In bags or boxes, 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	C.	11*s.* 1¼*d.*	Chatham for Rochester, 29 miles, 7*s.* E.	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 9*s.* 7*d.* E.
Potatoes old - -	13*s.* 9*d.*	8*s.* 4*d.* O.R.	5*s.* 5*d.* per 1,000 kos.=5*s.* 8¼*d.* per ton.	10*s.* 6*d.* - -	C.	4*s.* 9*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 10*s.* 2 ton lots E.	Farningham, 25 miles, 5*s.* 3*d.* 2 ton lots, E.
		Or, say, 8*s.* 9*d.* ch.	5*s.* per 1,000 kos. =5*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	10*s.* 6*d.* E. -	C.	5*s.* 3*d.*		
Agricultural seeds -	1 ton lots 11*s.* 6*d.*	10*s.* 10*d.*	8*d.* per 1,000 kos. =8¼*d.* per ton.	12*s.* 3*d.* E. - -	2Y	11*s.* 6*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 11*s.* 9*d.* E.	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 7*s.* 10*d.* 2 ton lots E.
	Less than 1 ton lots 12*s.* 8*d.*	10*s.* 10*d.*	1*s.* 10*d.* per 1,000 kos.=1*s.* 11*d.* per ton.	12*s.* 3*d.* E. - -	C.	10*s.* 4*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 11*s.* 9*d.* E.	Sittingbourne, 49 miles, 9*s.* 7*d.* less than 2 ton lots, E.
	5 ton lots 10*s.* 6*d.*	8*s.* 4*d.*	2*s.* 2*d.* per 1,000 kos.=2*s.* 3*d.* per ton.	12*s.* 3*d.* E. - -	1	10*s.* 4*d.*		
Hay and straw in pressed bales.	15*s.*	10*s.* 10*d.*	4*s.* 2*d.* per 1,000 kos.=4*s.* 4¼*d.* per ton.	Hay, machine pressed, 2 ton lots, 10*s.* 6*d.* E.	2	6*s.* 1¼*d.* hy.	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 10*s.*, machine pressed.	Teynham, 52¼ miles, 8*s.* 9*d.* 2 ton lots machine pressed, E.
				Straw, machine pressed, 12*s.* 3*d.* E.	—	7*s.* 10¼*d.*	Straw, Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 11*s.* 9*d.*, machine pressed.	Teynham, 52¼ miles, 10*s.*, machine pressed, E.
Hops in pressed bales.	31*s.* 10*d.*	16*s.* 8*d.*	15*s.* 2*d.* per 1,000 kos.=15*s.* 11*d.* per ton.	22*s.* 7*d.* - -	3	6*s.* 8*d.*	Canterbury, 66¼ miles, 20*s.* 10*d.*	Selling, 59¼ miles, 19*s.* 6*d.*

VI.

(*Handed in by the Rev. J. Gillespie. See Note, page* 140.)

THE SCOTTISH DAIRY INSTITUTE.

ABSTRACT of INCOME and EXPENDITURE in connexion with Dairy School at Kilmarnock, for Year ending 31st March 1895. (Session 1894.)

Charge.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
To balance from last year's account -	423	18	10
,, Government grant - - -	300	0	0
,, subscriptions from individuals -	246	14	0
,, subscriptions from County Councils—(Ayrshire, 225*l.*; Dumfriesshire, 30*l.*; Renfrewshire, 10*l.*) - -	265	0	0
,, subscriptions from societies—(Highland Society, 60*l.*; Wigtownshire Dairy Association, 30*l.* - -	90	0	0
,, fees from pupils - - -	149	1	0
,, sale of cheese - - - -	681	16	3
,, sale of butter - - - -	93	4	10
	2,249	14	11

Discharge.

	£	*s.*	*d.*
By fittings, furnishings, and repairs -	83	7	7
,, salaries - - - -	639	18	0
,, stationery, printing, and advertising -	21	16	5
,, milk - - - - -	816	2	6
,, coal - - - - -	17	14	6
,, debit interest on bank account -	10	11	4
,, Glasgow Technical College - -	175	0	0
,, miscellaneous payments - -	109	13	10
,, balance carried to next year's account	375	10	9
	2,249	14	11

Kilmarnock, 12th April, 1895.—Examined, compared with the vouchers, and found correct. The balance of cash at credit of the Institute at 31st March 1895 being 375*l.* 10*s.* 9*d.*

ARTHUR STURROCK,
Auditor.

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NOTE.—The number of pupils who attended the Session was 490, or an average of 19 daily. 256 of these were from Ayrshire, 50 from Dumfriesshire, 17 from Wigtownshire, 8 from Midlothian, 10 from Renfrewshire, 13 from Lanarkshire, 107 from Argyleshire, 17 from Buteshire, and 12 from other parts of the country.

The amount of milk received was 31,064½ gallons, 25,690½ gallons of which were made into cheese, yielding 10½ tons, and 5,374 gallons into butter, yielding 1,848 lbs.

Examinations were held in the spring and autumn in conjunction with the Glasgow and West of Scotland Technical College. At the examinations held in April and May, six pupils gained the junior certificate in dairying, and eight pupils the certificate in buttermaking. At the examinations held in September, eight pupils gained the senior certificate in dairying. These special examination classes cost the Scottish Dairy Institute considerably more than 200*l*. This included fee of 175*l*. paid to the Glasgow Technical College for theoretical instruction, lectures, demonstrations, &c.

J. HARLING TURNER,
Hon. Secretary and Treasurer.

VII.

Amendments to the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883, adopted by the Scottish Chamber of Agriculture.

(*Handed in by Mr. Hugh Elder. See Question* 53,184.)

1. *Compensation for Buildings, Fences, Permanent Pastures, &c.*

Section 3.—Enact that the tenant shall have right to compensation for all improvements under the first part of the schedule which the proprietor may consent to and agree to pay fair and reasonable compensation for, or failing such consent and agreement, as an arbiter to be appointed (on the application of proprietor or tenant) by the sheriff of the county shall certify to be necessary for the proper working of the farm, having regard to the purpose for which it was let.

2. *Notice of Intention to Drain.*

Section 4.—Substitute "not less than one month" for the words "not less than two months."

3. *Landlord's Counter Claim for Deterioration or Miscropping.*

Section 6.—Limit counter-claim to deterioration or miscropping during the last two years of the lease instead of the last four years as at present.

4. *Notice of Intention to Claim Compensation.*

Section 7 (*a*).—Enact that no notice of intention to claim compensation be required as regards improvements in the first and second parts of the schedule, and that only a fortnight's notice before termination of tenancy be required from the tenant of intention to claim for improvements specified in the third part of the schedule, and from the landlord of intention to make a counter-claim.

(*b*.) Enact that *fully detailed* statements shall be sent by proprietor and tenant to each other within a fortnight after determination of tenancy of all claims and counter-claims under the Act.

5. *Charging Estate with Tenant's Compensation.*

Section 24.—Provide that any charge under this section in respect of compensation for improvements under parts 1 and 2 of the schedule shall rank *before* all prior charges and burdens heritably secured upon the holding or estate.

6. *Government Loans.*

The Government should lend money to proprietor and tenant, or either, at a low rate of interest, for effecting improvements contemplated by the Act, the tenant being given statutory power to assign preferentially to the Government or other lender his right to claim compensation in security of the loan.

7. *Restoration or Renewal of Buildings.*

Include in the first part of the schedule the restoration or renewal of buildings.

8. *Part III. of Schedule.*

Amend this part of the schedule to read thus:—

"(16.) Application to land of manures not made from the produce of the holding.

"(17.) Consumption on the holding by horses, cattle, sheep, and pigs, of cake or other feeding stuff, including the produce of the holding, except straw, turnips, and pasture.

"(18.) Improvement of the general condition of the land by deep and thorough cultivation, by extended periods of pasturage, freedom from weeds or otherwise.

"(19.) Any other improvement increasing the value of the holding and not specially mentioned in this schedule, and for which the tenant is not otherwise compensated."

9. *Forms of Notices, Claims, Awards, &c.*

A set of these forms should be annexed to the Act for guidance of proprietors and tenants, and it should be made compulsory to record all awards in books to be specially kept for the purpose in the office of the sheriff clerk of the county, such books to be open to inspection on payment of a small fee.

10. *Sale of Produce.*

That notwithstanding any law, contract, or custom to the contrary, the tenant shall be entitled to sell or otherwise dispose of straw and turnips, he being always bound to provide and apply to the farm equivalent manurial value in manure or feeding stuffs, receiving no compensation for manure purchased in lieu of that which would have been made by consumption on the holding of straw and turnips produced thereon, but removed therefrom.

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Appendix A. VIII.

VIII.

(*Handed in by Mr. Guild. See Question* 53,633.)

STATEMENT showing difference in rental of Farms on Eleven Estates in Scotland between 1880 and 1895.

Situation of Estate.	Nature and Extent of Farm.	Rental in 1880.	Rental in 1895.	Abatements or Reductions.	Date when granted.	Remarks.
		£	£	£ s.		
A. Berwickshire -	Wholly arable. Mostly clay soil. 225 acres - -	380	200	40 0	1885	Re-let in 1894 at present rent.
				80 0	1889	
B. Haddingtonshire.	„ „ First class loamy soil. 407 acres	960	760	100 0	1881	
				135 0	1884	
				185 0	1885	Farm re-let to old tenant in 1894 at 760*l.*
				205 0	1886	
				135 0	From 1886 to 1894.	
C. „	„ „ „ „ 457 acres	1,175	950	—	—	Re-let in 1895 at 1,050*l.* Reduced in 1892 to present rent of 950*l.*
D. „	Wholly arable. Part light sandy soil. Rest loam. 378 acres.	700	600	—	—	Re-let to new tenant in 1894 at present rent.
E. „	Wholly arable. Heavy soil. Inclined to clay. 432 acres.	793	610	—	—	Re-let in 1886 at this rent.
F. „	400 acres arable and 1,000 acres good hill pasture -	1,275	600	475 0	1880	Re-let to old tenant this year.
				625 0	1885	Let to new tenant this year. Let to another tenant in 1893 at present rent.
G. „	Good arable land. 80 acres - - - - -	185	100	45 0	1881	
				48 10	1885	
				100 0	1890	Let to new tenant at 85*l.* Again re-let in 1893 to present tenant.
H. Midlothian -	First class arable land. 130 acres - - - *Note.*—This farm was re-let in 1893 at present rent. The whole crop is allowed to be sold and freedom of cropping is permitted. The farm is situated within 2 miles of Edinburgh.	390	550			
I. Fifeshire - -	Wholly arable. Good friable loam. 419 acres -	870	475	70 0	1880	
				170 0	1881	
				90 0	1882	
				100 0	1886	
				100 0	1887	
				300 0	1888	Re-let to old tenant in 1888 at 500*l.* Then let to new tenant in 1891 at present rent.
J. „ - -	„ „ Good loam. 260 acres - -	670	375	67 0	1880	Present rent fixed in 1888, when new tenant entered.
				60 0	1881	
				67 0	1882	
K. „ - -	„ „ „ „ 101 acres - -	260	130	50 0	1880	
				60 0	1881	
				60 0	1882	In 1882 re-let to old tenant at 200*l.* Again re-let to old tenant in 1888 at present rent.
L. Perthshire -	About 200 acres arable, stiff soil, and 200 acres moss pasture.	250	210	—	—	Permanent abatement of 40*l.* granted in 1890.

NOTE.—These are examples of one farm on each of the eleven different estates indicated by the letter of the alphabet.

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IX.

QUOTATIONS from historians and economists, handed in by Walter H. Gibson, as requested, to supplement evidence already laid before the Commission to prove that where supplies of money have been increasing prices have generally risen, and agriculture and commerce have flourished; where supplies of money have been diminishing agriculture and commerce have at all times been depressed. (*See page* 221.)

Jacob on Precious Metals, Vol. I.

Page 156. "If the two precious metals be in fact commodities like all others, except in possessing the faculty of being used as the measure of the value of all property, they must, like the others, be affected by their scarcity or abundance, though their denomination or their value with respect to each other may remain unchanged. If gold and silver are rare they will exchange for a larger portion of food, clothing, or other necessaries; if the supply of them be large they will exchange for smaller quantities of those articles. It is not, then, that other articles are dearer or cheaper, but that gold and silver are scarcer or more plentiful."

Page 158. "In the time of Solon (550 B.C.) an ox in Athens cost five drachmas, or nearly 3*s.*; a sheep one drachma, or 7½*d.*; and a medimnus of corn, or one bushel and three gallons, the same as a sheep; but prices rose gradually to five times, in many cases to ten or twenty times, their former amount, which after the example of more recent times does not seem surprising. The quantity of money was not only increased, but, through a rising population and extended intercourse, its circulation was accelerated."

"From the time of Solon to that of Demosthenes, a period of about 220 years, prices were continually rising; and though they fluctuated with the productiveness of seasons, they never were so low again as in the time of Solon. It was during this period that the gold and silver of Persia had been brought into Greece by the hostile invasions of that power and the subsidies of the Persians to their Grecian allies, and soon after the extension of the mines of Thrace by Philip."

"The medimnus of maize was sold for three drachmas, or near 2*s.*, 390 years B.C., but about 70 or 80 years later, and especially after the expedition of Alexander against Thebes, it was commonly sold as high as five drachmas, or about 3*s.* It is thus seen that the corn, which at one period was at one drachma, rose in two centuries to treble that price, and in one century more to five times as much as at the first."

Page 163. "We find from Pliny that the price of wheat was brought down by Marius Marcius, one of the ædiles of the people about 350 B.C., to the price of an *as* the modius, or 3*s.* 4*d.* the peck, being equal to 2*s.* of our money the quarter; and at the time of Pliny it had reached 3*l.* the quarter. The few notices we have of prices in the intermediate times seem to show that the advance accompanied the increase in the precious metals; that like that increase it was at first slow, but peculiarly rapid after the concentration of the contents of the chief mines in the hands of the Roman Government."

Page 165. "The prices of cattle kept pace in their increase with those of corn."

About 400 B.C. in Rome the price of 1 sheep was 7½*d.*; 1 calf was 1*s.* 7*d.*; 1 ox (=10 sheep) was 6*s.* 5½*d.*

About 1 A.D. 1 sheep was 1*l.* 5*s.*; 1 calf was 3*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*; 1 ox was 12*l.* 10*s.*

Page 190. "It has been estimated by several diligent inquirers that the whole revenues of the Roman empire in the time of Augustus amounted to a sum equivalent to forty millions of our money."

Page 199. "During the period between the years 25 A.D. and 460 A.D. the declension of the mines was proceeding, and the produce from them annually diminishing, till it became quite extinct."

Page 299. "We may, then, venture to conclude that whilst the coined money in the Roman empire was continually wearing away by friction, and no supplies of the precious metals to replace it were to be drawn from the exhausted or dilapidated mines, there could be very little addition made to its current money by converting the ornaments and utensils of the few wealthy families into gold or silver coin."

Page 218. "The tribute of the provinces, which in the time of Pliny had been directed to be transmitted in silver, was ordered to be collected and forwarded in gold, or only in such silver money as was of the imperial coinage."

Page 220. Referring to the ever-growing burden of taxation, Jacob quotes from *Gibbon*, Chap. XXVII., Page 87.

"Whatever may have been the amount of taxes imposed on the several divisions of the Roman empire, whether they were more or less grievous than those extracted from Gaul, they at length evidently produced a general and increasing distress in every province of the dominion.

The agriculture of the Roman provinces was insensibly ruined, and, in the progress of despotism, which tends to disappoint its own purpose, the emperors were obliged to derive some merit from the forgiveness of debts, or the remission of tributes, which their subjects were utterly incapable of paying. The fertile and happy province of Campania, the scene of the early victories and of the delicious retirements of the citizens of Rome, extended between the sea and the Appenine, from the Tiber to the Silarus. Within 60 years after the death of Constantine, and on the evidence of an actual survey, an exemption was granted in favour of 330,000 English acres of desert and uncultivated land, which amounted to one-eighth of the whole surface of the province. As the footsteps of the Barbarians had not yet been seen in Italy, the cause of this amazing desolation, which is recorded in the laws, can be ascribed only to the administration of the Roman emperors."

Jacob remarks on this:—

"The conclusion to which Gibbon and other writers have arrived ought not to be received without some limitation or at least some examination.

"The administration of the Roman emperors may have been one cause of the amazing desolation which had become so obvious before the footsteps of the Barbarians had been seen in Italy; but another cause had been operating, which, from its secrecy, or its almost imperceptible progress, may have equally escaped the observation of the government, and the notice of the historians of their deeds. While the production of the precious metals from the mines had ceased, and the countries near to the mines had poured the whole, or the greatest part, of their ancient and long accumulation into the universal empire, *there would be a consumption, a decay of the quantity of gold and silver in constant progress, which by lowering the metallic price of all other commodities would check that industry by which alone a country can continue to prosper.*"

Referring to this contraction of the currency, *Alison*, in his "History of Europe, 1815–1852," Vol. II., Page 381, remarks:—

"As a necessary consequence of so prodigious a contraction of the currency without any proportional diminution in the numbers or transactions of mankind, debts and taxes, which were all measured in the old standard, became so overwhelming that the national industry was ruined; agriculture disappeared, and was succeeded by pasturage in the fields; the great cities were all fed from Egypt and Libia; the revenue became irrecoverable; the legions dwindled into cohorts, the cohorts into companies; and the 600,000 men, who guarded the frontiers of the Empire in the time of Augustus, had sunk to 150,000 in that of Justinian, a force wholly inadequate to its defence."

Jacob on Precious Metals, Vol. I.

Page 225. Table showing estimated decrease in the supposed quantity of gold and silver money in the Roman Empire, between the death of Augustus (14 A.D.), and the termination of the Western Empire between 470 and 490 A.D.

Supposed quantity of gold and silver, 14 A.D., 580,000,000*l.* 482 A.D., 87,033,099.

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Appendix A. IX. Page 237.

Estimated quantity of gold and silver 806 A.D., 33,674,256*l.*

"Supposing the quantity of the precious metals in circulation to have been reduced in quantity from the time of Augustus to the beginning of the ninth century in the proportion that is here presumed, we might expect to have found a proportionate reduction in the money prices of all the commodities. which in the operations of exchanging them with each other are reduced to a metallic value; but in the period under consideration, though diligence has not been restricted to a slight search, no such notices of prices have been found as can be entitled to any confidence. In that respect those centuries may be emphatically denominated the dark ages."

Page 302.

"As the low prices of all commodities had accompanied or followed the diminution of the stock of gold and silver, the few articles that were purchased by the great mass of the people had fallen to such an extent, that no piece of gold or even of silver could be so small as to pay for what labourers needed for their daily subsistence. When a loaf of bread sufficient for a week's consumption for a man could be bought for a farthing, silver money could not be used in the transaction; to say nothing of the case of one who wished to purchase food for a day."

Page 313.

"Britain especially was so exhausted of the precious metals in the form of money that in trafficking, what the Saxon writers call *living money* was usual and legal. This consisted of slaves and cattle of all kinds which had a value set upon them by law, at which they passed current in the payment of debts and the purchase of commodities of all kinds, and supplied the deficiency of money properly so called."

Page 315.

Table of prices, about the year 997 A.D., quoted by Dr. Henry, in money of present time.

	£	*s.*	*d.*	
A man or slave - - -	2	13	3	sterling.
A horse - - - -	1	15	2	,,
A man or colt - - -	1	3	5	,,
An ass or mule - - -	0	14	1	,,
An ox - - - -	0	7	8½	,,
A cow - - - -	0	6	2	,,
A swine - - - -	0	1	10½	,,
A sheep - - - -	0	1	2	,,
A goat - - - -	0	0	4½	,,

Jacob on Precious Metals, Vol. II.

Page 52.

Estimated addition of precious metals by discovery of America, from discovery in 1492 to conquest of city of Mexico in 1521, 29 years	£ 1,308,000
In next 25 years to discovery of Potosi in 1546 - - - - - - - - - -	15,750,000
Total in 63 years - - -	£17,058,000

On Effects of Increased Prices.

Page 113.

"In no period of the world was the change in all mercantile and agricultural relations and connections in any degree approaching to that which took place between the termination of the fifteenth and of the sixteenth century. In the next century, though none of the precious metals was produced, the change was less extensive and it was the same in the century between the years 1700 and 1800, though the mines yielded still more. It is to fix attention on this great change that such an extended view of the several classes of society who were interested in it has been taken. *Its effect has been felt in many quarters of the globe, and has had an influence on the prosperity of the whole civilized race of man—not by the wealth that the gold and silver amounted to, but by the stimulus it began to administer to every branch of industry, by the impulse it communicated to physical, mechanical, legislation, judicial, and even moral investigations*, and by the attachment it inspired to the sound principles which introduced legal, civil, and political freedom."

Page 131.

Estimated stock of coin left at end of 1599, 130,000,000*l.*; at end of 1699, 297,000,000*l.* (an increase in 100 years of 150 per cent.).

Estimated total produce of gold and silver from Spanish America from 1700 to 1809 - - - - -	£ 706,464,334	Page 165. Page 167.
Add total produce from Portuguese America - - - -	80,000,000	
Total - -	£786,464,434	

	£
Average annual product - -	7,146,767
Add from Europe and Africa, say -	853,233
Net annual produce about -	£8,000,000

On the production of gold and silver from the end of the year 1809 *to the end of* 1829. Page 225.

"We are now arrived at a period when a great and sudden change took place in the production of the mines of gold and silver. After a space of more than three centuries, during the whole of which there had been a constant increase of the quantities obtained, and each succeeding decennial period yielding a larger portion than the similar number of years that preceded it, the whole of the mines in every part of the western continent declined greatly in their produce."

Estimated total supply of gold and silver, 1810 to 1829, 100,000,000*l.*; average annual supply, 20 years, 5,000,000*l.* Page 229.

"We have seen that the consumption of gold and silver, and the application of those substances to other purposes than the fabrication of coin, has, in the last 20 years, exceeded that supply of them which the mines have afforded . . . . . It may be safely inferred that the quantity of coin actually in circulation at the end of the term of 20 years had been diminished. If the view we have taken be correct, that diminution must have amounted to one-sixth of the whole circulating coin of Europe and America." Page 348.

On the state of cultivators of the soil in 1831. *Complaints universal all over Europe and America.* Page 376.

"The cultivators of the soil are the most numerous part of the community, their products are the least complicated in their origin, and the most simple in their distribution, and therefore are likely to be first affected by any increase in the value of the precious metals. They would be the first to experience the difficulty of obtaining the usual weight of gold and silver, if those metals became more rare, for the usual measure of corn, of meat, of cotton, of wool, of sugar, or other agricultural products. In this country, where the cultivators are a class of capitalists distinct from the proprietors, their capitals have generally been diminishing, whilst the decline of the mines has been proceeding, and the application of their produce to other purposes than that of coin has been increasing. It certainly does not follow from these two causes, having been in simultaneous progression, that one is the cause of the other. The same has been the condition of the cultivators of the soil in every other country, as far as it is accurately known. *In every part of the continent of Europe the same complaints are heard, however various may be the tenures by which land is held. Such complaints are not bounded by the limits of Europe. The cultivators in North America assert that the prices of their productions yield them no profit*, especially those of corn, cotton, tobacco, and rice. The same is the case in the West India Islands, and according to common reports, in South America and in India. *There must be some general cause producing such extensive effects, which are thus felt alike when taxation is high or low, under despotic and free governments: and whether the land is cultivated by slaves, by serfs, by hired labourers, or by proprietors.*"

On the benefit of increase and the evil of diminution of precious metals. Page 357.

"It would lead into a field far too extensive to speculate on what would be the effect in another 20 or 40 years, if the same difference should continue between the production and the consumption of the precious metals, as appears to have been in operation during the past 20 years. It may, however, be observed that the world is very little really richer or poorer from the portion of metallic matter that may be distributed over its surface; that the whole mass of material wealth is neither diminished nor increased by any change in the relative weight of gold and silver to the usual measures of other commodities

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The only benefit to the world in general from the increase of those metals is, that it acts as *a stimulus to industry* by that gradual rise of money prices, which it exhibits to the mind. The only evil from the diminution of these metals is the discouragement it may present to industry by the apparent loss, or lessened profit, when the result of labour is reckoned in gold and silver and not in other commodities."

Alison on the Decline of Prices, the Cause of the Suffering (1839). (History of Europe, 1815–1852.)

Vol. VI., Page 293.

"It was the *incessant fall* in the price of commodities of every sort which had now gone on, with only two periods of intermission of three years each, for 20 years, which was the cause of this universal and unheard-of distress. With the exception of the years 1824 and 1825, when the Small-Note Bill temporarily suspended the decline, and the years 1834 and 1835, when the Joint Stock Banks Bill, and bill making Bank of England notes a legal tender, save at the Bank of England, produced the same effect, the whole period from 1819 to 1839 had been one of incessant fall of prices. The chief articles of commerce had declined in money value during that time 50 per cent., many much more. Such a long-continued and prodigious fall of prices filled all classes with despair. True, they bought everything cheaper, but what did this cheapness avail them when the wages of labour came down in a still greater proportion, when two millions of destitute paupers in Ireland were at any moment ready to inundate the labour market of England, and employment even on the lowest rates was often not to be had, from the discouragement to speculation of every kind which the continual fall of prices occasioned? The only thing which rendered this fall tolerable to the working classes in towns and the manufacturing districts, was the extremely low price of the necessaries of life which the magnificent harvests from 1832 to 1836 occasioned; but this reduced the agricultural classes to despair, and the table of the House of Commons groaned, during these years, under petitions which set forth with truth, that under existing prices cultivation of any kind could be carried on only at a loss. And when the bad seasons began in 1837, and fine, cold, and wet autumns in succession raised the cost of food, even of the humblest kind, again to the war rates, which men then felt as famine prices, a still more general and acute suffering was experienced by the manufacturers; for in proportion to the decline of their wages, from the contraction of the currency and consequent commercial distress, was the rise in the cost of the necessaries of life from the badness of the season."

Alison on the Violent Outcry among Agricultural Classes (1849). (History of Europe, 1815-1852.)

Vol. VIII., Page 781.

"But although these circumstances (the extension of the railway system) tended profoundly, even before the gold discoveries came into operation, to counteract the depressing effect of the repeal of the Corn Laws, yet the first effect of that repeal was in the highest degree distressing, and produced an unprecedented amount of clamour among the agricultural classes in every part of the country. In 1850 and 1851 especially, when the quarter of wheat was 40s. and 39s., the outcry was universal. Meetings were held in London, Dublin, Edinburgh, and almost every country town in Great Britain, when the most alarming statements were put forth as to the depressed state of agriculture in all its branches, and the utter ruin which must overtake cultivation, if protection in some form were not restored. It is no wonder these statements were made; for the fall of at least *a third* in wheat, from an average of 56s. to one of 40s., at a time when wages were higher rather than the reverse, was to sweep away entirely the profits of cultivation, and leave the farmer nothing either to pay his rent or subsist his family. The story told at all these meetings was the same; that they could not compete with foreign cultivators, who raised grain by means of labourers paid 4d. a day while they were paying 2s., and that to avoid ruin they had no alternative but to turn their arable lands into grass, and abandon, except in the most favoured situations, all attempts to raise grain crops. This again led to a fresh set of evils; for the quantity of corn lands suddenly turned into pasture produced such an increase in the supply of butcher-meat, that it fell in a proportion even more alarming than the reduction in the price of grain. Meat sank from 9d. to 6d. and 5d. a pound; the complaint was universal among the graziers that, after buying sheep or cattle and feeding them for six months, they were obliged to sell them lower than they had bought them. In a word, the landlords and farmers in every part of the country were in despair."

Alison on the Gold Discoveries in 1850 and 1851. (History of Europe, 1815–52.)

Vol. VIII., Page 834.

"The annual supply of gold and silver for the use of the globe was, by these discoveries, suddenly increased from an average of 10,000,000*l.* to one of 35,000,000*l.*!" . . . . . "Most of all did Great Britain and Ireland experience the wonderful effects of this great addition to the circulating medium of our globe. That which for five-and-twenty years had been awaiting a currency commensurate to the increased numbers and transactions of the civilised world, was now supplied by the beneficent hand of nature. The era of a contracted currency, and consequent low prices and general misery, interrupted by passing gleams of prosperity, was at an end. Prices rapidly rose; wages advanced in a similar proportion; exports and imports enormously increased, while crime and misery has rapidly diminished. Emigration itself, which had reached 368,000 persons a year, sank to little more than half the amount. Wheat rose from 40s. to 65s.; but the wages of labour of every kind advanced in nearly as great a proportion; they were found to be about 30 per cent. higher, on an average, than they had been five years before.

"In Ireland the change was still greater, and probably unequalled in so short a time in the annals of history. Wages of country labour rose from 4d. a day to 1s. 6d. or 2s.; convicted crime sank nearly a half; and the increased growth of cereal crops, under the genial influences of these advancing prices, was as rapid as its previous decline since 1846 had been. At the same time decisive evidence was afforded that all this sudden burst of prosperity was the result of the expanded currency, and by no means of fair trade, in the fact that it did not appear till the gold discoveries came into operation, and then it was fully as great in the protected as in the freetrade states."

Alison on co-operating effect of Steam Navigation, Railroads, Telegraph, and Gold Discoveries, 1852. (This to be compared to part of Lord Farrer's evidence.) (History of Europe, 1815–52.)

Vol. VIII., Page 903.

"Observe in this view how marvellously the great physical changes of the period have conspired with the moral agencies in bringing about this stupendous result. Steam navigation has arisen, and been brought almost to perfection, during the period when these moral influences were so strongly impelling civilised man into the wilderness of nature. *By the effects of this great discovery the Atlantic has been bridged, the great rivers of the old and new worlds opened to European enterprise and energy, and ample means furnished to the most ardent and discontented denizens of Europe to leave their ancient dwellings, cross over into a new hemisphere, and ascend the mighty rivers by which it is penetrated. The application of steam to travelling by land, and the construction of railways, has, at the same time, opened innumerable feeders to those great highways of civilization, and brought the means of rapid and cheap conveyance almost to every man's door.* The electric telegraph, by rendering almost instantaneous the transmission of intelligence, not only by land, but through the bosom of the deep, has sensibly increased the influence of the moral causes which were so strongly impelling man from his native seats, and gave force to the exciting causes which were agitating society. Finally, the gold discoveries, first in California, and next in Australia, presented a magnet of universal attraction to large numbers of men in all countries, and not only drew them in great numbers to the places where it was thought, and often with truth, wealth was to be had merely for the taking, but stimulated industry and adventure by increasing prices over every part of the world."

Tooke on Prices and Supply of Gold. *A prediction which was fulfilled.* History of Prices, 1792–1856. Tooke and Newmarch.

Vol. V., Page 123

"The other reservation, besides that of the influence of the seasons and the assumption of a continuance of a state of peace, in the conjectural opinion which I ventured to offer on the probable range of future prices,

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Appendix A. IX.

was a stationary value of gold. (Tooke estimated the medium price of wheat would probably be about 45s. per quarter.) This reservation was expressed in the following passage (Vol IV., page 40):—'There is, however, 'one other consideration which must not be lost sight 'of in any view of future prices, and that is the value of 'gold. I believe that the circumstances operating upon 'the supply of gold, relatively to the demand for it in 'the markets of the world, have been for many years 'past such as to preserve it at a nearly constant value. 'At least there have been no indications, taking the 'ordinary tests, of any material variation. But there 'are in prospect causes which may produce a consider-'able alteration. The most important of these is the 'extraordinary production of gold in Russia.'"

"Now, extraordinary as the production of Russian gold appeared to be at the time when the above passage was written (in the autumn of 1847), and extraordinary it assuredly was, seeing that the produce of the metal from that source had attained to an annual amount equal to that which had been obtained from all the previously known sources; still, this extraordinary source of supply becomes altogether unimportant when compared with the marvellous discoveries of gold which were made in California in 1848, and in Australia in 1851.

"Of the vast extent of the supplies poured into the markets of the commercial world from these sources, and of the degree of influence to be ascribed to them, in a view of the actual and prospective prices of commodities and labour, a full account will be given in a subsequent division of these volumes, and I will now only offer a remark or two on the connexion between this great increase of the quantity of gold, and, in a smaller degree, of silver, or in more general terms of the previous metals, and the actual and future prices of corn.

"The rise in the price of wheat (taken as an exponent of the prices of corn generally) since the close of 1852, appears to be so fully accounted for by the seasons which caused a great deficiency in the produce of the corn crops over nearly the whole of Europe, and by the war which caused an obstruction to some of the usual sources of supply, and added greatly to the cost of production by increased rates of freight from those sources of supply which remained open, that little or no room seems left for ascribing any part of the rise and high range of prices in the last three years to the operation of the new gold; and while the influence of the seasons and of the war has been obvious and direct, and apparently sufficient to account for the whole of the rise which the corn markets of Europe have experienced, it would be difficult satisfactorily to trace or explain the mode in which the increased quantity of gold, whether as a commodity in the shape of coin can have come into immediate contact with corn so as to have contributed in any degree with the seasons and the war, to the recent high range of prices.

"*But, whether the new gold has entered or not as an element into the present prices of corn, it cannot, I think, fail of preventing a subsidence of them to the level of the prices of* 1852, *from which they had risen; or, in other words, there are good grounds for believing that when the masses of the precious metals from the new sources shall have become diffused and distributed in the shape of income—that is, of rents, salaries, and wages—among the nations holding commercial intercourse, a higher permanent level of prices will be established than there had previously been reason to anticipate.* But if prior to these gold discoveries, and while the value of the precious metals was constant, or nearly so, it was difficult, if not impossible, to form a reasonable conjecture as to the future price of wheat, whether as an average of a series of years or a medium between a maximum and minimum, any such attempt must be out of the question now that the future supplies from these new sources baffle all calculation as to their probable extent and duration, and consequently as to their ulterior effects on the price of corn."

Tooke and Newmarch on the Influence of New Supplies of Gold. (History of Prices, 1792-1856.)

Vol. VI., Page 136.

"The new gold is but one of the several causes which, during the last 10 years (1848-56), have exercised a profound and beneficial effect in contributing to the material prosperity of this and other countries.

"The rapid increase of railways in every part of the world, the improvement in the navigation and speed of ships, the rapid spread of population into new and fertile regions; the quick succession of important discoveries in practical science, and the ceaseless activity with which they are applied to increase the efficiency of all mechanical appliances, and, perhaps, more powerful than all, the setting free of the enterprise, the industry, and the ingenuity of some of the leading commercial states by the adoption, more or less, completely of principles of Free Trade; all are causes which singly and conjointly have assisted to accelerate the rate of progress."

But "the influence of the new supplies of gold year by year has been probably that particular cause, or train of causes, which has modified, in the most powerful degree, the economical and commercial history of the last nine years." Page 138.

Tooke and Newmarch on the Influence of New Supplies of Silver in the 16th century. (History of Prices, 1792-1856.)

"As an inference from these data, and also as an inference drawn from the records of the time, we have the fullest warrant for concluding that any partial inconvenience that might ensue from the effect of the American supplies of the 16th century in raising prices was *compensated and repaid a hundredfold by the activity, expansion, and vigour which they impressed, for more than one generation, upon every enterprise and every act which dignifies human life or increases human happiness.*" Vol. VI., Page 413.

Jevons on New Supplies of Gold and Rise of Prices. (Investigations in Currency and Finance.)

"Thus while industry, trade, and property were rapidly advancing in Great Britain, America, and most other parts of the world, there was no corresponding advance in the production of the precious metals. Prices, both in gold and silver, continually receded. Now, if while the introduction of free trade, railways, telegraphs, and innumerable other improvements accelerated the extension of trade, and the consequent demands for the precious metals, no new discoveries of gold and silver had been made, what must have ensued? Prices must have continued in the downward course they had pursued for 30 or 40 years before. But they did not continue in this course—on the contrary they turned upwards in a sudden and decided manner." Page 110.

"He who allows prices to have risen since 1850, but denies it to be the effect of the gold discoveries, must point out something else in the progress of industry since 1850 entirely different and contrary to the progress before; otherwise, it is natural to point to these gold discoveries as that which has entirely altered the course of prices." Page 111.

"The total supply of new gold during the 12 years 1849-60 nas been stated by Mr. Newmarch at 300 millions sterling, which is equal to about 50 per cent., or the half of the total stock of gold supposed to be in use at the beginning of the period. Is it likely? Is it conceivable that the stock of gold in the world, which before 1848 must have been nearly stationary, should suddenly have grown half as large again without a considerable effect upon prices?" Page 113.

Dr. Giffen. Predictions of Probable Fall in Prices. At "The Institute of Bankers," May 1883.

"Apart from the temporary change, the transitional period to which Mr. Goschen has referred, the permanent question is also of interest; because it is found that the annual supply of gold, now that the transition period may be considered over, is not sufficient to maintain things in what we may call an equilibrium, that there is a constant increase in population and in the resources of mankind from time to time going on, and the supply of new money is not quite equal to keep things at an equilibrium, then we may have a long continued fall in prices from generation to generation, and this will probably have very great effect as time goes on. We may, perhaps, have what may be called a permanent transition period, as far as I can see."

In "The Case against Bi-metallism." In an article written in 1886, *Mr. Giffen* remarks:—

"Even with bi-metallism there would have been a 10 per cent. fall in prices in the last few years. Similar falls must be expected from period to period." Page 73.

"A fall of prices from period to period is substantially due, as I have more than once pointed out in former years, to the necessary difficulty of increasing the stock of precious metals so as to keep pace with the multiplication of commodities and the multiplication of the numbers of the people. The tendency, as a rule, amongst communities advancing so rapidly in numbers Page 74.

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and in wealth as European communities do, including amongst them people of European descent like the United States and Australia, must be for prices to fall steadily from period to period. Exceptions only occur when you have such tremendous changes as those caused by the Australian and Californian gold discoveries, or, as I believe, by changes like what took place at the end of the last century, when there was a great expansion of the note circulation of banks in this country, which, no doubt, would have the effect of economising the use of the precious metals and making the same metals go further than they did before."

Mr. Goschen. Warning against further Demonetisation of Silver. At Paris Conference as British Delegate, 1878.

"If the demonetisation of silver were carried out everywhere at the same time, is it certain that the quantity of gold now in existence would be sufficient for the needs of circulation? A campaign against silver would be very disadvantageous even for the countries whose legal currency consists of gold only. The attempt which would be made from all sides at the same time to get rid of silver might cause grave disturbances in the economic situation, and might produce a crisis more disastrous than any of those which the commercial world remembers.

"If, however, other States were to carry on a propaganda in favour of a gold standard and of the demonetisation of silver, the Indian Government would be obliged to reconsider its position, and might be forced by events to take measures similar to those taken elsewhere.

"In that case the scramble to get rid of silver might provoke one of the gravest crises ever undergone by commerce."

X.

DECREE ARBITRAL in reference (under the Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883). DAVID JOHNSTONE MACFIE and GEORGE RIDDELL.

(*Handed in by Mr. Riddell. See Question* 54,552.)

I, James Drennan, land valuator, Auchinlee, Ayr, oversman appointed as after-mentioned in a reference under the "Agricultural Holdings (Scotland) Act, 1883," between David Johnstone Macfie, of Borthwick Hall, and George Riddell, Muirfield House, Drem, conform to (first) notice of claim by the said George Riddell, outgoing tenant of the holding of Corsehope, dated fourteenth January Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine; (second) notice of counterclaim by the said David Johnstone Macfie, landlord of said holding, dated twenty-eighth May Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine; (third) minute of appointment of John Wilson, Esquire, farmer, Chapel Hill, Cockburnspath, as referee, by the said George Riddell, dated eighteenth June Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine; (fourth) minute of appointment of John Kerr, Esquire, farmer, Broomhouse, Corstorphine, as referee, by the said David Johnstone Macfie, dated twenty-first June Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine; (fifth) minute by the said referees, dated fifteenth July Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, extending the time for pronouncing their award to the ninth day of August Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine; and (sixth) interlocutor by the sheriff of the Lothians and Peebles, dated sixteenth July Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, appointing me as oversman in the said reference; all of which are hereby referred to for their terms, and held as repeated, *brevitatis causa*. Considering that I duly received intimation of the devolution of said reference upon me as oversman in consequence of the failure of the said referees to pronounce their award, and have the same ready for delivery within the period allowed by the said Act, and that I have accepted of the said office of oversman; and further, considering that, in terms of a joint minute for the parties (number thirteen of process) I was present along with the referees at an inspection of the said holding, as well as at the proof led by the parties, and the hearing of counsel thereon; and having since considered the said claim and counterclaim, proof, and whole proceedings, including a representation by the said David Johnstone Macfie against my proposed findings with answers thereto by the said George Riddell, and being now well and ripely advised upon the matters submitted, and having God and a good conscience before my eyes, I do hereby pronounce and give forth my final sentence, decree, arbitral, and award as follows, videlicet:—I, the said oversman, do hereby find that the sum of One thousand and two pounds twelve shillings and fivepence is the net amount of compensation which the said George Riddell is entitled to obtain from the said David Johnstone Macfie, as the value to the landlord or incoming tenant of the improvements made by the said George Riddell on the said holding of Corsehope; and that the several improvements, acts, and things, in respect whereof compensation is hereby awarded, the times at which each of them was executed, and the amount payable to the said George Riddell in respect of each improvement, act, and thing, are as follows:—

	£	s.	d.
1. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1884	15	13	4
2. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1885	40	4	11
3. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding, 64*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.*; and of bone-meal applied to the land, 1*l.* 7*s.* 4*d.*; in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1886	66	6	10
4. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding, 149*l.* 14*s.*; and of bone-meal applied to the land, 2*l.* 13*s.* 8*d.*; in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1887	152	7	8
5. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding, 218*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.*; and of bone-meal and superphosphate applied to the land, 8*l.* 0*s.* 6*d.*; in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1888	227	0	0
6. The remaining value in the land of feeding stuff consumed on the holding, 252*l.* 3*s.* 11*d.*; and of bone-meal and superphosphate applied to the land, 9*l.* 3*s.* 4*d.*; in the year ending at Whit Sunday, 1889	261	7	3
7. The value of improvements effected during the lease—over and above the remaining values of feeding stuff and manures used during the latter years of the lease—by the extensive and continuous consumption of feeding stuff on the land	300	0	0
Amounting in all to	1,063	0	0

From this sum there fall to be taken into account in reduction thereof the following items, videlicet:—

1. The said George Riddell having admittedly removed from the holding, during the last two years of his lease, thirty-four tons of hay, he ought, according to the terms of the lease, to have laid on the land in lieu thereof thirteen tons twelve hundredweights of bones. In

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Appendix A. X., XI. to XII. & XIII.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Brought forward -	—	1,063 0 0
the last two years of the lease he laid on the farm eight tons fifteen hundredweights of bones and superphosphate, and the sums allowed in respect thereof in the foregoing findings have to be taken, *pro tanto*, in reduction of the compensation. These sums amounted to -	17 3 10	
2. Beyond the last-mentioned quantity, four tons seventeen hundredweights of bones should have been laid on the farm in the last year, in lieu of hay removed. Taking, therefore, bone-meal at 6*l.* 5*s.* per ton, and estimating the remaining value in the land after one crop at six-tenths of the price, the value that should have been left is - -	18 3 9	
3. A counterclaim of 50*l.* in respect of the state of the March fences of Corsehope was arranged by the agents during the proceedings, and it was agreed that the compensation therefor should be fixed at - -	25 0 0	
These reductions in respect of the removal of hay, and of the state of the March fences, amount to -		60 7 7
And they bring the net compensation, as already mentioned, to - - -		-1,002 12 5

And which sum of One thousand and two pounds twelve shillings and fivepence I decern and ordain the said David Johnstone Macfie to pay to the said George Riddell on the thirty-first day of October next Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, with interest thereon at the rate of five per centum per annum from that date till payment; and further, I find neither party entitled to expenses, but I find the said David Johnstone Macfie and George Riddell mutually liable in payment of the referees' and oversman's fees and outlays, and the account of John Shaw, solicitor, Supreme Courts, Edinburgh, clerk to the said reference. All of which fees and account I hereby fix at the sum of One hundred and fifty-nine pounds two shillings sterling, and I accordingly decern and ordain the said David Johnstone Macfie and George Riddell to make payment of the same to the said John Shaw, as clerk to the said reference, on the said thirty-first day of October next, with interest thereon, at the rate of five per centum per annum, from that date till payment; and also to make payment to the said John Shaw of the expense of recording this decree arbitral; and on the said David Johnstone Macfie implementing to the said George Riddell this my decree arbitral, I declare the said David Johnstone Macfie to be freed and discharged of all claims at the instance of the said George Riddell in consequence of his said claim, and the said George Riddell to be freed and discharged of all claims at the instance of the said David Johnstone Macfie in consequence of his said counterclaim; and I ordain the said parties, if so required by either of them, to execute and deliver a formal and valid mutual discharge accordingly; and further, I decern and ordain both parties to implement and fulfil this my decree arbitral in all respects to each other. In witness whereof these presents consisting of this and the preceding page of stamped paper, together with the marginal addition on page first hereof, all written by David Lyon Robertson, clerk to Pearson Robertson and Finlay, writers to the signet, Edinburgh, for the said John Shaw, are subscribed by me at Glasgow on the fourth day of September Eighteen hundred and eighty-nine, before these witnesses, John Barr, law clerk, residing at one hundred and sixteen Pollock Street, Glasgow, and John Whitelaw, law clerk, residing at seven Bishop Street, Glasgow.

Jno. Barr, witness. JAMES DRENNAN.
John Whitelaw, witness.

XI.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Questions* 55,573; 55,660.)

PRICES of THREE-YEAR OLD HEREFORD BULLOCKS—from Vaughan Hughes, Pentremawr, Llanbrynmair.

	£ s. d.	
1871 - - -	14 0 0	per head.
1872 - - -	15 10 0	,,
1873 - - -	17 0 0	,,
1874 - - -	15 14 0	,,
1875 - - -	14 15 0	,,
1877 - - -	12 0 0	,,
1878 - - -	15 5 0	,,
1879 - - -	12 3 0	,,
1880 - - -	11 0 0	,,
1881 - - -	10 5 0	,,
1882 - - -	14 0 0	,,
1885 - - -	9 10 0	,,
1886 - - -	9 5 0	,,
1888 - - -	9 10 0	,,
1889 - - -	10 10 0	,,
1892 - - -	12 10 0	,,
1893 - - -	7 10 0	,,
Autumn, 1894 / Spring, 1895 - -	13 0 0	,,

XII.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Questions* 55,575; 55,675.)

AN ACCOUNT of WELSH STORE SHEEP, with their Prices, sold by Mr. William Owen, of Mathfarm, Machynlleth, from 1833 to 1895.

	£ s. d.
Average price of sheep— for the years 1833–39, inclusive -	0 12 9
,, 1840–49 ,, -	0 12 10
,, 1850–59 ,, -	0 13 11
,, 1860–69 ,, -	0 16 6
,, 1870–79 ,, -	1 0 0
,, 1880–89 ,, -	1 1 8
,, 1890–94 ,, -	0 18 7
,, 1895 ,, -	1 0 0

XIII.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Question* 55,582.)

PRICES OF WELSH TUB BUTTER.

	s. d.	
1862 - - - -	1 3	per lb.
1864 - - - -	1 4½	,,
1866 - - - -	1 3	,,
1868 - - - -	1 1	,,
1869 - - - -	1 2	,,
1870 - - - -	1 3½	,,
1871 - - -	1 3½	,,
1872 - - - -	1 3¾	,,
1873 - - - -	1 2	,,
1875 - - - -	1 4½	,,
1876 - - - -	1 3	,,
1877 - - - -	1 4½	,,
1878 - - - -	1 0½	,,
1879 - - - -	1 0	,,
1880 - - - -	1 3¾	,,
1881 - - - -	1 2½	,,
1882 - - - -	1 2½	,,
1885 - - - -	1 1	,,
1887 - - - -	0 11	,,
1889 - - - -	1 0	,,
1894 - - - -	0 10	,,
1895 - - - -	0 9	,,

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XIV.

(Handed in by Col. Hughes. See Question 55,596.)

RATES in the PARISH of BANGOR are made up as follows:—

Poor Rate (so called):—

	s.	d.
Relief of poor	1	8
County and police	0	8
School board	0	10
Borough	0	8*
Other expenses	0	2
Total	4	0 in the £.

In addition there is a general district rate of 2*s.* 10*d.* in the £, which is applied for the payment of borough officials and workmen, the maintenance and scavenging of streets, public lighting, &c. Farmers pay the full amount of this rate on their dwelling-houses, and one-fourth on the land and outbuildings they hold. They are, however, exempt from highway rates.

The following are amongst other tenants of the Vaynol Estate, whose holdings, or parts of them, are within the borough boundary:—

Griff. Owen, Nantporth—house, buildings and land, *nett* rateable value, 55*l.* 10*s.*

Mrs. Pritchard & Son, Nantporth, Land only—rateable value, 44*l.* 10*s.*

To take the case of Griffith Owen, assuming that his house is assessed at 15*l.*, he pays borough rates from which his neighbour, whose holding happens to be without the borough boundary, is entirely exempt, to the extent of:—

	£	s.	d.
Borough rate on house, buildings and land=55*l.* 10*s.* at 8*d.*	1	17	0
Other expenses on house, buildings and land=55*l.* 10*s.* at 2*d.*	0	9	3
General district on house only say 15*l.* at 2*s.* 10*d.*	2	2	6
General district on land and buildings =40*l.* 10*s.* at one-fourth of 2*s.* 10*d.*	1	8	8
	£5	17	5

Therefore, in this district, an urban as compared with a rural farmer is at the disadvantage of having to pay a total rate of 3*s.* 8*d.* in the £ on the rateable value of his dwelling-house and 1*s.* 6½*d.* in the £ on that of his outbuildings and land,

Going back 10 or 12 years, before the town was incorporated and when its affairs were administered by the local board, the general district rate stood at about 1*s.* 8*d.* as compared with 2*s.* 10*d.* at the present time. The increase is due to the employment of a larger staff of workmen, the providing of pleasure and recreation grounds, new water supply, &c. A new pier is now in course of erection which will doubtless cause another increase.

In the parish of Llanbeblig (within the borough of Carnarvon) the following are the particulars of the rates levied:—

Poor rate (so called):—

	s.	d.
Relief of poor	1	9½
County rate	0	4½
School board	0	4
Library	0	1
Registration and other expenses	0	1
Total	2	8 in the £.

General district rate 2*s.* 9*d.* in the £. This is devoted to the payment of borough officials and workmen, the maintenance and scavenging of streets, public lighting, &c. As in the case of Bangor, farmers pay the full rate on the rateable value of their dwelling-houses and one-fourth on that of the outbuildings and land they hold. They are exempt from highway rates.

The following are a few of the Vaynol Estate tenants who farm land situated within the borough boundary:—

Wm. Owen, Penycock, house, buildings and land, nett rateable value, 44*l.*

Wm. Williams, Tyurhos, house, buildings and land, nett rateable value, 26*l.*

Jane Roberts, Tyddyn Llwydyn, house, buildings and land, nett rateable value, 24*l.* 5*s.*

Jane Rogers, Tyddyn Pandy, house, buildings and land, nett rateable value, 21*l.* 10*s.*

To tak the case of Wm. Owen, assuming his house to be valued at 15*l.*, he pays in rates levied exclusively for town purposes:—

	£	s.	d.
Library rate on house, buildings and land, 44*l.* at 1*d.*	0	3	8
Registration, &c. on house, buildings, and land, 44*l.* at 1*d.*	0	3	8
General district, house only, say 15*l.* at 2*s.* 9*d.*	2	1	3
General district, outbuildings and land, 29*l.* at one-fourth of 2*s.* 9*d.*	0	19	11
	£3	8	6

Or, on the rateable value of his dwelling-house, a total rate of 2*s.* 11*s.*, and on that of the outbuildings and land in his occupation, 10½*d.* in the £.

About 20 years ago a special rate was levied *for one year only* of 1*s.* in the £ to defray the cost of new waterworks, but beyond this, there has been no increase in the borough rates during the last 20 years calling for special notice. They have, however, naturally slightly and gradually advanced, and will probably do so in future, as it is the tendency in all towns to move towards greater efficiency of administration with consequent heavier expenses.

From the foregoing figures, it will be seen that in the Bangor district, farmers within the borough boundary are saddled with a total in rates of 3*s.* 8*d.* in the £ on the rateable value of their dwelling-houses and 1*s.* 6½*d.* in the £ on that of their outbuildings and land. And in the Carnarvon district they pay on the rateable value of their dwelling-houses 2*s.* 11*d.*, and on that of their outbuildings and land 10½*d.* in the £. These rates are applied exclusively for borough purposes, no benefit accruing to the farmers therefrom, unless it can be contended that they indirectly participate in the advantages resulting from the progress and growth of the towns by enhanced facilities for disposing of their produce.

With regard to school board rates, it is a question whether farmers in urban or rural parishes suffer the more. Probably the latter, because a rate of a certain sum levied in a rural parish will realise much less than a rate of a like amount levied in an urban one owing to the former being thinly populated and the property therein being less valuable. The fact of the agricultural population being in a larger proportion to the whole in the rural than the urban parishes also supports this view. Much, however, depends upon local circumstances, *i.e.*, whether new school buildings and sites for the same are necessary, &c. &c.

Perhaps the time when the grievances of the urban farmer are most forcibly brought home to him is when he looks upon his next door neighbour, whose holding happens to be just outside the borough boundary, enjoying the same advantages (in whatever degree they may exist) of being within easy access to the town, and watching the progress of such town with an equal interest with himself. To put all on an equal footing in that respect would, however, involve endless trouble. A kind of graduated rating scale would be necessary, with the distance of the different farms or fields from the town as a basis.

19 June 1895. W. WILLIAMS.

* To defray expenses of incorporation of city 10 years ago.

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Appendix A. XV., XVI. & XVII.

XV.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Question* 55,666.)

PRICES of BLACK CATTLE sold by Edward Vaughan, Llysyn, late of Hafodybendy and Rhiwsaeson.

——	1880.	1883.	1890.	1892.	1893.	1894.	1895.
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
2½ and 3 year old bullocks	15	19	13 10/-	14	14	14 10/-	16
Barren cows - - -	12	14	10	12	12	12	12
2 year old heifers - -	10	14	8	8	10	10	11 10/-

XVI.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Question* 55,673.)

PRICES OF WELSH SHEEP WOOL.

	s.	d.	
1856 - - - -	1	1	per lb.
1858 - - - -	1	2	,,
1866 - - - -	1	8	,,
1869 - - - -	0	10	,,
1870 - - - -	0	8½	,,
1871 - - - -	1	3	,,
1877 - - - -	1	0	,,
1883 - - - -	0	9	,,
1889 - - - -	0	8½	,,
1891 - - - -	0	7½	,,
1892 - - - -	0	8	,,
1893 - - - -	0	7½	,,
1894 - - - -	0	7	,,

XVII.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Questions* 55,681, 55,713, 55,793.)

WYNNSTAY ESTATE.—EXPENDITURE upon Woods and Fencing, Estate Buildings and Repairs, and Draining, from 1862 to 1893.

——	Farming and Cottage Rental.	Fencing, Gates, Woods, &c., exclusive of Home-growing Timber.	Estate Buildings and Repairs.	Draining.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
1862 - -	40,556 6 10	1,308 5 7	3,091 13 1	280 7 2
1863 - -	41,377 19 8	1,111 6 4	3,386 12 7	243 9 3
1864 - -	42,936 7 11	1,497 2 0	4,350 9 5	820 10 2
1865 - -	42,805 7 1	1,240 12 2	2,989 0 11	265 3 11
1866 - -	43,053 0 9	1,127 15 10	4,053 15 9	383 7 3
1867 - -	42,353 4 9	1,265 3 6	3,420 18 0	429 14 0
1868 - -	42,673 3 3	1,430 0 1	4,822 2 2	719 3 9
1869 - -	42,754 7 2	1,631 7 8	4,399 12 4	619 19 6
1870 - -	43,122 13 4	1,648 0 7	5,130 6 5	436 13 0
1871 - -	43,206 1 1	1,878 1 8	5,659 8 11	367 17 1
1872 - -	43,375 6 9	1,367 6 2	6,859 12 11	326 13 7
1873 - -	43,975 10 9	1,829 9 3	5,951 11 3	488 5 1
1874 - -	44,345 1 3	2,173 5 0	8,403 7 0	439 4 6
1875 - -	44,541 0 9	2,237 12 11	7,703 1 5	745 16 0
1876 - -	44,851 11 10	1,596 18 8	8,825 11 11	1,293 3 3
1877 - -	45,350 17 0	2,061 19 10	8,248 2 10	1,245 13 2
1878 - -	45,835 11 0	1,623 13 11	8,862 6 4	1,206 18 5
1879 - -	45,097 15 7	1,006 1 1	6,568 15 7	1,015 3 0
1880 - -	46,381 3 11	986 15 8	7,474 18 0	1,318 1 0
1881 - -	45,762 9 0	944 10 0	7,996 2 7	1,596 7 7
1882 - -	46,218 17 2	1,173 6 6	6,741 11 5	1,052 18 4
1883 - -	46,175 7 9	1,154 5 8	6,369 3 11	981 3 5
1884 - -	45,980 10 7	1,334 10 9	5,974 4 3	1,425 16 7
1885 - -	45,545 18 6	1,282 12 5	6,135 6 4	987 12 5
1886 - -	45,084 15 11	1,330 14 4	5,647 11 2	940 5 0
1887 - -	46,615 16 1	1,353 4 1	5,685 16 0	1,077 11 0
1888 - -	45,410 15 4	1,018 2 3	9,067 1 8	1,362 6 8
1889 - -	46,433 1 4	2,821 17 9	11,763 7 4	374 18 4
1890 - -	46,882 17 7	3,540 6 10	12,078 1 11	512 8 7
1891 - -	46,339 15 11	3,408 2 1	8,960 11 5	478 3 5
1892 - -	44,982 10 6	3,515 6 11	11,509 19 6	589 1 8
1893 - -	45,458 19 0	2,275 16 11	8,610 18 2	304 19 3
	1,425,434 5 4	54,178 14 5	216,731 2 6	24,328 15 4

SUMMARY.

	£	s.	d.
Fencing, gates, and woods, &c. -	54,173	14	5
Building and repairs - -	216,731	2	6
Draining - - - -	24,328	15	4
Total for 32 years ending 1893	£295,233	12	3

A total expenditure of 295,233*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.*, or an average of 9,260*l.* per annum, of which the annual details are appended.

In addition to this large sum, there has been an expenditure during the same period of 103,713*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* on buildings, and also repairs of cottages within the park walls and other property at Ruabon and elsewhere, which, as it does not affect the tenant farmers, I do not propose further to allude to.

Of the above sum of 295,233*l.* 12*s.* 3*d.*, the present Sir Watkin and Lady Williams-Wynn have spent during the six years ending 1893:—

	£	s.	d.
On farm buildings and repairs -	61,980	0	0
,, gates, fencing, woods, &c. -	16,579	12	9
,, draining - - -	3,621	17	11
Or a total of - -	82,181	10	8
In addition to giving rebates amounting to - - -	30,026	0	0
Total - -	£112,207	10	8

or an average deduction from their rental during the six years of 18,700*l.* per annum, being 41 per cent. of the rental.

These figures show that building and repairs form the principal item of expenditure.

This work is entirely done by the landlord, with the exception of haulage for repairs. For new buildings and repairs to those in inaccessible places the landlord pays the haulage, and for cottages he defrays the whole expense.

No interest is charged on new buildings or repairs to old ones, and compensation is granted to any outgoing tenant for haulage in carrying out repairs to buildings. Occasionally a temporary shed or Dutch barn is erected by a tenant, the landlord finding materials.

Fencing is a very expensive item on the estate, especially the post and wire fencing on the Welsh hills, which has been a regular outlay for nearly 30 years, and is admitted to be the greatest boon of hill sheep-walks.

The landlord pays compensation for every *bonâ fide* improvement carried out by the tenant, in accordance with the terms of the agreement.

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XVIII.

Appendix A. XVIII.

(Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Question 55,694).

PERMANENT REDUCTIONS IN RENT SINCE 1888.

Lady Day 1889.

		£	s.	d.
141.	Plaseglwyseg	15	0	0
744.	Garthgynan (Qy. permanent)	65	0	0

Lady Day 1890.

890*a*.	Llwydiarthfach	5	0	0

Lady Day 1891.

1554.	Tyddynfelin	7	0	0

Lady Day 1892.

12.	Tytanymynydd	18	0	0
176.	Llangedwyn Mill	25	0	0
335.	Glascoed	47	0	0
369.	Plastregririog	23	0	0
453*o*.	Tynypistill	10	0	0
453*p*.	Sycamore	12	0	0
1444.	Ysbyddadog	5	0	0
1474*a*.	Frongastell	8	0	0
1501.	Eagles Inn and Land	10	0	0
1540.	Paudymawr	4	0	0
1682.	Gilfachwen	11	0	0

Lady Day 1893.

1061.	Cae Jago	6	0	0
1085.	Melingaerig	4	0	0
1144*a*.	Hafodwnog	5	0	0
1404.	Aberbiga	10	0	0
1427.	Cefnbrwyn	17	0	0
1474.	Bryncaled	7	0	0
1478.	Caergai	50	0	0
1495.	Drwscaegwenyn	8	0	0
1512.	Hafodyrwyn	2	0	0
1514.	Hendremawr	8	0	0
1533.	Pantgwyn	3	10	0
1535.	Pantclyd	7	0	0
1545.	Rhydsaru	6	0	0
1657.	Gilrhos (tithe included)	4	0	0

Lady Day 1894.

192.	Wernypennant	15	0	0
226.	Tanllwyn	37	0	0
237.	Tynygraig	40	0	0
351.	Pwllymeirch	5	0	0
802.	Waen	2	0	0
838.	Cadwnfa Mill	8	0	0
909.	Melinygraig	9	0	0
1452.	Brynmoelucha (tithe included)	2	0	0
1455.	Frondro ,,	6	0	0
1465.	Bryniau	9	0	0
1467.	Braichceunant	5	0	0
1468.	Bryngwyn	13	0	0
1471.	Buarthmeini	9	0	0
1472.	Blaenlliwisaf	15	0	0
1473.	Blaenlliwuchaf	15	0	0
1474.	Bryncaled	5	0	0
1474*a*.	Frongastell	6	0	0
1482.	Tynybwlch	6	10	0
1485.	Graigytan	8	0	0
1487.	Coedypry	4	0	0
1489.	Cefngwyn	18	0	0
1490.	Cwmoneu	3	0	0
1492.	Caellwyd	2	0	0
1497.	Deildreisa	15	0	0
1500.	Dolfach	9	0	0
1502.	Eithinfynydd	12	0	0
1512.	Hafodyrwyn	2	0	0
1513.	Hendre	7	0	0
1520.	Llettycrippil	9	10	0
1522.	Llwynypiod	6	0	0
1525.	Llwyngweru	13	0	0
1527.	Maesgwyn	6	0	0
1528.	Nantydeilie	14	0	0
1532.	Plasmadoc	9	0	0
1533.	Pantgwyn	10	10	0
1538.	Pursau	5	0	0
1544.	Rhydybod	10	0	0
1550.	Tyddynllan	9	0	0
1553.	Tynllechwedd	2	0	0
1562.	Tymawr	5	0	0
1563	Tymawr	1	15	0
1565.	Tynant	10	0	0
1566.	Tynyrhos	7	0	0
1571.	Wern	10	0	0
1572.	Weirglodd ddu	3	0	0
1634.	Brynbedwog (tithe included)	6	0	0
1636.	Brynhynod ,,	9	0	0
1637.	Cornelau ,,	5	0	0
1651.	Tycerrig ,,	12	10	0
1656.	Wenallt ,,	7	0	0
1658.	Bryncocyn ,,	6	15	0
1659.	Tyisa ,,	6	0	0
1670.	Bryncelynog ,,	10	0	0
1671.	Blaencwmprysor ,,	20	0	0
1674.	Dolymoch ,,	14	0	0
1675.	Defeidiog Ganol ,,	4	0	0
1678.	Dolymynach ,,	15	10	0
1679*a*.	Dolwyddprysor ,,	14	0	0
1680.	Fadfilltir ,,	6	0	0
1683*a*.	Gelligau ,,	9	0	0
1684.	Llech Idris ,,	7	0	0
1686.	Rhiwgoch ,,	15	0	0
1688.	Tyddynmawr ,,	7	0	0
1689.	Twrmaen ,,	9	0	0
		£1,003	10	0

	£	s.	d.
1889	80	0	0
1890	5	0	0
1891	7	0	0
1892	173	0	0
1893	137	10	0
1894	601	0	0
	£1,003	10	0

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Appendix A. XIX.

XIX.

(*Handed in by Colonel Hughes. See Questions* 50,377, 55,602, 55,765.)

RATES paid in different PARISHES on the WYNNSTAY ESTATES since 1875.

Parish.	Year 1875. Rate in the £.	Year 1880. Rate in the £.	Year 1885. Rate in the £.	Year 1890. Rate in the £.	Year 1894. Rate in the £.
Ruabon.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
Poor and county rate	1 9⅜	2 3	2 0	1 7¼	0 11½
School board rate	0 6¾	0 10½	1 0	1 0	0 9¼
Highway rate	0 4⅛ 2 10¼	0 7 4 8	0 7½ 4 6	0 7 4 4	0 4½ 3 4
Sanitary rate	0 0½	0 10½	0 9⅓	1 0¾	0 11⅓
Burial rate	0 1	0 1	0 1	0 1	0 1
Other expenses	—	—	—	—	0 2
(Higher than 20 years ago.)					
Llangollen.					
Poor and county rate	—	2 1¾	2 1¾	1 11¾	1 8½
School board rate	—	0 6¼ 2 8	0 6¼ 3 3	0 9¼ 3 3	1 0 3 5½
Highway rate	—	—	0 7	0 6	0 6½
Other expenses	—	—	—	—	0 2⅔
(Higher than they have been for last 20 years.)					
Bangor Isycoed.					
Poor rate	—	—	2 0 2 6	1 4 2 4	0 9 1 3
Highway rate	—	—	0 6	1 0	0 6
Eyton.			s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Poor rate	—	—	2 6	1 11	1 7
Oswestry.			s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
Poor and county rate		0 8½	1 1	0 10	0 9⅔
Highway rate	s. d.	0 10½ 1 10	0 6½ 1 10	0 8 1 11¼	0 5 1 6⅔
Other charges	1 10½	0 3	0 2½	0 4	0 2⅔
Burial rate and expenses		—	—.	0 1¼	0 1⅓
Llangedwyn.					
Poor and county rate		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Highway rate	1 10	2 6	2 3	1 9	1 6
School board rate					
Sanitary rate					
Llansilin.					
Poor and other rates	2 0	3 0	2 4	2 0	2 4
(Higher than 20 years ago or four years ago.)					
Llanrhaiadr.					
Poor and other rates	2 6	2 8	2 8	1 10	2 0
(Higher than four years ago.)					
Sychtyn.					
Poor and other rates	2 4	2 2	2 2	2 6	2 0
Llanbrynmair.					
Poor and other rates	3 7	3 3	2 6	2 4	2 4
Cemmaes.					
Poor and other rates	—	2 11	3 2	2 6	2 6
Darowen.					
Poor and other rates	—	2 6	2 3	2 4½	2 6
(Higher than 10 years or four years ago)					
Llangurig.					
Poor and other rates	3 0	4 0	4 0	4 0	3 5
(Higher than 20 years ago.)					
Llanidloes.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
Poor rate	2 0	2 0	2 6	2 3	2 6
Highway rate	0 4	0 9	—	0 4	0 7
School board rate	0 8 3 2	0 6 3 4	0 6 3 0	0 8 3 4½	0 8 3 9
Sanitary rate	0 2	0 1	—	0 1½	
(Higher than they have been for last 20 years.)					

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Parish.	Year 1875.	Year 1880.	Year 1885.	Year 1890.	Year 1894.
	Rate in the £.	Rate in the £.	Rate in the £.	Rate in the £.	Rate in the £.
Trefeglwys.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Poor, school board, and highway rates. (Higher than in 1880 or 1890.)	4 6	2 8	4 0	3 0	3 8
Llanfihangel.					
Poor and other rates - - (Higher than four years ago.)	—	2 8½	2 4½	1 5½	2 0
Llangadfan.					
Poor and other rates - - (Higher than four years ago.)	2 8	2 5	2 5	1 5	1 10
Llanerfyl.		s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.	s. d. s. d.
Poor and country rate - -	—	0 10	1 4¾	1 5½	1 8¼
School board rate - -	—	0 5 } 1 8	0 6¼ } 2 10	0 8½ } 2 2	0 7 } 2 6
Highway rate - - -	—	0 5	0 11	—	0 6
Other expenses - - -	—	—	—	—	0 1¾
(Higher than 15 years or four years ago.)					
Llanfyllin.		s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Poor and other rates - - (Higher than four years ago.)	3 0	3 0	2 6	1 4¼	1 10
Llanuwchllyn.					
Poor and other rates - -	2 6	2 3	2 3	2 4	1 10
Llangower.					
Poor and other rates - -	2 6	2 3	2 3	2 4	1 10

XX.

(Tables handed in by Mr. R. E. Turnbull.)

Estimates of Farm Capital and Revenue.

1.—UNITED KINGDOM.

Estimated Amount of Capital invested in Farming (*see Question* 59,291).

June 1874.	——	——	June 1892.
£			£
265,750,000	Live stock - - -	Horses, cattle, sheep, pigs, poultry, mules, asses, and goats.	185,725,000
48,000,000	Implements, &c. - -	Implements, machinery, sheep fold requisites, dairy utensils, &c.	48,000,000
48,000,000	Manures - - -	Farmyard and artificial manures, lime, marl, and tenant right in cake, &c.	38,500,000
28,000,000	Labour - - - -	Manual and horse labour to 4th of June in respect of growing crops.	25,500,000
19,800,000	Seed - - - -	Seed corn, seed potatoes, clover and grass seed, turnip seed, &c.	12,310,000
8,800,000	Hay - - - -	Hay reserved for live stock and for sale - -	5,750,000
12,750,000	Corn - - - -	20 per cent. of wheat, oats, beans, and peas - -	5,770,000
2,500,000	Straw - - - -	Straw reserved for thatching and for stock - -	2,250,000
2,500,000	Hop gardens and orchards, &c. -	Capital invested in hop gardens, orchards, &c. -	2,500,000
3,000,000	Tradesmen's charges - -	25 per cent. of the estimated annual outlay, being part of the cost of the growing crops.	3,000,000
1,450,000	Dairy produce - -	One-sixth of the season's make of cheese. In stock on the 4th of June.	1,270,000
£440,550,000 9*l.* 6*s.* 9*d.* per acre. (47,143,000 acres.)			£330,575,000 6*l.* 17*s.* 9*d.* per acre. (47,978,000 acres.)

Estimated reduction in capital in 1892 as compared with 1874, 110,000,000*l.*=25 per cent.=49*s.* per acre.
Estimated gross revenue 1874–75, 267,718,000*l.*=5*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* per acre=60⅘ per cent. on the capital invested.
25 per cent. of gross revenue 1874–75, 66,929,500*l.*
25 per cent. of gross revenue 1892–93, 46,437,500*l.*
Estimated reduction in amount available for rent and tithe, 20,492,000*l.*
Estimated reduction capitalised at 25 years, 512,300,000*l.*
Estimated gross revenue 1892–93, 185,750,000*l.*=56⅕ per cent. on capital invested, 3*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* per acre.
Estimated reduction in gross revenue in 1892–93 as compared with 1874–75 about 82,000,000*l.*=30⅘ per cent.=36*s.* 2*d.* per acre.

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Appendix A. XX.

2.—UNITED KINGDOM.

June 1874.

ESTIMATED AMOUNT of CAPITAL invested in LIVE STOCK on AGRICULTURAL HOLDINGS.

No. in Stock, 1874 Census.		——	——
		£ s. d.	£
10,381,040	Cattle and calves	12 15 0	131,083,260
34,837,600	Sheep and lambs	2 2 6	74,020,000
1,847,150	Horses of all ages	25 0 0	46,178,750
3,537,350	Pigs of all ages	2 10 0	8,843,370
45,000,000	Head of poultry (No. estimated)	0 1 6	3,375,000
	Mules, asses, and goats		2,240,000
			265,750,380

ESTIMATED LIVE WEIGHT.

——	Estimated Value per Head as above.	——	——	——
	£ s. d.			
Cattle and calves	12 15 0	Cattle and calves	700 lbs. average.	100,100,000 cwt. 42s. 9d. per cwt.
Sheep and lambs	2 2 6	Sheep and lambs	100 „	
Pigs of all ages	2 10 0	Pigs of all ages	150 „	
£218,956,630.				£213,963,750.

In 1890, owing to the good prices of stock, the capital account was nearly as satisfactory as in 1874.

Estimated capital in 1890, 400,000,000*l.*, viz.:—

	£
In live stock=60 per cent.	250,000,000
In other things=40 per cent.	150,000,000
	£400,000,000

Revised estimate:—

	£
100,000 mules at 4*l.*	400,000
600,000 asses at 2*l.*	1,200,000
1,000,000 goats at 10*s.*	500,000
	£2,100,000

Estimated sales:—

	£ s. d.
Say=10 per cent. mules=10,000	5 0 0
10 per cent. asses= 60,000	2 10 0
40 per cent. goats=200,000	0 12 6

	£
Mules	50,000
Asses	150,000
Goats	250,000
	£450,000

UNITED KINGDOM.

June 1892.

LIVE STOCK.

3.—(A.) *Estimated Amount of Capital invested in Live Stock on Agricultural Holdings.*

No. in Stock, 1892 Census.		Estimated Value per Head.	——
		£ s. d.	£
11,519,415	Cattle and calves	8 5 0	95,035,100
33,642,810	Sheep and lambs	1 2 6	37,848,100
2,067,550	Horses and foals	20 0 0	41,351,000
3,265,900	Pigs of all ages	1 15 0	5,715,300
45,000,000	Head of poultry (number estimated)	0 1 6	3,375,000
700,000	Mules and asses (number estimated)	3 0 0	2,100,000
			£185,424,500

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ESTIMATED LIVE WEIGHT.

—	Estimated Value per Head as above.	—	—	—
	£ s. d.			
Cattle and calves - -	8 5 0	Cattle and calves - -	700 lbs. average.	} 102,034,600 cwt. 27s. 2d. per cwt.
Sheep and lambs - -	1 2 6	Sheep and lambs - -	100 ,,	
Pigs of all ages - -	1 15 0	Pigs of all ages - -	150 ,,	
£138,598,500.				£138,597,000.

(B.) 1894.

	£ s. d.
Cattle - - - - - - -	8 15 0
Sheep - - - - - - -	1 5 0
Horses - - - - - - -	20 0 0
Pigs - - - - - - -	1 10 0

ESTIMATED WEIGHT of CATTLE and CALVES, SHEEP and LAMBS, and PIGS of all Ages in Stock on the 4th of June for the Years named.

	Cwts.
1874 - - - - - - -	100,100,000
1878 - - - - - - -	95,135,700
1882 - - - - - - -	91,258,800
1886 - - - - - - -	98,492,000
1890 - - - - - - -	101,552,900
1892 - - - - - - -	102,034,600
1894 - - - - - - -	99,280,700

4.—Estimated Value of Live Stock.

	£
June 1890 - - - - - -	250,638,800
1891 - - - - - -	228,412,000
1892 - - - - - -	185,424,500
1893 - - - - - -	180,912,200
1894 - - - - - -	185,290,000
1874 - - - - - -	265,750,380

5.—UNITED KINGDOM.

ESTIMATED GROSS REVENUE for the Years 1874–75 and 1892–93 (*see Question* 59,280).

Agricultural Year, June 1874 to June 1875.	—	Agricultural Year, June 1892 to June 1893.
£		£
155,816,000	By stock - - -	122,555,000
58,707,000	By grain - - -	25,065,000
30,000,000	By fruit and vegetables - -	20,750,000
16,945,000	By hay and straw - -	12,125,000
3,500,000	By hops and flax - -	2,755,000
2,750,000	By green clover, vetches, &c. -	2,500,000
£267,718,000 = 5*l.* 13*s.* 6*d.* per acre. Gross revenue = 60¾ per cent. on capital.		£185,750,000 = 3*l.* 17*s.* 4*d.* per acre. Gross revenue = 56½ per cent. on capital.
	Per cent.	Per cent.
By live stock - - -	58·2	By live stock - - - 66
By grain - - -	21·9	By grain - - - 13½
By other things - - -	19·9	By other things - - - 20½
(By wheat 11·5) - -	100	By wheat 4 9/10 per cent.

Reduction in value of produce sold or consumed in farm households in 1892–93 as compared with 1874–75 1*l.* 16*s.* 2*d.* per acre. 82,000,000*l.* = 30⅗ per cent.

NOTE.—Even in 1874–75 less than ¼th of the gross farm revenue was obtained by the sale of grain and straw.

1874–75.	—	1892–93.
Per Cent.		Per Cent.
58½	By live stock - - -	66
23⅗	By grain and straw sold - -	15⅘
18⅕	By other things - - -	18⅕

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Appendix A. XX.

6.—UNITED KINGDOM.

Estimated Gross Farm Revenue, 1874–75.

		£		£
Total revenue—	By cattle -	81,533,500	By fat cattle, sheep, pigs -	95,212,500
	By sheep -	43,612,500	By dairy produce - -	36,533,500
	By pigs - -	17,400,000	By wool - - - -	10,800,000
	By poultry -	8,420,000	By horses - - -	4,849,000
	By horses -	4,849,000	By poultry, eggs - -	8,420,000
		155,815,000		155,815,000

	Estimated Weight of Beef and Veal, Mutton and Lamb, Bacon and Pork.	Estimated Average Value per Cwt.	Estimated Value of Fat Stock.
	Cwts.	s. d.	£
Fat cattle and calves - - - - - - -	12,000,000	75 0	45,000,000
Fat sheep and lambs - - - - - - -	7,500,000	87 6	32,812,500
Fat bacon and pork pigs - - - - - -	5,800,000	60 0	17,400,000
	25,300,000 Cwts.		£95,212,500

Home Dairy Produce, 1874–75.

10,010,070 cwts. { Milk, solids only (12½ per cent.) 5,812,500 cwts. / Butter - - - - 1,726,500 „ / Cheese - - - - 2,471,070 „ }

		Estimated Quantity of Dairy Produce.	Estimated Average Value per Cwt.	Estimated Value of Dairy Produce.
3,700,000 dairy cattle, Average 34 cwt. milk per head. 125,800,000 cwts.		Cwts.	s. d.	£
	New milk, household use -	37,740,000	7 6 } milk	15,357,000
	Sweet skim milk, household use -	8,760,000	2 9 } milk	
Household use, 30 per cent.	Butter - - - -	1,572,500	150 0 } butter	12,527,700
Butter making, 35 „	Whey butter - - -	154,000	95 0 } butter	
Cheese making, 20 „	Cheese - - - -	2,471,070	70 0 cheese	8,648,800
Calves - 15 „		50,698,070 Cwts.		£36,533,500

	£
Estimated number of horses sold, 150,000 at 35*l.* Av. - - -	4,849,000
Poultry and eggs, 2,105,000 cwt., 80*s.* - - - - -	8,420,000
Potatoes, 2½ cwt. per head of the population, 4,100,000 tons, 80*s.* -	16,400,000
Wool, 1,285,715 cwt., 168*s.* - - - - - - -	10,800,000
Hay sold, 2,500,000 tons, 5*l.* - - - - - -	12,500,000

7.—Grain Crops.

1874.

Estimated Value of the Crop.

	£
Estimated value of grain -	86,780,345
Estimated value of straw -	15,634,200
	£102,414,545

9*l.* per acre.

1874.

	Acres.
Wheat - - - -	3,830,767
Barley - - - -	2,507,130
Oats - - - -	4,088,825
Beans and peas - - -	881,838
Rye - - - - -	56,274
	11,364,834

	Estimated Yield per Acre.	Estimated Quantity produced.	Required for Seed for 1875 Crops.	Remaining for Sale and for Stock.	Estimated percentage sold.	Estimated Quantity sold.	Estimated Value per Bushel (Av.).	Estimated Value of Grain sold.
	Bushels.				Per Cent.		s. d.	£
Wheat - - -	32	122,585,000	8,785,000	113,800,000	97⅓	110,955,000	5 6⅓	30,743,880
Barley - - -	32	80,228,000	5,500,000	74,728,000	87⅔	65,387,000	5 4⅔	17,572,750
Oats - - -	38	155,377,000	16,705,000	138,672,000	20	27,734,400	3 7⅓	5,026,860
Beans and Peas - -	25	24,700,000	2,230,000	22,470,000	75	16,852,400	6 0	5,055,720
Rye - - -	32	1,800,000	160,000	1,640,000	75	1,230,000	5 0	307,500
		384,690,000	33,380,000	351,310,000	Av. 57¾ of crop.	222,158,800		£58,706,710 Average 5*l.* 3*s.* 3*d.* per Acre.

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—	Estimated Quantity kept for Seed for 1875 Crops.	Esti- Value per Bushel.	Estimated Value of Grain kept for Seed.
		s. d.	£
Wheat - -	8,785,000	5 6	2,415,875
Barley - -	5,500,000	5 9	1,581,250
Oats - - -	16,705,000	3 9	3,132,185
Beans and peas -	2,280,000	6 3	696,875
Rye - - -	160,000	5 3	42,000
	33,380,000		£7,868,185

—	Estimated Quantity of Grain consumed by Stock and Poultry.	Estimated Value of Grain consumed by Stock and Poultry.
	Bushels.	£
Oats - - -	110,937,600	16,640,640
Barley - - -	9,341,000	1,556,830
Beans and peas - -	5,617,600	1,404,400
Wheat - - -	2,845,000	521,580
Rye - - -	410,000	82,000
	129,151,200	£20,205,450

Estimated Value of the Crops of 1874.

	£
By grain sold - - -	58,706,710
By grain consumed - -	20,205,450
By grain kept for seed - -	7,868,185
By straw sold - - -	4,445,500
By straw for stock - -	7,884,550
By straw for bedding and thatch	3,304,150
	£102,414,545

Sales = 62½ per cent. of the value of the crop.

Sales of Grain and Straw.

	£
Estimated value of corn sold -	58,706,710
Estimated value of straw sold -	4,445,500
	£63,152,210

5*l.* 11*s.* 2*d.* per acre (62½ per cent.) = of the value of the crop.

Estimated Quantity of Straw 1874 crop.

13,336,500 tons.

Estimated Proportion sold ⅓th.

2,222,750 tons.

Estimated Value realised 40s. per ton.

4,445,500*l.*

Estimated Proportion of Straw consumed by Stock.

	Per cent.
Wheat straw - - - -	20
Oat straw - - - -	75
Barley straw - - - -	10
Pea straw - - - -	20

4,505,450 tons, 35*s.* = 7,884,550*l.*

Estimated Quantity of Straw used for Bedding and Thatch.

6,608,300 tons, 10*s.* = 3,304,150*l.*

UNITED KINGDOM.

Live Stock.

8.—*Estimated Gross Revenue for the Year* 1892-3. *Agricultural Holdings.*

	£
By fat cattle and veal calves -	34,378,840
By fat sheep and lambs - -	22,837,800
By pork and bacon pigs - -	15,075,580
By dairy produce - - -	32,579,000
By poultry and eggs - -	7,500,000
By farm-shorn wool - -	5,072,200
By horses sold - - -	5,110,950
	£122,554,370

Estimated Revenue from each Class of Stock.

	£
By cattle - - - -	66,957,840
By sheep - - - -	27,910,000
By pigs - - - -	15,075,580
By poultry - - - -	7,500,000
By horses sold (mules, asses, and goats about 500,000*l.* not included) - - - -	5,110,950
	£122,554,370

	£
1887-88 - - - -	120,700,000
1888-89 - - - -	120,200,000
1889-90 - - - -	120,000,000
1890-91 - - - -	125,200,000
1891-92 - - - -	126,400,000
1892-93 - - - -	122,550,000

	£
By fat stock - - -	72,292,220
By dairy produce - -	32,579,000
By poultry and eggs - -	7,500,000
By wool - - -	5,072,200
By horses - - - -	5,110,950
	£122,554,370

UNITED KINGDOM, 1892-93.

Live Stock—Gross Revenue.

9.—(A.) *Estimated Supply of Fat Stock, Poultry and Eggs, Dairy Produce, Wool and Horses.*

—	Number of Fat Stock.	Estimated Dressed Weight.	Estimated Value of Fat Stock.	Horses.
		Cwts.	£	
Cattle and calves - - -	3,397,880	13,521,180	34,378,840	Estimated number and value of horses sold, 170,365, at an average of 30*l.*, 5,110,950*l.*
Sheep and lambs - - -	13,782,840	7,786,395	22,837,800	
Pork and bacon pigs - -	4,580,860	5,025,195	15,075,580	
	21,761,580	26,332,770	£72,292,220	

Estimated supply and value of fat poultry and eggs, 5 lbs. per acre, 2,142,860 cwts., 70*s.* per cwt., 7,500,000*l.*

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Appendix A. XX.

Dairy Produce consumed by Live Stock, 1892–93.

Estimated Quantity.	——	Per Cwt.	Estimated Value.
Cwts.		s. d.	£
19,390,000	New milk - - -	6 6	6,301,750
27,921,380	Skim milk - - -	1 9	2,443,120
25,149,730	Whey and butter milk - -	0 6	687,580
72,461,110			9,432,450

1892–93.

(B.) *Estimated Quantity and Value of Dairy Produce.*

	Cwts.
New milk for household use - -	42,657,800
Sweet skim milk, separated and butter milk (25 per cent. of the supply).	9,971,920
	52,629,720
Solids only - -	6,329,420

——	Quantity.	Value.	Per Head of Population.
		£	s. d.
Milk solids -	6,329,420	14,736,400	7 8 } 17s.
Butter -	1,636,020	10,225,150	5 4 }
Cheese - -	2,539,150	7,617,450	4 0 }
	10,504,590	£32,579,000	

Estimated Quantity of Milk yielded in the Year.

Cold and wet in the north } Estimated yield reduces
Drought in the south - } thereby by 7½ per cent.

	Cwts.	Per-centage.
For household use -	42,657,800	33
For butter-making -	41,365,000	32
For cheese-making -	25,853,200	20
For calf rearing -	19,390,000	15
	129,266,000	Household use - £ 32,579,000
	Value at 6s. 6d. per cwt., £42,011,450l.	Calves and Pigs - 9,432,450
		42,011,450

Note.—With favourable weather the yield would have been 140,000,000 cwt., valued at 6s. 6d., 45,500,000l.

(C.) *Farm-shorn Wool.*

Number of sheep in stock, 1893 census -	19,760,055
25 per cent. of sheep sold for mutton shorn before leaving the farms.	2,783,405
	22,543,460
	Cwt.
Estimated average weight per fleece, 6 lbs.	1,207,685
	£
Estimated value, 84s. per cwt. - -	5,072,200

10.—Grain, Potatoes, and Hay Crops.

(A.) 1892.

Potato crop of 1892, 5,633,950 tons.
Estimated quantity for household use, 2 cwt. per head of the population.
3,826,700 tons, 52s. 6d. = 10,523,500l.

Hay crop, 1892, 11,516,480 tons.
Estimated proportion sold about one-fifth.
2,300,000 tons, 75s. = 8,625,000l.

(B.) Grain Crops.

United Kingdom, 1892. Acreage in Grain Crops.		Yield in Bushels.	Required for Seed for 1893 Crop.	Quantity of Seed per Acre.	Remaining for Sale and for Farm Stock.	Estimated Per-centage sold.	Estimated Quantity sold.	Average Value per Bushel realised.	Estimated Value of Corn sold off Farms.
				Bushels.		Per Cent.		s. d.	£
4,238,036	Oats - -	168,181,200	17,744,000	4	150,437,200	25	37,609,300	2 4	4,387,750
2,220,243	Barley - -	76,939,100	4,502,600	2	72,436,500	85	61,571,020	3 4	10,261,835
2,298,607	Wheat - -	60,775,200	4,888,000	2½	55,887,200	95	53,092,840	3 4	8,848,805
510,423	Beans and peas	12,082,700	1,148,000	2¼	10,934,700	60	6,560,820	4 0	1,312,160
61,392	Rye - -	2,210,000	173,800	2½	2,036,200	75	1,527,150	3 4	254,520
9,328,701		320,188,200	28,456,400 = 8·88 per cent.		291,731,800		160,361,130 = 50 per cent.		£25,065,070 2l. 13s. 8d. per acre.

(C.)

Estimated Quantity of Grain consumed by Live Stock.	Per-centage of Crop.	Estimated Value per Bushel.	Estimated Value of Corn consumed.	Estimated Value of Seed Corn retained for the Crop of 1893.	Estimated Value per Bushel.
	Per Cent.	s. d.	£	£	s. d.
112,827,900 bushels of oats - -	67	2 4	12,693,140	2,218,000	2 6
10,865,480 bushels of barley -	14	2 6	1,358,180	844,240	3 9
2,794,360 bushels of wheat - -	4⅝	2 6	349,300	427,700	3 6
4,373,880 bushels of beans and peas -	30	3 9	820,100	229,600	4 0
509,050 bushels of rye - -	28	3 0	76,360	30,460	3 6
			£15,297,080	£3,750,000	

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(D.) *Estimated Value of Grain grown in* 1892.

	£
Estimated value of corn sold -	25,065,070
Estimated value of corn for stock	15,297,080
Estimated value of corn kept for seed - - - -	3,750,000
	£44,112,150

(E.) Estimated quantity of straw produced, 10,500,000 tons. Condition in many districts not good.

Oat straw consumed by stock, 75 per cent.	3,170,000	35*s.* per ton.
Wheat straw consumed by stock, 25 per cent.	860,000	25*s.* „
Barley straw consumed by stock, 20 per cent.	400,000	20*s.* „
Pea straw, 25 per cent. -	50,000	25*s.* „
Estimated quantity consumed by stock.	4,480,000	
Estimated quantity sold, one-sixth.	1,750,000	
Used for thatch and bedding.	4,270,000	
	10,500,000	

(F.) *Estimated Value of Corn Crops grown in* 1892.

	£
Grain - - - -	44,112,150
Straw - - - -	12,720,000
	£56,832,150 = 6*l.* 1*s.* 8*d.* per acre.

(G.) *Estimated Value of Grain and Straw sold.*

	£
Grain - - - -	25,065,070
Straw - - - -	3,500,000
	£28,565,070 = 3*l.* 1*s.* 2*d.* per acre.

—	Tons.	Estimated Value.
		£
Estimated quantity of straw sold, 40*s.* per ton = 7*s.* 6*d.* per acre.	1,750,000	3,500,000 = 40*s.* per ton.
Estimated quantity of straw consumed by stock.	4,480,000	7,085,000 = 30*s.* 9*d.*
Estimated quantity of straw used for bedding and thatch.	4,270,000	2,135,000 = 10*s.* per ton.
	10,500,000	12,720,000

11.—Estimated Home Supply of Meat for the 15 Years 1879–94.

—	Beef and Veal.	Mutton and Lamb.	Bacon and Pork.	Estimated Total Supply of Beef and Veal, Mutton and Lamb, Bacon and Pork.
	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.
1879–80 - - - -	11,140,965	5,908,830	5,517,970	22,567,765
1880–81 - - - -	10,207,425	6,026,790	4,331,465	20,565,680
1881–82 - - - -	10,968,810	5,610,360	4,208,820	20,787,980
1882–83 - - - -	9,671,925	5,083,275	6,395,210	21,150,410
1883–84 - - - -	9,812,445	5,318,350	6,567,770	21,698,565
1884–85 - - - -	9,420,470	5,758,070	6,594,155	21,772,695
1885–86 - - - -	11,770,765	6,409,555	6,203,540	24,383,860
1886–87 - - - -	12,569,365	5,825,180	5,430,710	23,825,255
1887–88 - - - -	13,221,740	6,254,705	5,939,630	25,416,075
1888–89 - - - -	11,122,960	5,849,135	6,098,450	23,070,545
1889–90 - - - -	9,051,815	5,454,980	5,833,385	20,340,180
1890–91 - - - -	9,534,170	5,936,410	7,188,300	22,658,880
1891–92 - - - -	11,574,220	6,854,710	7,892,810	26,321,740
1892–93 - - - -	13,521,180	7,786,395	5,025,195	26,332,770
1893–94 - - - -	11,796,500	7,261,490	4,605,770	23,665,760
	165,386,755	91,338,225	87,833,180	344,558,160
	11,025,785 Average = 48 per cent.	6,089,215 Average = 26¼ per cent.	5,855,545 Average = 25¼ per cent.	22,970,545 Average.

12.—Average Annual Supply, 1879–1894.

	Cwts.
Beef and veal - - - -	11,025,785 = 48 per cent.
Mutton and lamb - - - -	6,089,215 = 26¼ „
Bacon and pork - - - -	5,855,545 = 25¼ „
	22,970,545

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Appendix A. XX.

13.—ENGLISH BUTTER. KIRBY LONSDALE MARKET.

Prices for 27 years, viz., 1868 to 1894. The average price named for each year has been arrived at by dividing the sum of the average weekly prices by 52. As a larger quantity of butter is made in the months when prices are at their lowest than in the winter months, when prices are at their highest, the average prices named represent the average cost to consumers who buy in Kirby Lonsdale market, and not the average prices obtained by farmers, who sell their butter in that market. Mr. Punchard, agent for the Underley Estate, Westmoreland, to whom I am indebted for this information, is of opinion that the higher prices obtained by farmers, who make the highest class of butter, and who retail it direct to consumers at from 1*d.* to 2*d.* per lb. above the average market prices, fairly makes up for the fact that the quantity of butter sold in the summer months is larger than the quantity sold in the winter months.

	Highest Weekly Average.	Lowest Weekly Average.	Average for the Year.		Highest Weekly Average.	Lowest Weekly Average.	Average for the Year.
	d.	*d.*	*d.*		*d.*	*d.*	*d.*
1868	17⅓	11	14¾	1882	20	11	15¼
1869	18⅔	11½	15¼	1883	19	11	15
1870	17⅓	11⅞	15¼	1884	19⅓	10	14¾
1871	18	11	15⅛	1885	17	8½	13¼
1872	19	11	15¼	1886	16	8	12¼
1873	20	13	16¾	1887	16	8	13
1874	22	12	17¾	1888	16	8½	12⅛
1875	22	12	17	1889	17	9	12¾
1876	21½	12½	17¼	1890	17	8	12
1877	20⅔	12	16¾	1891	17	8½	13¼
1878	20⅓	11	15¾	1892	16⅓	9	13⅛
1879	18	9½	14¼	1893	16	8½	13
1880	19	11⅓	16¼	1894	16	8½	12
1881	20	12	15¾				

Average for 27 years 14¾*d.* Average for the 12 years, 1868–79, 1*s.* 4*d.* per lb.
Average for the 15 years, 1880–94, 13½*d.*

14.—WOOL.

(A.) Quantity sold Annually from a Yorkshire Wold Farm (of about 800 acres, three-fourths arable land, one-fourth permanent pasture), and amount realised from 1874 to 1885 (fractions of a £ omitted).

	Stones.	*s.* *d.*	£		Stones.	*s.* *d.*	£
1874	592	26 0	770	1882	591¼	13 6	387
1875	575	27 0	776	1883	601	11 3	338
1876	461	19 6	445	1884	598	13 6	404
1877	539	19 0	505	1885	632	11 6	359
1878	633	19 0	601				
1879	632⅓	14 6	455				£6,028
1880	675½	18 9	633				
1881	478⅔	14 7	355				

Average per year 502*l.*

(B.) Quantity sold Annually from a Yorkshire Wold Farm (of 1,250 acres, 72 per cent. arable, 28 per cent. permanent pasture), and amount realised annually from 1886 to 1892.

	Stones.	*s.* *d.*	£		Stones.	*s.* *d.*	£
1886	690	11 0	365	1891	923	11 6	526†
1887	690	12 0	403	1892	995	10 6	510
1888	747	11 6	418				
1889	941	11 6	526				£3,242
1890	820	12 6	494*				

* 1,165 fleeces average 9 lbs. per fleece.

† Including 26 stone of locks at 7*s.*

Average per year, 463*l.*

	s.	*d.*
Average per acre for the 12 years, 1874 to 1885	12	6½
,, ,, 7 years, 1886 to 1892	7	4¾

In 1892 *the price per stone was about* 60 *per cent. lower than in* 1874.

	s.	*d.*
Per acre in 1874	19	3
Per acre in 1892	8	2

In 1874 the price per stone was 248 per cent. higher than in 1892.

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15.—UNITED KINGDOM.

(A.) Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Fat Stock, Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry, and Eggs, Margarine, and Lard, Horses, Grain, Wool, Fruit and Vegetables, Hay and Straw, Green Clover, and Vetches, &c. (exports of Foreign and Colonial Produce deducted 1892. Exports of Foreign and Colonial Wool deducted 1874).

Home Supply 1874–75. Foreign and Colonial 1874.	——	Home Supply 1892–93. Foreign and Colonial 1892.
£		£
108,700,500	Fat stock and meat - - - -	102,865,700
102,232,000	Grain and flour - - - -	73,687,500
50,067,500	Dairy produce - - - -	50,109,500
33,255,000	Fruit and vegetables - - -	27,365,000
23,300,000	Wool, farm shorn - - - -	15,188,500
16,945,500	Hay and straw - - - -	12,580,000
11,120,000	Poultry and eggs - - - -	11,730,600
4,850,000	Horses sold off farms - - -	5,525,000
4,430,000	Hops and flax - - - -	3,685,000
2,750,000	Green clover, vetches, &c. - - -	2,500,000
884,500	Lard (home lard included in value of fat stock) and margarine.	5,641,200
358,535,000	Population.	310,828,000
Per head of Population, 10*l.* 18*s.* 7*d.*	1874–75. 32,800,000 / 1892–93. 38,265,300	Per head of Population, 8*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.*, reduced cost per head, 2*l.* 16*s.* 1*d.* = 25⅝ per cent.

Reduction in total wholesale value in 1892–93 as compared with 1874–75, 47,707,000*l.* = 13$\frac{3}{10}$ per cent.

(B.[1]) Food per Head of Population.

——	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial.
	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*
1874–75 - -	6 4 8	2 0 4	8 5 0
1892–93 - -	3 15 8	2 13 7	6 9 3

(B.[2]) Per Head of Population.

1874–75.	1892–93.
£ *s.* *d.*	£ *s.* *d.*
8 5 0	6 9 3

Reduced wholesale value per head in 1892–93, 1*l.* 15*s.* 9*d.*=21¾ per cent.

(C.) Food for Household Consumption.

1874–75.	1892–93.
£	£
270,107,500	247,172,400

Reduced total wholesale value in 1892–93 as compared with 1874–75, 22,935,100*l.*=8½ per cent.

16.—UNITED KINGDOM.

1874–75.

(A.) Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Fat Stock, Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry and Eggs, Wool, Horses, Grain, Fruit and Vegetables, Hay, Straw, Green Clover and Vetches; Margarine and Lard. (Exports of Wool deducted. Foreign and Colonial.)

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.	——	Home Supply, 1874–75.	1874. Foreign and Colonial Supply in competition with Home-grown.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.
Per cent.	Per cent.		£	£	£
87⅝	12⅜	Fat stock and meat - -	95,212,500	13,488,000	108,700,500
57¼	42¾	Grain and flour - -	58,706,500	43,525,500	102,232,000
72$\frac{11}{12}$	27$\frac{1}{12}$	Dairy produce - -	36,533,500	13,534,000	50,067,500
90	10	Fruit and vegetables - -	30,000,000	3,255,000	33,255,000
46⅜	53⅝	Wool, farm-shorn - -	10,800,000	12,500,000	23,300,000
100	—	Hay and straw - -	16,945,500	—	16,945,500
75$\frac{7}{10}$	24$\frac{3}{10}$	Poultry and eggs - -	8,420,000	2,700,000	11,120,000
100	—	Horses sold - -	4,850,000	—	4,850,000
79	21	Hops and flax - -	3,500,000	930,000	4,430,000
100	—	Green clover, vetches, &c. -	2,750,000	—	2,750,000
				Lard 884,500	884,500
			£267,718,000	£90,817,000	£358,535,000

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Appendix A. XX.

—	Estimated Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial.
	£	£	£
Potatoes and other vegetables -	21,500,000	1,455,000	22,955,000
Fruit - - - - -	8,500,000	1,800,000	10,300,000
	£30,000,000	£3,255,000	£33,255,000

—	Home Supply, 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1874.	Home, Foreign and Colonial Supply.	Total Supply Per Head of Population.
	£	£	£	£ s. d.
Household Food. Fat stock and meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	140,166,000	30,606,500	170,772,500	5 4 2
Wheat and oatmeal - - -	31,844,000	30,956,000	62,800,000	1 18 4
Fruit, vegetables, and hops - -	32,350,000	4,185,000	36,535,000	1 2 3
	204,360,000	65,747,500	270,107,500	8 4 9
Wool, hay, straw, green clover, vetches, flax, grain for stock and malting barley, horses.	63,358,000	25,069,500	88,427,500	2 13 10
Gross Total Revenue - -	£267,718,000	£90,817,000	£358,535,000	£10 18 7

(B.)

—	—	Per Head of Population. 1874–75.	Home Supply. 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial. 1874.
Food.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Household food—meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard, wheat and oatmeal, fruit, vegetables, and hops.	270,107,500	8 4 9	6 4 8	2 0 1
Other things - - - - - -	88,427,500	2 13 10	1 18 7	0 15 3
	£358,535,000	£10 18 7	£8 3 3	£2 15 4

(C.)

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	—	Home Supply. 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial Supply. 1874.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.
Per cent.	Per cent.	*Food for Household use.*	£	£	Per cent.	Per cent.
75·65	24·35	Meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	140,166,000	30,606,500	82	18
		Wheat and oatmeal - -	31,844,000	30,956,000	50·7	49·3
		Fruit, vegetables, and hops -	32,350,000	4,185,000	88	12
			204,360,000	65,747,500		
		Other things.				
71¾	28¼	Wool, hay, straw, green clover, vetches, flax, and horses.	63,358,000	25,069,500		
			£267,718,000	£90,817,000		

Home Supply per acre - £5 13 6=74¾ per cent.
Foreign and Colonial Supply 1 18 6=25¼ „
£7 12 0

Home Supply per head (population 32,800,000) £8 3 3
Foreign and Colonial Supply - - - 2 15 4
£10 18 7

Acreage, 47,143,320.

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Appendix A. XX.

(D.) Food.—Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply, one year.

Home Supply, 1874–75.

Foreign and Colonial, 1874.

	£	£	£
Fat stock and meat - -	95,212,500	13,488,000	108,700,500
Dairy produce - - -	36,533,500	13,534,000	50,067,500
Poultry and eggs - - -	8,420,000	2,700,000	11,120,000
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal -	31,844,000	30,956,000	62,800,000
Vegetables and fruit - -	30,000,000	3,255,000	33,255,000
Lard - - - - -	Included in fat stock.	884,500	884,500
	202,010,000	64,817,500	266,827,500
	6*l.* 3*s.* 2*d.* per head	1*l.* 19*s.* 6*d.* per head	8*l.* 2*s.* 8*d.* per head

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	—	—
			£ s. d.
$87\frac{6}{10}$	$12\frac{4}{10}$	Fat stock and meat - -	3 6 3
$72\frac{9}{10}$	$27\frac{1}{10}$	Dairy produce - - -	1 10 6
$75\frac{7}{10}$	$24\frac{3}{10}$	Poultry and eggs - - -	0 6 9
$50\frac{7}{10}$	$49\frac{3}{10}$	Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - -	1 18 4
$90\frac{8}{10}$	$9\frac{2}{10}$	Vegetables and fruit - -	1 0 3
		Lard - - - - -	0 0 7
			8 2 8

	£	s.	d.	
Home supply 75·7 per cent. - -	= 6	3	2	
Foreign and Colonial 24·3 per cent.	= 1	19	6	
	8	2	8	

	£	s.	d.	
Animal products - -	5	4	1	= 64 per cent.
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal -	1	18	4	= 23·56 per cent.
Fruit and vegetables -	1	0	3	= 12·44 „
	8	2	8	

UNITED KINGDOM.

1874–75.

(E.) Estimated Home Supply of Grain and Foreign and Colonial Supply of Wheat, Flour, Oats, Oatmeal, Barley, Beans, Peas, and Rye.

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Home Supply, 1874–75.		Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1874.		Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.
Per cent.	Per cent.		£		£	£
50	50	Wheat - - -	30,743,880	Wheat and flour -	30,922,000	61,665,880
77	23	Barley - - -	17,572,750	Barley - -	5,291,290	22,864,040
50	50	Oats - - -	5,026,860	Oats and oatmeal -	5,150,230	10,177,090
70	30	Beans and peas -	5,055,720	Beans and peas -	1,964,450	7,020,170
60	40	Rye - - -	307,500	Rye - - -	197,730	505,230
			£58,706,710		£48,525,700	£102,232,410

Home Supply, 57¼ per cent. - - } 100.
Foreign and Colonial Supply, 42¾ per cent. }

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Appendix A. XX.

	Per Head of Population.		
	Home Supply, 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial, 1874.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Household Food: Fat stock, meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	4 5 6	0 18 8	5 4 2
Household Food: Wheat and oatmeal	0 19 5	0 18 11	1 18 4
Household Food: Fruit, vegetables, and hops	0 19 9	0 2 6	1 2 3
	6 4 8	2 0 1	8 4 9
Other things	1 18 7	0 15 3	2 13 10
Total	8 3 8	2 15 4	10 18 7

	Per cent. Home Supply.	Per cent. Foreign and Colonial.
Household food	75·65	24·35
Other things	71·75	20·25

1874–75.

17.—UNITED KINGDOM.

(Population, 32,800,000.)

(A.) Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry and Eggs.

Meat.

	Home Supply, 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1874.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.
	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Per cent.	Per cent.
Beef and veal	12,000,000	1,906,450	13,906,450	86⅓	13⅔
Mutton and lamb	7,500,000	474,350	7,974,350	94 1/10	5 9/10
Bacon and pork	5,800,000	2,894,400	8,694,400	66⅔	33⅓
	25,300,000 = 86⅔ lbs. per head.	5,275,200 = 18 lbs. per head.	30,575,200 = 104⅔ lbs. per head of the population.		

Home Supply=82⅔ per cent. } 100.
Foreign and Colonial Supply=17⅓ per cent. }

(B.)—*Dairy Produce.*)

Home Supply.		Foreign and Colonial.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.
Lbs. per Head of Population.		Lbs. per Head of Population.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Per cent.	Per cent.
19·8	Milk, solids only	0	5,812,500	—	5,812,500	100	—
5·9	Butter	5·5	1,727,000	1,619,800	3,346,800	51⅔	48⅓
8·5	Cheese	5·1	2,471,070	1,485,260	3,956,330	50	50
34·2		10·6	10,010,570 Cwts. = 76⅔ per cent. = 34⅓ lbs. per head.	3,105,060 Cwts. = 23⅓ per cent. 10⅓ lbs. per head.	13,115,630 Cwts. = 44⅓ lbs per head of the Population.		

Home, Foreign and Colonial Supply of Dairy Produce.

	No. of lbs. per Head.
Milk (solids only)	19·8
Butter	11·4
Cheese	13·6
	44·8

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Appendix A. XX.

Poultry and Eggs.

——	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.
Poultry and eggs - - -	2,105,000 = 74 per cent. 7⅓ lbs. per head.	745,000 = 26 per cent. 2⅔ lbs. per head.	2,850,000 = 9⅔ lbs. per head of the Population.	74	26

Lard.

——	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.	——	——	——
Lard - - - - -	Included in value of fat pigs.	374,330 = 1 3/10 lbs. per head.	—	—	—

Home, Foreign, and Colonial supply of meat, average 3*l.* 11*s.* 1½*d.* per cwt.=7·62*d.* per lb.

1874–75.

(B.)—Animal Food Supply.

——	Home Supply, 1874–75.	Foreign and Colonial, 1874.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial.	No. of Lbs. per Head of Population.		
				Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Total.
	Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.			
Meat - - - -	25,300,000	5,275,200	30,575,200	86·40	18	104·40
Dairy produce - - -	10,010,570	3,105,060	13,115,630	34·20	10·60	44·80
Poultry and eggs - - -	2,105,000	745,000	2,850,000	7·20	2·60	9·80
Lard - - - -	Included in Pigs.	374,330	374,330	—	1·30	1·30
Total - -	37,415,570	9,519,590	46,915,160	127⅘	32½	160 9/10

——	Home Supply, 1892–93.	Foreign and Colonial, 1892.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Total Supply per head of Population.
	£	£	£	£ s. d.
Fat stock, meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	112,371,700	57,975,400	170,347,100	4 9 0
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - -	9,349,600	36,925,700	46,275,300	1 4 3
Fruit, vegetables, and hops - -	23,005,000	7,545,000	30,550,000	0 16 0
Household food - - -	144,726,300	102,446,100	247,172,400	6 9 3
Other things - - -	41,023,700	22,632,000	63,655,700	1 13 3
	185,750,000	125,078,100	310,828,100	8 2 6

Home supply of food 58½ per cent. Foreign and colonial 41½ per cent.

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Appendix A. XX

1892–93.

18.—UNITED KINGDOM.

Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.

(A.) (*Exports of Foreign and Colonial Produce deducted.*)

	Home Supply, 1892–93.	Foreign and Colonial Supply in competition with Home Supply 1892.	Estimated Value of the Total Supply.	Per-centage Home Supply.	Per-centage Foreign and Colonial.
	£	£	£		
Fat stock and meat - -	72,292,200	30,573,500	102,865,700	70·3	29·7
Dairy produce - - -	32,579,500	17,530,000	50,109,500	65·	35·
Grain and flour - - -	25,065,100	48,622,400	73,687,500	34·	66·
Vegetables and fruit - -	20,750,000	6,615,000	27,365,000	76·	24·
Hay and straw - - -	12,125,000	455,000	12,580,000	96·4	3·6
Poultry and eggs - - -	7,500,000	4,230,600	11,730,600	64·	36·
Wool, farm-shorn - - -	5,072,200	10,066,300	15,138,500	33·3	66·7
Hops and flax - -	2,755,000	(Hops) 930,000	3,685,000	74·8	25·2
Green clover, vetches, &c. -	2,500,000	—	2,500,000	100·	—
Horses sold off farms - -	5,111,000	414,000	5,525,000	92½·	7½·
Margarine and lard - -	Included in stock.	5,641,300	5,641,300	—	100·
	£185,750,000 = 59¾ per cent.	£125,078,100 = 40¼ per cent.	£310,828,100 = 8*l.* 2*s.* 6*d.* per head.	59¾	40¼

Population 1892–93 - - - - 38,265,300.

(B.)

	Per Head.	Per Acre.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Home supply - - -	4 17 0	3 17 4
Foreign and Colonial - -	3 5 6	2 12 0
	8 2 6	6 9 4

(C.)

	Per Head of Population.
Household Food.	£ s. d.
Fat stock, meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	4 9 0
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - - -	1 4 3
Fruit, vegetables, and hops - - -	0 16 0
	6 9 3
Other Things.	
Barley, oats, beans, peas, rye, hay, straw, green clover, vetches, home-grown flax, wool, and horses.	1 13 3
	£8 2 6

(D.)

Food Supply.	Estimated Value of Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Per-centages.	Per Head of Population. Home Supply.	Per Head of Population. Foreign and Colonial.
	£		£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Fat stock and meat, dairy produce, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	170,347,100	68·9 per cent. of the total supply.	2 18 9	1 10 3
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - -	46,275,300	18·7 „ „ „	0 4 10	0 19 5
Fruit, vegetables, and hops - -	30,550,000	12·4 „ „ „	0 12 0	0 4 0
	£247,172,400	= 6*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* per head.	3 15 7	2 13 8
			Total, 6*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.*	

58½ per cent. Home Supply of Food - 144,726,300*l.* = 3*l.* 15*s.* 8*d.*

41½ per cent. Foreign and Colonial Supply 102,446,100*l.* = 2*l.* 13*s.* 7*d.*

100 247,172,400*l.* = 6*l.* 9*s.* 3*d.* per head of the population (38,265,300).

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E. ONE YEARS' SUPPLY. Appendix A. XX.

Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Food.

Per Cent. Home Supply.	Per Cent. Foreign and Colonial.	——	Home Supply, 1892–93. Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1892. Foreign and Colonial Exports deducted.	Total.
			£	£	£
70·3	29·7	Fat stock and meat - - -	72,292,220	30,573,420	102,865,640
65·	35·	Dairy produce - - -	32,579,000	17,529,560	50,108,560
64·	36·	Poultry and eggs - - -	7,500,000	4,230,590	11,730,590
—	100·	Margarine and lard - - -	Included in fat stock	5,641,355	5,641,355
20·2	79·8	Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - -	9,349,600	36,925,700	46,275,300
75·8	24·2	Vegetables and fruit - - -	20,750,000	6,615,000	27,365,000
			142,470,820	101,515,625	243,986,445
			= 3*l.* 14*s.* 6*d.* per head	= 2*l.* 13*s.* per head	= 6*l.* 7*s.* 6*d.* per head

Total Supply per Head of Population.

	£	s.	d.
Fat stock and meat - - - - -	2	13	9
Dairy produce - - - - - -	1	6	2
Poultry and eggs - - - - -	0	6	1
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - - - -	1	4	3
Vegetables and fruit - - - - -	0	14	3
Margarine and lard - - - - -	0	3	0
	6	7	6

£ s. d.		Per cent.		£ s. d.	Per Cent.
3 14 6	Home supply - - -	58·39	Fat stock and meat, poultry and eggs, margarine and lard.	4 9 0	70
2 13 0	Foreign and Colonial supply -	41·61	Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - -	1 4 3	19
6 7 6		100	Fruit and vegetables - -	0 14 3	11
				6 7 6	100

——	1874–75, Year of Account.	1892–93.	Estimated decreased Expenditure in 1892–93.
	£	£	£
Animal products - - - - -	170,772,500	170,346,200	426,300
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - - - -	62,800,000	46,275,300	16,524,700
Fruit and vegetables - - - - -	33,255,000	27,365,000	5,890,000
	266,827,500	243,986,500	22,841,000
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Per head of population - - - - -	8 2 8	6 7 6	1 15 2

With an average production of food available for household consumption of about 3*l.* per acre, an additional area of about 775,000 acres annually of land of the same productive power would be required to supply food for the increased population, or equal to a large estate every week and a county every year.

1892.

F.—FOREIGN AND COLONIAL STOCK IMPORTED INTO AND KILLED FOR MEAT IN THE UNITED KINGDOM.

——	No.	Cwt. dressed meat.	Value.
			£
Cattle and calves - -	502,237	3,496,598	9,224,010
Sheep and lambs - -	79,048	46,110	125,660
Pigs - - - -	3,826	4,782	12,465
	585,111	3,547,490	9,362,135

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Appendix A. XX.

Estimated Average Weight per Head sinking the Offal.

	cwt.
Bullocks and bulls	7
Cows	6
Calves	1 1/16
Pigs	1 1/4

Sheep and lambs about 65 lbs.

1892–93.

(E.[1]) Estimated Value of Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Wheat, Flour, Barley, Oats, Beans, Peas and Rye, Hay and Straw, Vegetables, Fruit, Hops, Flax, Green Clover, and Wool and Horses.

(Exports of Foreign and Colonial Produce deducted.)

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Home Supply, 1892–93.		Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1892. (Exports deducted.)		Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.
Per cent.	Per cent.		£		£	£
19 2/3	80 2/3	Wheat	8,848,800	Wheat and flour	36,700,000	45,548,800
70	30	Barley	10,261,840	Barley	4,300,600	14,562,440
45	55	Oats	4,387,750	Oats and oatmeal	5,237,300	9,625,050
37	63	Beans and peas	1,312,160	Beans and peas	2,198,000	3,510,160
57 3/4	42 1/4	Rye	254,520	Rye	186,500	441,020
			£25,065,070		£48,622,400	£73,687,470

Home Supply=34 per cent.
Foreign and Colonial=66 per cent. } 100

(E.[2])

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	Home Supply, 1892–93.		Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1892.		Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.
Per cent.	Per cent.		£		£	£
96 2/3	3 1/3	Hay and straw	12,125,000	Hay and straw	455,000	12,580,000
84 1/3	15 2/3	Vegetables	15,750,000	Vegetables	2,860,000	18,610,000
57 1/16	42 15/16	Fruit	5,000,000	Fruit	3,755,000	8,755,000
74 2/3	25 1/3	Hops and flax	2,755,000	Hops	930,000	3,685,000
100	,,	Green clover, &c.	2,500,000	Green clover, &c.	—	2,500,000
33 1/3	66 2/3	Wool, farm-shorn	5,072,200	Wool	10,066,240	15,138,440
92 1/3	7 2/3	Horses	5,110,950	Horses	414,065	5,525,015

19.—Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Fat Stock, Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry and Eggs, Margarine and Lard.

Foreign and Colonial Exports deducted.

Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	—	Home Supply, 1892–93.	Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1892.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	Per Head of Population.	
Per cent.	Per cent.		£	£	£	£ s. d.	
70	30	Fat stock	72,292,220	30,573,420	102,865,640	2 13 9	Home supply 70 p.c. Foreign and Colonial 30 p.c.
65	35	Dairy produce	32,579,000	17,529,560	50,108,560	1 6 2	
64	36	Poultry and eggs	7,500,000	4,230,590	11,730,590	0 6 1	
		Margarine and lard, home supply. (Included in value of fat stock.)	—	5,641,355	5,641,355	0 3 0	
			£112,371,220 2*l.* 18*s.* 9*d.* per head of population.	£57,974,925 1*l.* 10*s.* 8*d.* per head of population.	£170,346,145	£4 9 0	Home supply 66 p.c. Foreign and Colonial supply 34 per cent. Home supply.

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							Per Head of Population.	
							Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial
Per cent.	Per cent.		Cwts.	Cwts.	Cwts.	Lbs.	lbs.	lbs.
66	34	Meat - - -	26,332,770	13,567,480	39,900,250	116⅔ meat.	77·1	39·7
69¼	30¾	Dairy produce -	10,504,590	4,663,960	15,168,550	44 9/10 dairy produce.	30·7	13·6
58⅓	41⅔	Poultry and eggs -	2,142,860	1,517,445	3,660,305	10⅓ poultry and eggs.	6·25	4·25
						6⅓ margarine and lard.*	—	6·5
			38,980,220	19,748,885	58,729,105			
			=66⅔ per cent.	=33⅓ per cent.	*2,269,430	178 1/10	114 1/10	64 1/10
		Margarine and lard	—	*2,269,430				
				22,018,815	60,998,535 = Home supply 63 9/10 per cent. Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply 36 1/10 per cent.			

* Margarine and lard, Foreign and Colonial. Home supply of margarine and lard included in value of stock.

Home, Foreign, and Colonial supply of meat, average 2*l.* 11*s.* 6¾*d.* per cwt. =5·52*d.* per lb. offal given in.

Dairy Produce.—No. of lbs. per Head of Population. Home Supply, 1892–93.

Milk (solids only, viz., 12½ per cent.) - - -	18·50
Butter - - - - - -	4·80
Cheese - - - - - -	7·40
	30 7/10 lbs.

UNITED KINGDOM.

1892–93.

(Population 38,265,300.)

20.—Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Fat Stock, Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry and Eggs, Horses, Wool, Margarine and Lard.

Estimated Value of the Supply for the Year.
From Agricultural Holdings.

—	Home Supply, 1892–93.	—	Foreign and Colonial Supply (Exports not deducted), 1892.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.
			£	£
Fat cattle and veal calves -	34,378,840	Fat cattle and veal calves, beef and veal, and unclassed meat (£836,410).	16,183,360	50,562,200
Fat sheep and fat lambs -	22,837,800	Fat sheep and lambs, mutton and lamb	3,710,545	26,548,345
Fat pigs, bacon and pork -	15,075,580	Fat pigs, bacon and pork - -	11,522,715	26,598,295
Milk - - - -	14,736,400	Milk, condensed or preserved -	930,205	15,666,685
Butter - - - -	10,225,150	Butter, fresh and salted - -	11,965,285	22,190,435
Cheese - - - -	7,617,450	Cheese - - - -	5,417,780	13,035,230
Poultry and eggs - -	7,500,000	Poultry and eggs - - -	4,230,590	11,730,590
Wool - - - -	5,072,200	Wool - - - -	26,827,100	31,899,300
Horses - - - -	5,110,950	Horses - - - -	425,335	5,536,285
		Margarine and lard - - -	5,935,895	5,935,895
	122,554,370 £2 11*s.* 1*d.* per acre.		£87,148,890 =£1 16*s.* 4*d.* per acre of cultivated land in the United Kingdom.	£209,703,260 =£4 7*s.* 5*d.* per acre of cultivated land in the United Kingdom.

	£	
Home supply - - - - - -	122,554,370 = 64⅓ per cent.	100.
Foreign and Colonial supply exports deducted - -	68,455,230 = 35⅔ ,,	
	191,009,600	

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Appendix A. XX.

UNITED KINGDOM.

Estimated Population 1892-93, 38,265,300.

(Exports not deducted.)

21.—Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply of Meat, Dairy Produce, Poultry and Eggs, Margarine and Lard—Quantity.

Home Supply, 1892-93.		Foreign and Colonial Supply, 1892.		Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.		Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.
	Cwts.		Cwts.		Cwts.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.
Beef and veal -	13,531,180	Beef and veal, and unclassed meat (324,140 cwts.).	6,733,340	Beef and veal -	20,254,520	67·75	33·25
Mutton and lamb -	7,786,395	Mutton and lamb -	1,814,500	Mutton and lamb -	9,600,895	81·25	18·75
Bacon and pork -	5,025,195	Bacon and pork -	5,500,000	Bacon and pork -	10,525,195	47·75	52·25
Milk—solids -	6,329,420	Milk, condensed and preserved.	481,375	Milk - -	6,810,795	92·75	7·25
Cheese - -	2,539,150	Cheese - -	2,232,815	Cheese - -	4,771,965	53·88	46·12
Butter - -	1,636,020	Butter - -	2,183,000	Butter - -	3,819,020	43·55	56·45
Poultry and eggs -	2,142,860	Poultry and eggs -	1,517,445	Poultry and eggs -	3,660,305	58·55	41·45
		Margarine and lard -	2,544,400	Margarine and lard	2,544,400		
	38,980,220		23,006,875		61,987,095		

Home Supply.		Per Head of Population.	Percentage of Supply.	Foreign and Colonial Supply.		Per Head of Population.	Percentage of Supply.	Home, Foreign, and Colonial Supply.	
								——	Per Head of Population.
	Cwts.	Lbs.	Per cent.		Cwts.	Lbs.	Per Cent.	Cwts.	Lbs.
Meat - -	26,332,770	77	65⅓	Meat - -	14,047,840	41	34⅔	40,580,610	116
Dairy produce -	10,504,590	30¾	68⅓	Dairy produce -	4,897,190	14¼	31⅓	15,401,780	45
Poultry and eggs	2,142,860	6¼	58¼	Poultry and eggs	1,517,445	4¼	41½	3,660,305	10⅔
				Margarine and lard.	2,544,400	7	100	2,544,400	7
	38,980,220	114	62·88		23,006,875	66⅔ lbs.	37·12 %	61,987,095	180⅔

Total supply of beef, veal, mutton or lamb, including edible offal and allowing for waste—about 120 lbs.

22.—(A.) *Imports and Exports of Horses, Home, Foreign, and Colonial.*

No. imported. Average Value £20 4s. 6d.	No. exported.		Value of Horses imported.	Value of Horses exported.	
	Home-bred.	Foreign and Colonial.		Home-bred.	Foreign and Colonial.
21,026	11,233	123	425,335*l.* Average value per head, 20*l.* 4*s.* 6*d.*	563,364*l.* Average value per head, 50*l.* 3*s.* 1*d.*	11,270*l.* Average value per head, 91*l.* 12*s.* 8*d.*

(B.) *Foreign and Colonial Wool*, 1892.

	Cwts.	£
Quantity imported - -	6,585,660	26,827,100
Quantity exported - -	3,839,768	16,760,860
Home consumption of Foreign and Colonial wool.	2,745,892	10,066,240 = 66⅔ per cent.
Home supply of farm-shorn wool	1,207,685	5,072,200 = 33⅓ per cent.
	3,953,577 cwts.	£15,138,440

Home supply - - 30·55 per cent.
Foreign and Colonial - 69·45 ,,

(C.) *Exports of Foreign and Colonial Produce.*

	Cwts.	£
Wool - - - -	3,839,768	16,760,860
Meat - - - -	480,360	843,200
Dairy produce - - -	233,230	783,790
Margarine and lard - -	274,970	294,540
Horses (123) - - -	—	11,270
	4,828,328 cwts.	£18,693,660

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23.—UNITED KINGDOM.

Appendix A. XX.

Food Supply from Agricultural Holdings.

	Value of Home Supply.		
	1874–5.	1892–3.	Decrease in 1892–3.
	£	£	£
Fat stock and meat	95,212,500	72,292,200	22,920,300
Dairy produce	36,538,500	32,579,000	3,954,500
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal	31,844,000	9,349,600	22,494,400
Vegetables and fruit	30,000,000	20,750,000	19,250,000
Poultry and eggs	8,420,000	7,500,000	920,000
Total	£202,010,000	£142,470,800	£69,539,200
	Decrease = 34⅜ per cent.		

Home supply per head of population:—

	£	s.	d.
1874–5	6	3	2
1892–3	3	14	6
Decrease per head, 1892–3	£2	8	8

	Value of Foreign and Colonial Supply.		
	1874.	1892 (Exports deducted.)	Increase in 1892.
	£	£	£
Fat stock and meat	13,488,000	30,573,400	17,085,400
Dairy produce	13,534,000	17,529,500	3,995,500
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal	30,956,000	36,925,700	5,969,700
Vegetables and fruit	3,255,000	6,615,000	3,360,000
Poultry and eggs	2,700,000	4,230,600	1,530,600
Margarine and lard	884,500	5,641,300	4,756,800
Total	£64,817,500	£101,515,500	£36,698,000
	Increase = 36$\frac{8}{10}$ per cent.		

Foreign and colonial supply per head of population:—

	£	s.	d.
1874	1	19	6
1892	2	13	0
Increase per head in 1892	£0	13	6

24.—HOME, FOREIGN, AND COLONIAL SUPPLY OF FOOD.

Foreign and Colonial in competition with Home Supply.

Home supply, 1874–5. Foreign and Colonial, 1874. Exports of Foreign and Colonial in 1892 deducted. Home supply, 1892–3. Foreign and Colonial, 1892.

	Year of Account.	Year of Account.	Per-centage.		Per Head of Population.								
	1874–75.	1892–93.	Home Supply.	Foreign and Colonial.	1874–75.			1892–93.			Decrease in 1892–93.		
	£	£			£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
Fat stock and meat	108,700,500	102,865,600	87·6	12·4	3	6	3	2	13	9	0	12	6
Dairy produce	50,067,500	50,108,500	72·9	27·1	1	10	6	1	6	2	0	4	4
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal	62,800,000	46,275,300	50·7	49·3	1	18	4	1	4	3	0	14	1
Vegetables and fruit	33,255,000	27,365,000	90·2	9·8	1	0	3	0	14	3	0	6	0
Poultry and eggs	11,120,000	11,730,600	75·7	24·3	0	6	9	0	6	1	0	0	8
Margarine and lard	884,500	5,641,300	—	—	0	0	7	0	3	0	0	2	5*
	£266,827,500	£243,986,300	—	—	£8	2	8	£6	7	6	£1	15	2

* Increase.

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Appendix A. XX.

——	1874–5.	1892–3.	1874–5.	1892–3.
	Per cent.	Per cent.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Home supply - - - - -	75·7	58·39	6 3 2	3 14 6
Foreign and Colonial - - - -	24·3	41·61	1 19 6	2 13 0
	100·	100·	8 2 8	6 7 6

——	1874–5.	1892–3.	Decrease in 1892–3.
	£	£	£
Animal products - - - -	170,772,500	170,346,200	426,300
Wheat, flour, and oatmeal - - -	62,800,000	46,275,300	16,524,700
Fruit and vegetables - - -	33,255,000	27,365,000	5,890,000
	266,827,500	243,986,500	22,841,000

NOTE.—With an average production of food in the United Kingdom available for household use of about 3*l.* per acre, an additional area of about 775,000 acres annually of land of the same productive power would be required to supply food for the increased population, or equal to a large English estate every week and a county every year.

25.—TABLE showing the NETT INCOME from an estate worth 375,000*l.* in 1874, and 250,000*l.*, or one-third less, in 1894, free from debt.

Value of Estate.	Gross Rental (=4 per cent. on the Value of the Estate).	Estate Expenses. (25 per Cent. of Gross Rental) = One per Cent. on the Maximum Value of the Estate.	Net Income =3 per cent. on the Value of the Estate.
£	£	£	£
375,000	15,000	3,750	11,250
350,000	14,000	3,500	10,500
325,000	13,000	3,250	9,750
300,000	12,000	3,000	9,000
275,000	11,000	2,750	8,250
250,000	10,000	2,500	7,500

26.—STATEMENT showing the loss of CAPITAL and INCOME by MORTGAGING ESTATES on the TERMS named (4 per cent. and 3½ per cent.).

Landed estate, rental 30,000*l.* 20,000 acres. Value in 1874 at 25 years' purchase, 750,000*l.*

Mortgage loan contracted of 375,000*l.*, being half the value of the estate. Interest, 4 per cent., 15,000*l.*

Value of Estate.	Gross Rental =4 per Cent. on the Value of the Estate.	Estate Expenses 25 per Cent. of Gross Rental =1 per Cent. of the Value of the Estate.	Interest on Mortgage (=2 per Cent. on the Maximum Value of the Estate).	Total Expenses (=3 per Cent. on the Maximum Value of the Estate).	Net Income (=1 per Cent. on the Maximum Value of the Estate).
£	£	£	£	£	£
750,000	30,000	7,500	15,000	22,500	7,500
700,000	28,000	7,000	15,000	22,000	6,000
650,000	26,000	6,500	15,000	21,500	4,500
600,000	24,000	6,000	15,000	21,000	3,000
550,000	22,000	5,500	15,000	20,500	1,500
500,000	20,000	5,000	15,000	20,000	Nil.

Fall in value of the estate, 250,000*l.*=33⅓ per cent.
Reduction in gross rental, 10,000*l.*=33⅓ per cent.
Reduction in nett income, 7,500*l.*=100 per cent.
Reduction in value of the half of the estate held with the mortgage loan, 125,000*l.*
Value of the land held with the mortgage loan, 250,000*l.* Interest, 15,000*l.*=6 per cent.

If instead of mortgaging the estate for 375,000*l.*, half the property had been sold, the owner would have had a larger income, till the value of the estate began to fall, of 3,750*l.* a year=50 per cent., and even when the estate had fallen in value one-third—viz., from 375,000*l.* to 250,000*l.*—he would still have been in the enjoyment of as large a nett income as he received in the prosperous time, when the estate was worth 750,000*l.* and was mortgaged for 375,000*l.*

The gross rental from the half of the estate retained by contracting the mortgage loan was at the time, 15,000*l.*

The estate expenses on this portion, 3,750*l.*

Nett income to meet the interest of 15,000*l.*, 11,250*l.*

The annual loss by the transaction, even if the value of land had not fallen, would have been 3,750*l.* a year.

The nett income of 11,250*l.*=3 per cent. on the capitalised value of half the estate. Had the money been raised at 3½ per cent. there would still have been an annual loss of 1,875*l.*=half of one per cent. on the amount of the mortgage money, and with a fall in value of the property of 33⅓ per cent., the nett income would only have been 1,875*l.*, even if the estate expenses had been reduced in proportion to the fall in the rental; and with a fall of 41⅔ per cent.—viz., from 750,000*l.* to 437,500*l.*—the whole of the gross rental would have been required to meet the mortgage interest and the estate expenses. There would have been no nett income.

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Appendix A. XXI. and XXII.

XXI.

(Handed in by Mr. Turnbull. See Question 59,417.)

(HIRING OUT SHEEP.)

(Shropshire Sheep.)

Owner's Account. One year.

Outlay.	£	s.	d.
100 ewes at 45s.	225	0	0
25 ewe lambs at 30s.	37	10	0
1 ram	5	0	0
1 ram lamb	2	10	0
Value of sheep hired out at Michaelmas	270	0	0

Income.	£	s.	d.
Value of 8 per cent. of lambs reared: 135 lambs per 100 ewes served, value at 30s. each	202	10	0
8 per cent. of lambs	16	4	0
	£	s.	d.
5 per cent. interest on capital	13	10	0
Agent's commission 1 per cent. on value of flock	2	14	0
	16	4	0

Hirer's Account. One year.

Outlay.	£	s.	d.
Keep of 95 ewes and their lambs at 35s. per ewe	166	5	0
Keep of 24 ewe lambs at 25s.	30	0	0
Keep of 2 rams at 27s. 6d.	2	15	0
Shepherding	15	0	0
Sundries	1	16	0
Hire.—8 per cent. of lambs reared at average value of lambs sold	16	4	0
	232	0	0

Income.	£	s.	d.
130 lambs reared per 100 ewes served at 30s.	202	10	0
20 fat ewes at 42s.	42	0	0
1 fat ram 50s.	2	10	0
Wool	25	0	0
	272	0	0
Less value of 25 ewe lambs at 30s. and 1 ram lamb, 50s. retained to keep up the flock	40	0	0
	232	0	0

NOTE.—Manure only for profit when prices are low.

XXII.

(Handed in by Mr. Turnbull. See Question 59,328.)

HOME SUPPLY OF DAIRY PRODUCE.

June to June.

	Quantity.			Value.	
	1874-5.	1892-3.		1874-5.	1892-3.
	cwts.	cwts.		£	£
Milk—solids only=12¼ per cent.	5,812,500	6,329,420	Milk	15,257,000	14,736,400
Butter	1,736,500	1,636,080	Butter	12,527,700	10,225,150
Cheese	2,471,070	2,539,150	Cheese	8,648,800	7,617,450
	10,010,070	10,504,590		36,533,500	32,579,000

Decrease in value in 1892-3, 3,954,500*l.*=10¾ths per cent.

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Appendix A. XXIII.

XXIII.

(*Handed in by Mr. Turnbull. See Questions* 59,402–59,416.)

A Cowhouse for two Cows for 5*l*.

A warm and comfortable cowhouse can be put up by any intelligent labourer at a cost of 5*l*. for two cows.

Sound creosoted sleepers can be purchased from railway companies for 1*s*. each, 9 ft. 10 inches in length, 10 inches in width, 5 inches in thickness.

For a shed 15 ft. by 8 ft. 4 inches, suitable for two cows, 18 sleepers are required for each side, 10 for one end, 5 for the other end, 10 cut down the centre for the roof, 9 sleepers for the stalls: in all 60 sleepers=3*l*. 10*s*. Two boards 7 ft. 6 inches long, 1½×11 for feeding trough, 2*s*. 6*d*. Rack and chains 7*s*. 6*d*. Door, 10*s*. Bricks for paving floor behind the cows, 5*s*. Thatch for roof, 5*s*., rushes—labour only. Total cost, 5*l*.

Keep for two 8 cwt. cows:—	£	s.	d.
1 acre of oats	5	0	0
½ acre of swedes and carrots	4	0	0
½ acre of clover	2	0	0
1 acre of meadow	3	0	0
2 acres of pasture	3	0	0
5 acres	17	0	0

Stock food, 2 cows, 8 cwt. each:—	
Produce of land—	
1 ton grain, 1 ton straw	1 acre.
8 tons roots	½ acre.
1 ton clover hay	½ acre.
1½ tons hay and four tons grass	1 acre.
12 tons grass	2 acres.
Free labour except as regards arable land.	

Cash expenses. Two cows:—	£	s.	d.
Food	17	0	0
Service	0	10	0
Sundries	0	10	0
Hire	7	0	0
	25	0	0
Equal to 12*l*. 10*s*. per cow.			

Produce. Average live weight of cows, 8 cwt.	£	s.	d.
8 cwt.+6=48 cwt. at 7*s*.			
2 cows =96 cwt. at 7*s*.			
=33 12 0			
Calves	2	8	0
	36	0	0
Equal to 18*l*. per cow.			
Profit 11*l*. + 6*l*. 10*s*. per cow.			

Adding 5*l*. for labour of milking and attending to the cows, and haymaking: total cost, 30*l*.=15*l*. per cow. Net profit, 3*l*. per cow.

Net cost of milk=5*s*. 3*d*. per cwt.=about 5¾*d*. per gallon: about 1¼ lbs. of solid and perfect food at a cost of 4¼*d*. per lb. 1 cwt. of pure new milk of good quality produces 1 stone of 14 lbs. of solid food.

The First Cow hired out.

Kerry cow hired by Alec Cranstone, Haywood Dale (Harkness Estate, Yorks). Value of the Kerry when hired out in 1876 as a three-year-old calving heifer, 12*l*. Rate of hire, 45*s*. a year (this was the first cow hired out). Hired for 8 years and finally sold for 5*l*. Amount of hire received, 18*l*.

Cr.	
	18*l*.

Dr.	£	s.	d.
Loss on sale	7	0	0
Interest on capital, 8 years at 4%	3	16	9
Agent's commission and expenses	3	0	0
Profit	4	3	3(=4⅓%)
	18	0	0

This cow was an exceptionally good one and a great producer of butter. The calf was sold for veal each year at a price which fully covered the cost of hire. By having this cow old Alec kept his little home without parish assistance. He said to me when paying the hire, "The little coo has paid you, Sir, and it has paid me, so we ought both to be satisfied."

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XXIV.

(*Handed in by Mr. Turnbull. See Question* 59,496.)

AGRICULTURE IN NORFOLK.

Estimated Average cost of Grain Crops, Green Crops, Hay, Clover, and Bare Fallows.

Horse labour. Estimated cost per Horse.						Per Acre. 1874.				Per Acre, 1894.		
£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.		£	s.	d.
24	5	0	Keep, corn, hay, &c.	18	5	0	2	0	0	Rent, rates, and tithes	1	5	0
2	15	0	Blacksmith's saddle	2	15	0	1	10	0	Manual labour	1	10	0
2	0	0	Depreciation	2	0	0	1	8	6	Horse labour	1	4	8
1	0	0	Insurance	1	0	0	1	8	0	Manure	1	5	0
							0	12	0	Seed corn, clover, and root seeds	0	7	7
30	0	0		24	0	0	0	5	0	Sundries	0	5	0
							7	3	6	Reduction per acre in expenses in 1894, 26*s.* 3*d.*	5	17	3

NOTE.—In 1892–3 the gross farm revenue was about 36*s.* 3*d.* per acre less than in 1874–75 and in 1894 about 40*s* per acre less than in 1874.

XXV.

(*Handed in by Mr. Turnbull. See Question* 59,495.)

SUMMARY of HORSES used for Agricultural purposes sold by auction by Messrs. Boulton and Cooper, Auctioneers, Malton, at Farm Stock Sales conducted by them during the past sixteen years (1880 to 1895 inclusive) together with the total amount realised and average for each year.

Year.	Number sold.	Amount realised.			Average.		
		£	s.	d.	£	s.	d.
1880	113	4,068	0	0	36	0	0
1881	124	4,090	0	0	33	0	0
1882	156	4,504	0	0	28	17	6
1883	120	3,032	0	0	25	5	0
1884	102	2,542	0	0	24	18	8
1885	134	2,739	0	0	20	8	9
1886	130	2,590	0	0	19	18	6
1887	180	3,557	0	0	19	15	3
1888	152	2,789	0	0	18	7	0
1889	77	1,322	0	0	17	3	4
1890	48	1,172	0	0	24	8	4
1891	102	2,376	0	0	23	6	0
1892	132	3,594	0	0	27	4	6
1893	165	3,424	0	0	20	15	0
1894	237	5,100	0	0	21	10	4
1895	101	2,418	0	0	23	19	0

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Appendix A. XXVI.

XXVI.

Tables handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

TABLE 1.

LOCAL RATES ON A FARM IN YORKS. (*See Question* 62,812.)

Previous to 1878 this farm was included in a union where the assessment was low and the rates moderate. It was then transferred to another union, where a much stricter assessment was made and higher rates prevailed.

Years.	Amount of Rates.	Average Amount for different Periods of Years.	Increase per Cent. as compared with first Period.	Assessment.	Rates in the £.				
					Poor Rate.	Highway.	County.	Sanitary and School Attendance.	Total.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£	d.	d.	d.	d.	d.
1874	39 3 4			434	20	7	—	—	27
1875	44 9 8	4 years.		454	17	7	—	—	24
1876	43 6 7	43 16 5		,,	17	5	—	0½	22½
1877	47 14 0			,,	15	6	—	3½	24½
1878	58 12 10			,,	24	7	—	—	31
1879	77 10 1	4 years.		512	30	6½	—	—	36½
1880	61 2 9	69 5 5	+58·0	,,	16	11½	—	1	28½
1881	79 16 0			504	22½	13	1	1½	38
1882	75 12 0			,,	21	10½	2½	2	36
1883	63 0 0	4 years.		,,	17	11	2	—	30
1884	60 18 0	64 11 6	+47·3	,,	17	10	2	—	29
1885	58 16 0			,,	15	11	2	—	28
1886	77 14 0			There has been some slight alteration of area, but nothing sufficient to substantially affect the results shown.	24	8	2	3	37
1887	78 10 0	4 years.			19	11	2	3	35
1888	54 12 0	62 9 6	+42·5		19	6	1	—	26
1889	44 2 0				18	—	2	1	21
1890	52 10 0				13	6	4	2	25
1891	60 18 0	5 years.			15	7	5	2	29
1892	81 18 0	63 4 2	+44·2		24	8	5	2	39
1893	61 19 0				17	7	3	2½	29½
1894	58 16 0				17	7	2	2	28

TABLE 2.

LOCAL RATES ON A FARM IN CAMBRIDGESHIRE. (*See Question* 62,809.)

STATEMENT SHOWING the AMOUNT PAID in each year, 1875–95, for LOCAL RATES in respect of LAND in the occupation of W. C. LITTLE, with the RATE in the £ of the POOR and HIGHWAY RATES, and the AVERAGE AMOUNT of such RATES for each period of three years.

Year ending 25th March.	Rates on 1*l.*		Total Amount of Rates.	Average Amount, Three Years.	Ratio to Amount in first Period, 1888–1881.	Ratio to Amount, 1894–1886.
	Poor's Rate.	Highway.				
	d.	d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
1878 - -	16	14	118 10 1			
1879 - -	22	14	141 19 6			
1880 -	14	8	87 1 2			
				115 16 11	100	
1881 - -	19	14	130 15 2			
1882 - -	20	8	113 3 8			
1883 - -	18	14	116 19 6			
				120 6 1	103·84	
1884 - -	18	4	75 7 2			
1885 - -	18	12	102 19 10			
1886 -	20	14	115 19 0			
				98 2 0	84·7	100
1887	18	13	105 12 0			
1888 - -	24	12	124 16 4			
1889 - -	18	12	103 17 2			
				111 8 6	96·26	113·5
1890 - -	25	6	106 7 6			
1891 - -	22	9	107 6 6			
1892 - -	18	9	93 9 6			
				102 7 10	88·4	104·4
1893 - -	22	10	110 15 8			
1894 - -	23	10	114 5 0			
1895 - -	26	10	124 18 4			
				116 11 4	100·6	118·8

The first half year of 1895–6 poor rate, 14*d.*; highway rate, 8*d.*
The joint incomes of owners and occupier in this case would be assessed for income-tax purposes at 1,023*l.*
The rates on an average equal an income-tax of 27·3*d.*

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Appendix A. XXVI.

TABLE 3.

POOR RATES. ELM PARISH. WISBECH UNION. COUNTY—ISLE OF ELY.

STATEMENT showing the RATE in the £ of the POOR RATES levied in the PARISH of ELM in each year from 1857–1895, with the AVERAGE PER-CENTAGE of such RATES for each successive period of three Years, and the ASSESSMENT upon which such RATES were levied at different periods.

Year ending 25th March.	Assessment.	Rates in £1.	Average of Three Years except where otherwise stated.	Year ending 25th March.	Assessment.	Rates in £1.	Average of Three Years.
		d.			£	d.	
1851	—	22		1867	—	22	
1852	—	19		1868	19,874	28	
1853	—	16		1869	—	24	
			19				24⅔
1854	—	21		1870	—	24	
1855	—	23		1871	—	24	
1856	—	23		1872	—	28	
			22⅓				25⅓
1857	—	18		1873	—	24	
1858	—	24		1874	—	24	
1859	—	22		1875	—	24	
			21⅓				24
1860	—	17		1876	20,363	22	
1861	—	21		1877	20,429	22	
1862	—	26		1878	20,452	16	
			21⅓				20
1863	—	23		1879	20,447	22	
1864	—	20		1880	20,445	14	
1865	—	18	4 years 20	1881	20,473	19	
							18⅓
1866	—	19		1882*	18,390	20	
				1883	18,401	18	
				1884	18,630	18	
							18⅔
	Average for 16 years - -		20¾	1885	18,608	18	
				1886	18,581	20	
				1887	18,601	18	
							18⅔
				1888	18,514	24	
				1889	18,520	18	
				1890	18,490	25	
	The Union Chargeable Act came into force 25th March 1866.						21⅓
				1891	18.471	22	
				1892	18,880	18	
				1893	18,971	22	2 years 20⅔
				1894	18,757	23	
				1895	19,102	26	24⅓

* In 1882 15 per cent. taken off the land.

TABLE 4.

ELM PARISH in the UNION of WISBECH. (*See Question* 62,828.)

STATEMENT showing for five successive periods of THREE YEARS the AVERAGE CONTRIBUTIONS to the FUNDS of the the UNION and the EXPENDITURE under the principal heads with the INCREASE or DECREASE during each period.

Periods of Three Years ending Lady Day.	Contributions.		Common Charges.		Separate Charges.		County Rate.		Total Expenditure.	
	Amount.	Increase + or Decrease −.	Amount.	Increase + or Decrease −.	Amount.	Increase + or Decrease −.	Amount.	Increase + or Decrease −.	Amount.	Increase + or Decrease −.
	£	Per Cent.	£	Per Cent.	£	Per Cent.	£	Per Cent.	£	Per Cent.
1862 - - -	1,371	—	1,016	—	15	—	404	—	1,435	—
1865 - - -	1,352	−1·4	927	−8·8	25	+66·5	403	−0·1	1,355	−5·8
1868 - - -	1,466	+6·9	960	−5·5	28	+83·2	418	+3·4	1,406	−2·6
1891 - - -	1,551	+13·1	1,025	+6·9	30	+96·1	539	+30·9	1,584	+10·4
1894 - - -	1,520	+10·9	946	−6·9	36	+138·	617	+52·9	1,600	+11·

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Appendix A. XXVI.

Table 5.

Local Taxation. Elm Parish. (*See Question* 62,858.)

Statement as to the Rateble Value of all Property in the Parish, and that of Railways, Tramways, Water Works, and Canals included in the same in 1883 and 1893.

1. Year.	2. Total Rateable Value.	3. Rateable Value of Railways, &c.	4. Per-centage of Total in Col. 4.	5. Amount raised by Rate of 2s. in £.	6. Amount of 2s. Rate on Railway, &c., Col. 3.	7. Balance to be paid by other Property.	8. Rate per Acre, 11,042 Acres.
		£ s. d.	Per Cent.	£	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	d.
1883 - -	18,401	862 6 6	4·7	1,840	86 4 8	1,753 15 4	38·10
1893 - -	16,757	1,608 9 9	8·5	1,874	160 7 0	1,713 13 0	37·25
					Difference -	40 2 4	·85

In consequence of the extension of tramways, waterworks, &c., and the increase in the assessment of railways &c., land has been relieved to the extent of about 1½*d.* an acre. The parish is almost entirely agricultural.

Table 6.

Wisbech Union. (*See Questions* 62,822, 62,886.)

Statement showing the Number of Paupers relieved and the Cost of Indoor and Outdoor Relief during Five successive Periods of Three Years each.

Periods of Three Years to Lady Day.	Paupers relieved.										Lunatics.			
	Numbers.				Cost.						Number.		Cost.	
	Indoor.		Outdoor.		Indoor.		Outdoor.		Total.					
——	No.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	No.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	£	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	£	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	£	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	No.	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).	£	Inc. (+) or Dec. (−).
		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.		Per Cent.
1882 - -	6,488	—	10,432	—	5,837	—	19,734	—	25,571	—	339	—	4,049	—
1885 - -	4,619	−28·8	8,893	−14·8	5,753	− 1·4	18,797	− 4·8	24,550	− 4·0	364	+ 7·3	4,231	+ 4·5
1888 - -	7,064	+ 8·8	9,328	−10·6	5,622	− 3·7	19,650	− 0·5	25,272	− 1·2	385	+13·5	4,089	+ 1·0
1891 - -	7,633	+18·4	10,793	+ 3·4	5,825	− 0·2	22,454	+13·7	28,279	+10·6	403	+19·0	4,833	+19·3
1894 - -	7,997	+23·2	10,083	− 3·3	6,064	+ 3·8	20,298	+ 2·8	26,362	+ 3·1	439	+29·4	4,905	+21·1

Table 7.

Isle of Ely.—County Rates.

Statement showing the Total Amount levied, the Rate in the £, and the Assessment for general purposes for each year 1868 to 1895.

——	Amount levied.	Rate in £.	Assessment.
	£		£
Year ending 29th September 1868	8,106	5¼	350,175
1869	7,787	5	—
1870	10,456	6¾	—
1871	7,369	4	457,088
1872	7,881	4¼	,,
1873	10,155	5½	,,
1874	10,226	5½	,,
1875	8,798	4¾	,,
1876	9,345	5	,,
1877	7,881	4¼	,,
1878	8,869	4¾	,,
Half-year ending 25th March 1879	4,584	2½	,,
Year ending 25th March - 1880	8,833	4¾	,,
1881	9,309	5	,,
1882	8,797	4¾	,,
1883	8,798	4¾	,,
1884	9,309	5	457,147
1885	8,799	4¾	457,907
1886	7,895	4¼	,,
1887	12,153	6½	,,
1888	7,859	4¼	,,
1889	11,030	5¾	,,
*1890	12,936	7	424,357
1891	12,377	7	,,
1892	15,913	9	,,
1893	15,913	9	,,
1894	15,913	9	,,
1895	17,682	10	431,324

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TABLE 8.

LOCAL RATES paid for a FARM in LINCOLNSHIRE, 1889–1894.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Year ending Lady Day, 1889	94 4 7	
" " 1890	95 5 1	
" " 1891	98 4 1	
Total for three years		287 13 9
Average		95 17 11
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Year ending Lady Day, 1892	105 12 0	
" " 1893	154 14 1	
" " 1894	137 1 9	
Total for three years		397 7 10
Average		132 9 3
Increase per cent. in the amount of the last period of three years over that of the first period		38·1

TABLE 9.

POOR RATES levied in a PARISH in NORFOLK during successive PERIODS of THREE YEARS.

Statement showing:—

1. The assessment on which the rate was levied.
2. The average amount raised.
3. The rate in the £.
4. The increase or decrease in the amount raised and the per-centage of the rate.
5. The estimated amount falling upon the land.

1. Periods of Three Years	2. Assessment.	3. Average Amount received.	4. Average Rate in £.	5. Increase (+) or Decrease (−).		6. Estimated Amount falling upon the Land after deducting 500*l.* for other Property. *See* Note *.	
				Amount raised.	Rate in £.	Amount.	Increase (+) or Decrease (−)
	£	£ s. d.	d.	Per Cent.	Per Cent.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
1876–1878	2,743	176 12 5	15·66	—	—	146 7 1	—
1879–1881	2,551	163 0 7	14·66	− 7·7	− 6·4	125 5 7	−14·5
1882–1884	2,551	192 13 0	18·66	+ 9·0	+19·1	159 9 3	+ 9·0
1885–1887	2,440	211 3 0	20·33	+20·0	+30·	166 3 0	+18·5
1888–1890	2,293	212 11 6	22·66	+20·4	+44·7	169 5 9	+15·7
1891–1893	2,216	226 3 5	24·66	+28·	+57·2	176 6 4	+20·4
1894	1,879	211 8 6	27·	+19·7	+72·3	155 2 9	+ 6·0

* This parish is purely agricultural, and it belongs entirely to one owner. It contains, in addition to the agricultural land, the Hall rated at 200*l.*, the shooting and woods at 146*l.* There are 34 inhabited houses and 143 inhabitants. If these properties be estimated at 500*l.*, the balance of poor rate falling on the land will be that shown in col. 6.

The assessment of the parish has been reduced by 31½ per cent., but the amount of the rate has increased 20 per cent.

XXVII.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

RATES IN RATIO TO GROSS PROFITS.

In the following instances GROSS PROFITS are taken as the sum received by the *Landowner* as *rent* and by the *Occupier* as *profit*. The necessary expenditure on production (exclusive of the equipment and maintenance of the farm and the interest on capital) being deducted from the gross receipts the remaining sum is that which is divisible between landlord and tenant, or in the case of an owner farming his land, the return for capital invested in the land, and in farming stock.

TABLE 1.

SUMMARY STATEMENT compiled from a FARM ACCOUNT given by DR. FREAM in his REPORT on the ANDOVER DISTRICT (Appendix H.).

Periods of Years.	Total Amount of Gross Profits.	Total Amount of Rates.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£	£	Per Cent.
7 years—1872–1878	9,174	537	5·85
7 " 1879–1885	7,037	516	7·33
7 " 1886–1892	1,336	380	28·44

Since 1892 this farm has been abandoned, and was a short time since lying derelict.

TABLE 2.

RATES in RATIO to GROSS PROFITS on a FARM in NORFOLK (compiled from a STATEMENT privately communicated).

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
7 years—1862–1868	1,279 17 5	95 17 0	7·5
7 " 1869–1875	1,325 11 10	108 8 4	8·2
7 " 1876–1882	656 4 8	101 11 3	15·4
7 " 1883–1889	695 9 7	103 6 0	14·9
4 " 1890–1893	541 3 0	89 3 6	16·5

If the first 21 years be compared with the last 11 the result would be as follows:—

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£	£	Per Cent.
21 years—1862–1882	1,088	102	9·37
11 " 1883–1893	640	98	15·31

Decrease in gross profits, 41·2 per cent.
" rates 3·9 "

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Appendix A. XXVII.

TABLE 3.

RATES in RATIO to GROSS PROFITS on a FARM in BUCKS (privately communicated).

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years—1887–1890	343 4 10	48 8 10	14·11
4 „ 1891–1894	202 0 8	37 0 11	18·31

Decrease in gross profits, 41·0 per cent.
„ rates 23·6 „

TABLE 4.

RATES, &c. on a FARM in HUNTS; compiled from MR. PRINGLE'S REPORT (Appendix C. viii.).

[In the Report rates and taxes are not distinguished. Mr. Pringle has kindly obtained for me the particulars as to rates.]

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years—1886–1890	664 16 7	65 11 8	9·86
4 „ 1890–1894	316 11 8	66 7 3	20·96

TABLE 5.

RATES in RATIO to GROSS PROFITS on a FARM in SUFFOLK.

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Local Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years—1884–1887	656 13 9	65 17 5	10·03
4 „ 1888–1890	470 4 9	61 6 5	13·04
3 „ 1892–1894	177 9 3	47 16 2	26·93

TABLE 6.

The same with regard to a FARM in NORTHAMPTONSHIRE compiled from Mr. PRINGLE'S REPORT, APPENDIX C. X. (additional detailed particulars having been supplied).

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Local Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years—1887–1890	717 7 10	32 0 5	4·46
3 „ 1891–1893	445 11 4	29 9 6	6·62

TABLE 7.

The same with regard to a FARM in SUFFOLK (privately communicated).

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Local Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years—1861–1864	1,191	69 18 0	5·87
5 „ 1870–1874	1,327	72 18 0	5·50
5 „ 1880–1884	1,133	56 19 3	5·04
5 „ 1890–1894	606	56 16 0	9·37

TABLE 8.

The same with regard to a FARM in HERTS (privately communicated).

Periods of Years.	Gross Profits, Average.	Local Rates, Average.	Ratio of Rates to Gross Profits.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
3 years—1870–1872	828 2 1	85 0 3	10·26
3 „ 1880–1882	816 1 7	85 7 6	10·31
5 „ 1890–1894	208 4 0	86 13 2	42·9

TABLE 9.

STATEMENT compiled from APPENDIX to Mr. WILSON FOX'S REPORT on CAMBS. (page 58).

Periods of Three Years ending	Rents received.	Tenants' Profit + or Loss −.	Gross Profits.	Rates.	*Ratio* of Rates to Gross Profits.	Increase + or Decrease − as compared with 1st Period.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		
1877	3,582 13 3	+ 2,798 7 9	6,331 1 0	335 7 1	5·30	—
1880	2,674 15 4	+ 2,001 15 10	4,676 11 2	353 4 1	7·34	+ 5·3
1883	2,591 13 9	+ 1,851 1 9	4,442 15 6	339 14 9	8·10	+ 1·3
1886	2,559 13 9	+ 780 9 3	3,340 3 0	336 17 2	10·09	+ 0·4
1889	2,402 18 4	+ 1,167 2 7	3,570 1 11	284 0 7	7·95	− 15·3
1892	2,614 4 6	+ 586 5 4	3,200 9 8	271 15 3	8·49	− 18·96
1895	1,885 9 8	− 1,566 11 6	318 18 2	288 7 4	90·4	− 14·1
	18,261 8 7	Balance 7,618 11 10	25,880 0 5	2,209 6 3	8·53	—

Rates during the whole period are equal to an Income Tax of 20*d.* in the £ on the gross rent received, or of 20·5*d.* in the £ on the joint income of landlord and tenant.

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Appendix A. XXVII., XXVIII., & XXIX.

TABLE 10.

LOCAL RATES in proportion to INCOMES of OWNER and OCCUPIER. (*See Question* 63,636.)

EXEMPLIFICATION of TWO INSTANCES reported by Mr. HUNTER PRINGLE in his REPORT on BEDS, page 82.

Parish.	Rent of Farm.	Rateable Value.	Ratio of Rateable Value to Rent=100*l.*	Amount of Rates. One Year, 1893-1894.	Assumed Income* of Landlord and Tenant derived from Ownership and Occupation of the Property assessed.			Rate of Taxation in £ upon Separate and Joint Incomes.		
					Owner.*	Occupier.†	Total Income.	Owner.	Occupier.	Occupying Owner.
	£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
POTTON -	175 0	207 0 0	118·28	57 4 1	153 2 6	57 8 2	210 18 8	7 5½	19 11	5 5
				or if calculated on income and rates together -				5 5½	10 0	4 3
BOZEAT - -	156 10 0	141 17 6	90·6	31 14 0	136 18 9	51 7 0	188 5 9	4 7½	12 4	3 4½
				or if calculated on income and rates together -				3 9½	7 7½	2 10½

* It is assumed that in both cases the land is tithe free; if otherwise, the owner's income would be reduced by the amount of the Tithe Rent Charge. 12½ per cent. is allowed for repairs.
† The occupier's income is estimated as that on which income tax would be charged if the occupier were chargeable with such tax.

XXVIII.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

UNION CHARGEABILITY ACT. INCREASED CHARGES, as a consequence of that ACT.

1. Farm in Norfolk. Rates increased 10*s.* an acre during the currency of a lease.

2. Farm in my own occupation. Poor rates increased 16*l.* a year for the benefit of urban ratepayers.

3. PARTICULARS as to POOR RATES on a FARM in NORFOLK and ISLE of ELY under the old POOR LAW, before the UNION CHARGEABILITY ACT, and for SEVEN YEARS after that Act was passed. (*See Question* 62,922.)

Periods of Years.	Average Amount.	Increase per Cent. as compared with eight Years to April 1842.
	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
2 years to April 1, 1834	37 3 4	—
8 „ „ 1842	21 4 11	
8 „ „ 1850	26 13 0	+25·4
8 „ „ 1858	28 17 4	+35·8
8 „ „ 1866	31 19 5	+50·5
7 „ „ 1873	45 19 5	+116·3

If the average amount of rates for four years immediately before the Union Chargeability Act came into operation be compared with the subsequent periods, the result will be as follows:—

Periods of Years.	Average Amount.	Increase per Cent.
	£ s. d.	Per Cent.
4 years to April 4, 1866	31 1 5	—
4 „ „ 1870	44 11 2	+43·4
3 „ „ 1873	47 17 0	+54·0

I am not able to give particulars as to the amount of rates since 1873.

In the parish where this farm lies there are no other rates than the poor rate.

INCREASED RATES under DIVIDED PARISHES ACTS and other ACTS altering the AREA of CHARGE. (*See Question* 62,917.)

4. A small farm rated to a parish in which there was no rate except the poor rate, and situate in a union where the rates are low, has been transferred to another parish in which there is a highway rate of 8*d.* and a school board rate of 7*d.* in the £, and into a union where the rates are higher.

5. A parish has recently been transferred from the county of Norfolk to the Isle of Ely. In the former county the county rate is 5*d.* in the £; in the latter it is 10*d.*

Although it was stated, on behalf of the owners, at a local inquiry as to boundaries, that this parish had not produced a 1*s.* of rent for three years, it is still rated at 359*l.*

6. A parish in which there has never been a highway rate, and which is without a single yard of metalled road, will, under the Local Government Act, 1894, be called upon to contribute to the parish roads in the Rural Sanitary District in which it lies. The greater part of the parish is so situated that the inhabitants never use the high roads to which they will contribute, while they will contribute nothing towards the roads in two other districts which they do make use of.

7. In the Isle of Ely 14 parishes out of 36 have had their boundaries altered. In five of these cases fractions of parishes have been transferred to different unions, and in every one of those cases to the disadvantage of the owners of the property transferred.

XXIX.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

TABLE 1.

URBAN SANITARY DISTRICTS in ENGLAND and WALES (exclusive of LONDON), classified in respect of POPULATION.

Districts with a Population	No.	Per Cent. of Total.	No.	Per Cent.	Average No. of Inhabitants.	Average Area.
						Acres.
Not exceeding 1,000 -	21	2·09	—	—	710	1,925
Of 1,000 and not exceeding 2,000.	82	8·15	—	—	1,535	1,845
Of 2,000 and not exceeding 5,000.	279	27·76	—	—	—	—
Total not exceeding 5,000.	—	—	382	38·00	—	—
Of 5,000 and not exceeding 10,000.	265	26·40	—	—	—	—
Total not exceeding 10,000.	—	—	647	64·40	—	—
Of 10,000 and not exceeding 50,000.	299	29·70	—	—	—	—
Of 50,000 and upwards	59	5·90	—	—	—	—
Total - -	1,005	100·00	—	—	—	—

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Appendix A. XXIX.

TABLE 2.

URBAN SANITARY DISTRICTS classified in respect of AREA.

Districts having an area of 10,000 acres or more	41	
5,000 acres and less than 10,000	124	
		165
Less than 5,000	840	840
	1,005	1,005

Of the 165 districts having 5,000 acres or more, 74 have an area of more than one acre to each inhabitant.

TABLE 3.

STATEMENT as to RATES on AGRICULTURAL LAND in URBAN DISTRICTS. (*See Questions* 62,942; 62,947.)

Farm in Wisbech and March containing 244 a. 3 r. 33 p.

Description of Property.	Wisbech Borough. 86 acres. Rateable Value.	Proportionate Part of Value charged.	Assessment for District Rates.	March U.S. District 158 a. 3 r. 33 p. Rateable Value.	Proportionate Part of Value charged.	Assessment for District Rates.
	£ s. d.		£ s. d.	£ s. d.		£ s. d.
Farmhouse	17 3 3	Full.	17 3 3	—	—	—
Buildings	5 5 0	Half.	2 12 6	—	—	—
Land	93 14 4	One fourth.	23 8 7	146 6 2	One-fourth.	36 11 6
Total	116 2 7	—	43 4 4	146 6 2	—	36 11 6

Poor rates are payable on the following amounts:—

	£ s. d.
Wisbech, 116*l.* 2*s.* 7*d.*, less 1*l.* 7*s.* allowances on cottages	114 15 7
March	146 6 2
	261 1 9

The borough rate is paid out of the poor rate.

Rates levied on this Farm in 1893.

WISBECH.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
Wisbech and Walsoken main drainage rate at 1*s.* 4*d.*	2 17 6	
Wisbech Local Government district rate at 3*s.*	6 9 7	
Wisbech overseers' rates, 1*s.* 6*d.*, 1*s.* 8*d.*, 3*s.* 2*d.*	18 7 1	
Total in Wisbech		27 14 2

MARCH.

	£ s. d.	£ s. d.
District rates, 11*d.* and 9*d.*=1*s.* 8*d.*	3 9 8½	
Poor rates, 11*d.* and 1*s.* 4*d.*=2*s.* 3*d.*	16 9 2½	
Total in March		19 18 11
Total rates on the farm		47 13 1

The average rates on the total rateable valne were:—
In Wisbech, 4*s.* 9½*d.* in the £.
In March, 2*s.* 8¾*d.* in the £.
On the whole property, 3*s.* 7½*d.* in the £.

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XXX.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

TABLE 1.

ASSESSED RATEABLE VALUE of a FARM in RATIO to NET RENT payable to LANDLORD. (*See Question* 62,833.)

Periods.	Landlord's agreed Rental.	Outgoings paid by Landlord. Repairs,* Drainage.†	‡ Net Rent payable.	Rateable Value.	Ratio of Rateable Value to Net Rent.	—
	£	£	£	£	PerCent.	
1866-68	1,180	170	1,010	961	95·15	Valuation by parochial committee.
1868-82	1,180	170	1,010§	885	87·7	Valuation of the Union by professional surveyor.
1882-94	834	142	692‖	795	114·3	Assessment of land reduced by 15 per cent.

* Repairs are taken at 5 per cent.
† Somewhat variable in amount, but an approximate average given.
‡ No account is taken of remissions.
§ Some remission of this.
‖ 125*l.* remission made of late years.

TABLE 2.

RATIO of RATEABLE VALUE to RENTAL VALUE. (*See Question* 62,983.)

Farm in Norfolk and Isle of Ely referred to App. B. 3.

In 1841 the assessment was 257*l.* The estimated value was 620*l.*, and one moiety of the farm was let at that rate of rent clear of all outgoings. The assessment was in the same year raised to 440*l.*, and it remained at that amount until 1864, when it was advanced to 594*l.* A portion of the same farm is now let at 230*l.*, and is rated at 394*l.* The following statement compares the rental with the rateable value:—

Years.	Rental Value.	Rateable Value.	Ratio of Rateable Value to Rent.
	£	£	Per Cent.
1841 - -	620	257	41·5
1841-64 -	620	440	71·0
1864-72 -	620	594	95·8
	Part of the Farm.		
1894 - -	230	394	171·3

"In assessing premises the overseers should proceed on the estimate not of the rent actually paid for the premises by the occupier, but of the rent at which they might reasonably be expected to let from year to year."—Hayward *v.* Brinkworth (Wilts), 10 L. T., 608.

XXXI.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

TABLE 1.

TAXATION to which REAL PROPERTY contributes its full QUOTA. INCREASED PROPORTION of TOTAL TAXATION raised by DIRECT TAXATION. (*See Question* 63,041.)

TABLE showing the TOTAL REVENUE of the UNITED KINGDOM raised by TAXATION in the Years 1871-1895, with the amount received in each year from PROPERTY and INCOME TAX, and from LAND TAX and HOUSE DUTY, with the proportionate share of the whole amount raised by INCOME TAX, and by INCOME TAX, LAND TAX, and HOUSE DUTY together in successive Periods of Five Years.

Compiled from the Statistical Abstract, 1895.

1. Year.	2. Total Customs and Inland Revenue. 000's om.	3. Property and Income Tax. 000's om.	4. Land Tax and House Duty. 000's om.	5. Ratio of Col. 3 to Col. 2.	6. Ratio of Cols. 3 and 4 to Col. 2.
1871	61,061	6,350	2,725		
1872	64,838	9,084	2,330		
1873	66,602	7,500	2,337		
1874	66,076	5,691	2,324		
1875	63,970	4,806	2,440		
Total 5 years	322,547	33,931	12,156		
Average	64,509	6,586	2,431	10·21	13·98
1876	65,255	4,109	2,496		
1877	66,360	5,280	2,532		
1878*	66,879	5,520	2,670		
1879	68,987	8,710	2,720		
1880	66,950	9,230	2,670		
Total 5 years	334,431	33,149	13,088		
Average	66,886	6,630	2,618	9·91	13·83
1881	68,952	10,650	2,740		
1882	70,581	9,945	2,725		
1883	73,128	11,900	2,800		
1884	71,866	10,718	2,875		
1885	73,796	12,000	2,950		
Total 5 years	358,323	55,213	14,090		
Average	71,665	11,043	2,818	15·40	19·34
1886	74,927	15,160	2,890		
1887	76,115	15,900	2,980		
1888	75,660	14,440	2,970		
1889	73,597	12,700	2,960		
1890	73,414	12,770	3,000		
Total 5 years	373,713	70,970	14,800		
Average	74,743	14,194	2,960	18·99	22·95
1891	73,578	13,350	2,600		
1892	75,340	13,010	2,464		
1893	74,800	13,470	2,450		
1894	75,427	15,200	2,460		
1895	78,655	15,600	2,450		
	377,800	71,630	12,444		
	75,560	14,266	2,489*	8·88	22·18
	If adjusted - - -			18·67	21·93

* *Note.*—From 1871-1878 the total in col. 2 includes fee and patent stamps, which has since then been excluded from receipts from taxation. If the receipts under this head are added the average total for the five years 1891-1895 would be 833,000*l.*, and the figures in cols. 5, 6, would be reduced to 18·67 and 21·93 respectively.

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Appendix A. XXXI. & XXXII.

TABLE 2.

POOR RATES.—EXPENDITURE for the RELIEF of the POOR and other purposes during the year ending LADY DAY, 1892; with the PER-CENTAGE of the TOTAL EXPENDITURE under each head, completed from Table 92, Local Government Board Report, 1892-3.

Classification.	Col. in Table 92.	Purposes.	Amount.	Per-centage of Total.
			£	
I.	4	Expended for relief to the poor and purposes connected therewith.	8,847,678	47·95
II.	—	Expended for purposes unconnected with relief to the poor.	—	—
	5	County, borough, or police rates.	6,301,786	34·10
	6	Highway boards for highways.	757,196	4·
	7	Burial boards - -	118,936	·63
	8	Rural sanitary authorities -	169,675	·92
	9	School boards or school attendance committees.	973,640	5·28
	10	Registration of births, deaths, and marriages.	100,916	·55
	11	Vaccination fees and expenses.	83,146	·45
	12	Parliamentary registration and jury lists.	199,938	1·0
	13	Other expenses - -	127,801	·70
III.	—	Expenditure not shown in previous columns, legal proceedings, parochial and union.	43,852	·24
		Union assessment committees.	98,674	·53
		Salaries, &c.; parochial officers, &c.	631,222	3·47
			18,454,460	100·

TABLE 3.

POOR RATES AND RELIEF OF THE POOR.

Table showing for ten successive periods of five years and for two recent years:—

1. The average annual amount levied as poor rates.
2. The average annual expenditure on the relief of the poor and purposes connected therewith.
3. The ratio per cent. which such expenditure bears to the sums levied as poor rates.

Periods.	1. Average Annual Amount levied as Poor Rates.	2. Average Annual Expenditure on Poor Relief and Purposes connected therewith.	3. Ratio Per Cent. of Col. 2 to Col. 1.
	£	£	
Five years ending 1845	6,725,705	4,979,250	74·
„ „ 1850	7,305,503	5,524,348	75·6
„ „ 1855	6,938,181	5,194,469	74·9
„ „ 1860	8,070,680	5,759,039	71·4
„ „ 1865	8,889,653	6,214,370	69·9
„ „ 1870	10,573,843	7,242,965	68·5
„ „ 1875	12,145,475	7,747,947	63·8
„ „ 1880	12,534,852	7,653,874	61·1
„ „ 1885	14,025,209	8,316,411	59·3
„ „ 1890	14,989,775	8,342,928	55·8
Two years „ 1892	15,602,907	8,745,498	56·0

XXXII.

Handed in by Mr. William C. Little.

The following extracts from papers written by myself in past years are presented, at the suggestion of friends, with the object of showing that the opinions which I hold on the subject of the incidence of local rates have not been hastily formed or recently adopted.

1.

EXTRACTS FROM A PAPER UPON LOCAL TAXATION READ AT A MEETING OF THE WISBECH DISTRICT CHAMBER OF AGRICULTURE, BY MR. WILLIAM C. LITTLE IN 1870. (*See Question* 62,802.)

What are the purposes for which the poor rate is levied? They are very numerous and various. I would not trouble you with an enumeration of them, even if I could ascertain them . . . But numerous as these purposes are they may nearly all be grouped in four classes:—

I. *Relief of the Poor.*

II. *Protection of Life and Property*, including police, prisons, reformatories, lunatic asylums, militia storehouses, coroners, vaccination, inspection of weights, &c.

III. *Expenses of Administration*, which would include surveys and valuations for the purposes of local taxation, law costs, registration of births, &c., jury lists, Parliamentary registration, &c.

IV. There remains then a sum of about 600,000*l.* paid out of the poor rate to highway boards, which should be considered in connexion with highway rates, not included in the poor rate; there is also, in 1868, a sum of 54,000*l.* for county bridges . . . . . .

It appears to me that there is scarcely one of these purposes which might not be called national as well as local, and there can be very little doubt that if we had now for the first time to devise a system of rating for these purposes, we should endeavour to lay the burden on the owners of all descriptions of property, in proportion to their interests in the expenditure. Whether the relief of the poor be looked upon as an organised system of charity, or as "a species of insurance of "property (which Sir G. C. Lewis call it),* the obliga- "tion of contributing towards it attaches to all." In 1850 a Committee of the House of Lords declared "that the relief of the poor is a national object to- "wards which every description of property ought "justly to be called upon to contribute." The cost of protecting life and property is still more clearly a charge that should fall upon all. The mercantile, commercial, and professional classes are at least as much interested as the owners and occupiers of land, who pay much more heavily to this rate. I admit that the case of roads and bridges is not quite so strong, and that the introduction of railroads has done a good deal to localise the advantages of roads, but even now they are an important element of civilisation; they form the means of communication between producer and consumer. They have been well described as "a system "of veins and arteries by which all those principles "necessary for the maintenance of the prosperity of a "country are kept in circulation."

I have endeavoured to show that the poor rate, though paid by a small part of the property of the country, is expended for the benefit or in the interest of all. Here a very natural question presents itself. How has it happened that so much property has been exempted or unfairly relieved? To that question I answer, *by accident;* and I think I can show that the larger items of expenditure were originally charges upon all descriptions of property, while the smaller and more modern purposes have been thrown on to the poor rate for the sake of convenience, and because that was the only assessment available for local taxation.

And first as to the relief of the poor. It is frequently stated that taxation for this purpose was first imposed in 1601 by the statute 43 Eliz. c. 2, but this is only partially true. Several earlier attempts to enforce contributions had been made, and a great deal of light is thrown upon the later Act by the provisions of the statutes which preceded it. These statutes had two leading ideas. One, the suppression of "the valiant beggars," who were swarming through the country. The other, the organization of a system of alms-giving for the relief of the impotent poor. The successive steps towards regular taxation are pretty clearly marked. In 1536 parish officers were appointed for the collection of alms; the clergy were enjoined to take every means to provoke the liberality of their people; indiscriminate almsgiving was forbidden; all that men would give was to be thrown into a general parochial fund. In 1551 the parish officers were to write down in a book what each person would give for the poor. If any one *able to give*, refused to do so he was to be

* Report of Lords' Committee on Parochial Assessments.

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exhorted by ministers and churchwardens, and if he failed the bishop was to send for him. In 1563 if any man refused to give "*according to his ability*" (mark the significance of the phrase) the bishop was to bind him over to appear at the sessions, when the justices were to try their powers of persuasion, and if they failed the justices and churchwardens were to tax this "froward," "wilful" man at their discretion. In 1572 justices were empowered to tax all inhabitants for the poor. If any refused to pay he was to be sent to gaol until he should be "contented with the order and perform the same." In 1601 the famous statute (of 43 Eliz. c. 2.) was passed, which up to the present day in a great measure determines the liability of property to the poor rate. It authorised taxation of inhabitants and occupiers, at the discretion of the parish officers, and according to *the ability of the parish*. Comparing these provisions with those of earlier statutes, which were tentative steps towards a regular and equitable taxation of all, it is impossible to doubt that the framers of the Act intended to impose a Parochial Income Tax upon all inhabitants and occupiers. Mr. Lumley, the assistant secretary to the Poor Law Board, says*: "*This statute beyond all doubt whatever intended to sweep up all the property of the parish;*" and there is abundant evidence to show that in various places personal property was taxed under the powers given by this Act. So long as the sum demanded was small the rough apportionment of the tax by the overseers was no doubt tolerably successful; but as the burden increased, and as new sources of wealth were developed, questions as to the liability of persons and property were raised, and the law courts were called upon to interpret the Act; and now the precise enumeration of different kinds of property in the taxing clause of the Act was held to exempt such descriptions of property as had not been specified. Thus the mention of coal mines leads to the exemption of all other mines. In the decisions of the courts certain general principles were laid down which narrowed the application of the Act by deciding that all property to be rateable must be *local, visible, and productive*. But this definition still leaves inhabitants liable for their personal property if productive (*e.g.*, stock-in-trade), but in 1840 an Act was passed to suspend for one year the liability of inhabitants as inhabitants in respect of their ability derived from stock-in-trade or from any other property, and this Act is renewed annually.

Thus the rate, which was at first an income tax imposed upon inhabitants and occupiers, has become gradually restricted to a rate upon the occupiers of such real property as is specified in an Act 270 years old. It must not be forgotten that liability for the poor rate means liability for all local taxation. It is not merely that some are exempted from contribution to the relief of the poor, but the same persons escape taxation for all the other purposes to which local taxes are applied.

What portion of the rate falls upon the occupier? It is confidently stated by many persons that the whole amount of rates falls upon the owner, because if there were no rates, rents would be higher; and they declare that the tenant now pays no more in rent and rates together than he would pay in rent alone if rates were abolished. There is of course some truth in this, but nevertheless I must deny that the whole burden falls on the owner. Undoubtedly when a prudent man takes a farm he takes into consideration the amount of the rates, and estimates the rent accordingly, but too many neglect this precaution, and lose sight of the occasional payments which are comparatively small in amount. But suppose a man to have taken this precaution. He hires a farm on lease, and during the time of his occupation the rates increase. It is clear that this increase must fall upon the tenant. I heard of a case the other day where the rates on a particular farm had increased 10*s.* an acre during the tenant's lease. The case of a yearly tenant is very similar, during his occupation the rates gradually increase, new charges are made upon them. The tenant cannot be always making a fresh bargain with his landlord. Each addition, viewed separately, seems small, but in the course of a few years a sensible addition has been made to the tenant's outgoings. Those who maintain that the whole amount of the rates ultimately falls upon the landlord take it for granted that all landlords let their land at rack rent, and that they would endeavour to appropriate the whole benefit of any reduction. I believe that they could not do so even if they wished. In every case of remission or reduction of taxation the actual payer of the tax is relieved. Mr. Dudley Baxter, who enters fully into the question, calculates that that on an average three-fourths of the rates on land fall upon the owner, and one-fourth on the tenant, and as regards houses two-thirds fall on the landlord and one-third on the tenant, but he afterwards bases his calculations on one-half by the tenant.†

Now *the occupiers' share of the burden is the charge upon personal property*.

Now if your bear in mind that this taxation is assessed in proportion to the rent which a man pays, and that a farmer's rent is twice his income, while in the case of all other owners of personal property rent is only a fraction (perhaps one-tenth) of income you will see that the pressure of the burden is heavy upon the tenant farmer's personal property, and a mere nominal charge upon all other personal property. Suppose the case of a farmer with an income of 400*l.* a year assessed at 700*l.*; rates at 2*s.* in the £ amount to 70*l.*, of which 17*l.* 10*s.* is paid by the tenant, that is a tax of about 10*d.* in the £ on his income. A tradesman or a professional man with an income of 400*l.* a year, occupying premises assessed at 40*l*; rates at, say, 3*s.* amount to 6*l.*, of which the tenant pays 3*l.*, this is a tax of 1¾*d.* in the £ on his income, against 10*d.* on the farmer, rather heavy handicapping in the race for wealth.

And now for the case of the owners of real property. It can hardly be doubted that they are taxed out of all proportion to their interest in the objects for which these rates are levied; but it is said that the owners of land have acquired their property subject to these charges, which are not really taxation, but a rent charge which the State has reserved. Now, undoubtedly, land, like every other description of property, is protected and secured to its possessor on the condition of its contributing a fair share of the expenses of Government; it has also been bought or inherited subject to various imposts, but can it be pretended that this liability is unlimited in amount, undefined in purpose, and irreversible under altered conditions? Suppose, for the sake of argument, that in earlier times, when land was almost the only source of wealth, when the poor were tied to the soil, when the labourer, even if he had been allowed to leave the parish, could have found no other employment than farm work, suppose, I say, that under such circumstances the land had been charged with the whole cost of maintaining the destitute poor of the parish, would it follow that when other sources of wealth arose, when other means of employing labour were found, when the labourer was free to carry his labour wherever the best market for it was to be found, that the land should still bear the whole cost of the poor; and if still liable for the poor, would that imply liability for numerous purposes totally unconnected with relief to the poor?

But we have seen that taxation, for the main purposes of the poor rate, was originally distributed generally, even when the value of real property exceeded that of personal property. Since then commerce and manufactures have enormously increased personal property, and at the same time increased pauperism and crime. Ought personal property, then, to escape its fair share of the burden? The relative conditions of land and other properties have also been altered by legislation. The abolition of protection, for instance, removed land from the position of a favoured interest. Again, the extension of the area of rating, and the modification of the law of settlement, have largely increased the rates in some parishes and reduced them in others, thus varying the supposed rentcharge and exhibiting the power and the right of the State to review and readjust the burden; and if I can see any principle in the legislation of the last forty years it has been the removal of inequalities and injustices. No arguments of prescriptive rights or immemorial privileges, no class or individual interests, have been allowed to bar the progress of measures demanded by justice and reason.

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As far as I can ascertain, in no other country in the world is taxation for the poor and for the protection of life and property a special charge upon real property. Even in Ireland and Scotland the incidence of these rates is very different. In Ireland the principal roads have been made at the cost of the imperial funds. The constabulary are paid out of the Consolidated Fund. The

* Report of Lords' Committee on Parochial Assessments. 1850.

† Taxation of U. K., p. 55.
† Taxation of U. K., pp. 98, 99.

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Appendix A. XXXII.

poor rate proper is paid half by the occupier and half by the owner. In Scotland the owners generally pay a portion of the cost of the roads and part of the rogue or prison rate; and in all cases half of the poor rate. But in a great number of parishes (representing one-third of the country in value) an approximation to a parochial income tax is reached by the system of classification of property. It is to be observed that starting from about the same period as our poor law, the Scotch law always recognised the propriety of assessing *means and substance*. The cannie Scot held tenaciously to this right of taxing personal property, notwithstanding the difficulty of enforcing it. In 1845 the Scotch poor law gave to parochial boards the choice of three modes of assessment, one of which was a graduated tax on different descriptions of property. . . . . .

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Sir G. C. Lewis says, "In adopting this mode you "approach as nearly as you can to the principle of an "income tax without going into the income of each "individual." Sir John McNeill, for many years chief member of the Board of Supervision, thinks "this the "most equitable and the most practical form of "rating that can be devised." . . . . . .

. . . . . .

I am quite aware that this subject cannot be fully discussed without reference to the incidence of imperial taxes. It is said by many, "We grant all that you urge "against the unfair and unequal pressure of local taxes, "but on the other hand imperial taxes press unfairly "upon those who are lightly taxed for local purposes, "and on the whole the balance is fairly adjusted." Now I cannot profess that I have examined this part of the subject very closely, but as far as I can discover the persons upon whom local taxation falls most heavily have no corresponding exemption from imperial taxes. Mr. Dudley Baxter, after a most minute and exhaustive inquiry into the subject, estimates the actual amount of taxation, including local taxes, paid by different classes as follows:—

On incomes derived from real property, 11 per cent.
" " " personality, 7 "
" " " industry, 3½ "

He has previously laid down the following as fair relative proportions:—

For real property, 8½ per cent.
" personal, 7 "
" industry, 5 "

Thus, according to this estimate, incomes derived from real property pay 2½ per cent. more, and industrial incomes 1½ per cent. less than their fair share of the total taxation. This estimate may be right or wrong, but the case is evidently one for inquiry. If after a full investigation of the incidence of all taxes it should be discovered that, taking into consideration both imperial and local taxes, the burdens are fairly distributed, I should still advocate the redistribution of taxation in order that every class and every individual might feel a direct and personal interest in the economical and judicious expenditure of the funds derived from local taxation.

2.

EXTRACTS FROM MR. WILLIAM C. LITTLE'S REPORT TO THE DUKE OF RICHMOND'S COMMISSION, 1882. (*See Questions* 62,803, 63,047.)

LOCAL RATES.

R. 3375—1882. pp. 53–54.

The abstract (Appendix C. (*d*) III.) of which I have previously spoken, which dissects gross rent and shows how much of it goes to the landlord, how much to the tithe owner, and how much is paid in rates, shows that on an average about 10 per cent. of gross rent is paid in the form of rates. Taking for the purpose of illustration a similar case to that which I used with regard to tithes, a farmer receiving 1,000*l.* a year, and paying 300*l.* a year in gross rent, pays on an average about 30*l.* a year in rates.

It may be granted then that the sum paid by farmers as rates is on an average only a small proportion of his total expenditure, and that the relief which he may derive from any readjustment of taxation for local purposes will be comparatively small; but if this be one of those items of expenditure which can be reduced, it is worthy of attention, even though no great and striking result can be anticipated. . . . . .

. . . . . .

This question does not seem to me to be affected by the circumstance that the amount paid bears a small proportion to the whole of a man's necessary expenditure; nor does the claim for re-adjustment appear to me to rest upon the assumption that the amount paid in rates has everywhere, or on the average, increased. .

. . . . . .

No doubt the poor rate has decreased, and this is only a natural and proper consequence of a great improvement in the condition of the poor. Again, large additional subventions have been given by the State, and the entire cost of gaols has been transferred to Imperial funds, and this has been done with the express object of relieving the ratepayers and in acknowledgment of the justice of his claim to have his burden lightened.

There is abundant evidence that in some cases a heavy school rate, or large expenditure on sanitary works, or a re-distribution of charge, such as was effected by the Highways and Locomotives Amendment Act, 1878, have very largely increased the rates in certain parishes and farms; but I believe that where there have been none of these exceptional charges the aggregate amount paid for all rates has rather diminished than increased in the last 15 years. . . . . .

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But if I am of opinion that on the average the aggregate amount of rates on agricultural land has not materially increased, I must repeat that in some extreme cases a great injustice has been done to occupiers of land who have but a temporary interest in their occupations by the imposition of heavy charges for sanitary, educational, and other purposes. I have mentioned in my reports of different counties some instances of very high rates for education. I find that in my district no less than 317 parishes (excluding boroughs) have rates for education exceeding 3*d.* in the pound, the sum which Mr. Forster, in introducing the Elementary Education Bill to the House of Commons, spoke of as the extreme limit to which rating for education under that Bill would extend; of these 317 parishes 38 have rates varying from 12*d.* to 23*d.* (1*s.* to 1*s.* 11*d.*) in the pound; 45 range from 9*d.* to 1*s.*, and 144 from 6*d.* to 9*d.*

These heavy rates, in most cases, occur in poor parishes where the margin between the cost of cultivation and the value of the produce is in the best of times but small, and in many instances they have greatly aggravated the difficulties of the farmers.

While, then, I am not prepared to endorse the statement so frequently made that rates have, *on the average*, enormously increased, I must state that many farmers have had most unfair and heavy charges thrown upon them unexpectedly. . . . . .

It does not seem to me very important at this point p. 80. to determine precisely what proportion of the sum paid for rates comes out of the pocket of the landlord, and how much is a tax upon the tenant's capital or profits. It may be granted that a tenant on taking a farm knows or should know what rates are chargeable upon the land, and what is the probable annual amount of these rates; but it is impossible for him to foresee what new charges may be imposed upon the land, nor can he anticipate such an extension of his liability as may be caused by the operation of such Acts as the Union Chargeability Act, 1855, or the Highways and Locomotives Act, 1878, both of which Acts completely redistributed the burden of rates, greatly relieving some parishes at the cost of others. There can be little doubt that the effect of these additions and redistributions is for some time felt by the tenant alone. On a vast majority of farms rents are not revised in consequence of these changes, and where rates are reduced by them tenants benefit. Where they are increased, the increase is paid by the tenant.

But whether rates are paid by the landlord or by the tenant, they come out of the gross produce of the land, and even if they have not increased they may be relatively a heavier burden than they were since the value of that gross produce has decreased.

In order, however, to simplify the question, it may be desirable to consider the position of the man who farms his own land. It is said to be most expedient to increase this class. How does the State treat such a man? Notoriously it taxes him more heavily than any other member of the community. . . . . .

. . . . . .

If, for the sake of illustration, we take the case of a farmer who occupies 200 acres of his own land, and who makes at the very most his 450*l.* a year, he probably pays 40*l.* a year in rates; and if there happens to be a heavy education rate, or a sanitary or cemetery rate, he probably pays 50*l.* or 60*l.* But 40*l.* a year is equal to

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an income tax of 21 pence in the pound. A tradesman in the same parish, making a similar profit, pays perhaps 10*l.*, and a professional man, or a private individual, with double the income gets off for 10*l.* Now there is not a single object which is supported or maintained by these rates which is not of equal interest and importance to the trader and the professional man as it is to the farmer, and there is not an Imperial tax to which the farmer does not contribute his full quota, whether the others do or not.

But it will be said that the farmer has acquired his land subject to these charges; that they are part of the property reserved by the State and never in his possession. If a certain degree of liability for rates for local purposes be admitted, it may, however, be urged that this liability cannot be unlimited in extent or indefinite as to objects. The argument can only apply to those rates which are of ancient date, and even as to one of them, the poor rate, the liability of personal property to contribute is only suspended, and has never been formally and legally annulled.

But further, the liability of land to old established rates is strictly limited locally, and only extends to the requirements of the particular parish in which it is situate. The extension of the area of liability which has been made by various Acts of Parliament is justifiable on the plea of equity and expedience, but the State, in carrying out a redistribution, renounced its claim upon some and imposed a new burden on others. The policy of the Union Chargeability Act will not perhaps at the present moment be seriously challenged; but it was a distinct departure from the "hereditary burden" theory. Extra-parochial land which had been bought with the understanding and knowledge that it was free from any charges for the poor was made liable for the poor of other parishes.

In truth, the argument that land always has paid a large share of local rates for certain purposes, and that it should continue to bear as large a share of rates for those and other purposes, is founded on the assumption that injustice, if only it be long continued, becomes justice. It is one which might have been employed in defence of any taxes, however obnoxious they might be, however harassing to a particular trade, and however injurious to the interest of the whole community. Unjust taxation is unjust, even though the sufferers are farmers and landowners.

The policy of the legislature has been to extend the area of contribution for poor relief and the maintenance of highways. It may fairly be asked to go a step further in the same direction, and, as the rural parishes have been brought in to relieve urban parishes of part of the cost of their poor, so all descriptions of property ought to be brought in to bear part of the cost of such objects as are maintained by local rates for the benefit of all classes.

It is unnecessary for me to repeat again what has been so frequently stated by me, that the tendency of events of late years has been to relieve the public of one very considerable charge levied upon them by means of turnpike tolls, and to throw upon the ratepayers a corresponding increase of taxation. I will only say here that no grievance is more universally felt than this one.

There is, however, such a very general assent to the proposition that local rates are an unfair burden upon land that I need say no more on the subject of the justice of the claim to relief. The difficulty which stands in the way of giving that relief is that of carrying out a readjustment of taxation for local purposes without injuring or weakening our system of local self-government, and without removing or lessening the motives to economical administration.

There would appear to be at least four different ways in which the charges for objects maintained wholly or partially by local rates might be redistributed:—

1. By the complete transfer of the cost of certain objects to Imperial funds.
2. By subventions or grants from Imperial funds in aid of certain objects.
3. By the surrender of some Imperial taxes, locally levied, to the local authorities in aid of particular objects.
4. By a classification of property for local rating, and a graduation of rates according to the nature of the property.

1. Transference of Objects from Local to National Funds.

1. An instance and a precedent for the transfer of the cost of certain objects to Imperial funds is the case of prisons which were taken over by the late Government from the local authorities, the State assuming all responsibility for them, and obtaining entire control and management of them. The arguments which supported this transfer were that the owners of all property were interested in the suppression and prevention of crime, and that the executive Government could manage the prisons better and more economically than local authorities. The principle might perhaps be advantageously extended to the cost of the police force, which exists for the same purpose as prisons, and there is every reason to believe that the Government could manage the force more economically than the county and borough magistrates. Under the present system the force is divided into a number of separate companies. Were the whole of the police force combined in one, under the undivided control of the Government, it is alleged that a much smaller number of men would be required, that the whole cost of administration would be lessened. Among other advantages which might be expected to follow are these: the chances and opportunity of promotion would be greatly increased, and this, it may be hoped, would attract better men to the force. Again, it would be possible to contrive a much better system of superannuation with a national force than with a small county or borough force. And finally it may be said that the control which the local authorities exercise over the police is so small that it is not worth consideration, they can augment the pay or increase the staff, and that is about all that is practically within their power. . . .

. . . . . .

It has been frequently suggested that the whole cost of elementary education should be defrayed by the State. As a matter of principle, it is difficult to imagine any object which is more properly and distinctly within the range of national, as distinguished from local obligations. But, as a matter of policy and expediency, it is extremely doubtful whether it is desirable to throw on the State the whole of this charge. One inevitable consequence of the change would be an enormous increase in the cost of education. The voluntary schools would be superseded; all the work that is now done by voluntary agency would be paid for. If school boards were allowed to manage the schools they would be even more extravagant than they have been, and if no local management was permitted, it is difficult to see how the work could be carried on.

2. Government Subventions or Grants in aid of certain Objects.

This method of subsidising local authorities is at the present moment resorted to in the case of police, education, lunatics, criminal prosecutions, salaries of medical and sanitary officers, &c.

The policy of such subventions has of late been severely criticised, and it has been said, though, as I think, without sufficient proof, to have led to great extravagance. It is perhaps something of a makeshift arrangement, an acknowledgment by the State that the system of taxation for local purposes is unfair and a temporary device. But in certain cases these subsidies are plainly advantageous; the necessary consequence of them is that Government have the right of inspection and of some control, and they thus enable the Executive Government to carry out reforms by making it distinctly to the interest of the local authorities to co-operate with the State in an improved system of administration. The establishment of complete national system of education would have been much more difficult, if not impossible, without such aid and control.

These subsidies may, therefore, be said to be justifiable, and indeed desirable, in case of such objects as can be best administered by local authorities, but where Government inspection would be necessary or efficacious; on these grounds, the subventions which are now given are clearly defensible, and a further extension of the principle to a grant in aid of the cost of indoor poor relief may be advocated. It is generally admitted that a stringent application of the workhouse test is most successful in diminishing pauperism. In some Poor Law Unions an immense improvement has been effected by the zealous efforts of a few men who have carried out the suggestions and instructions of the Local Government Board and profited by the advice of the poor law inspectors. But generally Boards of Guardians want some more direct inducement than the hope of eventually decreasing pauperism to persuade them into a rigid compliance with the spirit of the law, and this inducement would be supplied if Government made

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Appendix A. XXXIII.

a grant of a fixed sum per head towards the cost of maintenance of indoor paupers, while the whole cost of outdoor relief was still left a local charge. Such a subvention, instead of encouraging extravagance, would stimulate economy and promote a great reform.

3. Surrender of certain Imperial Taxes to Local Authorities.

In 1871 it was proposed by Mr. Goschen, then President of the Poor Law Board, to give up the house tax to parochial authorities in aid of their local funds. This proposal would have resulted in some advantages to towns, but in purely rural parishes the effect would have been imperceptible. Had the proposal been to apply the house tax to some union or county purposes, it might have been more gratefully received. It has been suggested that carriage licences should be handed over to those authorities who are charged with the maintenance of roads, and perhaps no fairer way of charging those who use the roads for some part of the cost of maintaining them could be devised. It would, I think, be desirable that local authorities should have the power of levying licences upon all carriages used upon public roads, and that these licences should be graduated according to the nature of the vehicle and the probable frequency of its use, and the damage done to the roads by its use. Certainly it is most urgently required that something should be done to remedy the injustice which has resulted to the ratepayer from the abolition of turnpike tolls.

In most continental countries provincial authorities have the power of levying additional cents upon all Imperial taxes paid within the limits of their local government. It may some day be thought possible to entrust Englishmen assembled in elected county boards with a similar power.

4. Graduation of Rates according to the Nature of the Property rated.

This principle is already adopted in the case of Urban Sanitary, Board of Health, lighting and watch rates, for which purposes land pays at a lower rate than houses. It is based on the intelligible principle that the value of the house a man lives in is a much truer measure of his interest in these purposes than the value of the farm which he occupies. But the Scotch system of a classification of property for poor rate is much more scientific, and it is perhaps the most equitable manner of levying local rates which can be practically carried out. A full account of this system will be found in evidence given before a Select Committee of the House of Commons in 1865. . . . . .

p. 62. To recapitulate the various proposals which I have thought deserving the consideration of the Royal Commission, they are these:—

1. That the cost of the police should be entirely borne by the State.
2. That a subvention should be made to Boards of Guardians from Imperial funds towards the cost of indoor relief of the poor.
3. That some Imperial taxes, such as carriage and other licences, should be handed over to local authorities.
4. That rates for educational, sanitary, and administrative purposes should be graduated rates, either on the Scotch principle of classification of property, or on the principle of Urban General District rates.

It is said, and perhaps with truth, that the interest which men take in the administration of the Poor Law has much abated since the Union Chargeability Act came into operation. It is of course impossible to go back to parochial chargeability, and the wisest course now open seems to be to give as many people as possible a direct interest in promoting the economical administration of rates.

With this object in view, it is expedient that owners of property should pay a portion of all local rates, and the present time seems a specially convenient time for carrying out such an arrangement, as in a great number of cases the terms upon which the tenants hold are now under review.

One great advantage might result from such a division of rates between owners and occupiers. The growth of the indebtedness of local authorities proceeds at an alarming rate. So long as occupiers only are immediately affected by expenditure on improvements, it is but simple justice that the cost should be spread over a long term of years, but if one half of the rates were paid by the owners, this term might perhaps be considerably abridged.

But if it is fit and proper that owners of property should in all cases become actual ratepayers, it is no less advisable that the lower class of occupiers should feel the pressure of rates which they, many of them, pay indirectly in the shape of rent. The practice of allowing owners of small tenements to compound for the rates has of course many advantages. It is extremely convenient to the collector of rates, and if it were put an end to, no doubt the cost and difficulties of collection would be somewhat increased, but the system has this signal disadvantage that a large number of respectable labourers and artisans have no interest in checking improper and unnecessary expenditure, whereas, if they felt that it was their money which was being spent improperly, they might usefully co-operate with others in their efforts to reduce expenditure; and at least it ought to be provided that no cottager should have a vote for the School Board or at any other parochial election who did not pay rates.

XXXIII.

Statement of Evidence given by Sir Alfred Milner, K.C.B.

(*See Question* 63,078.)

The subject on which the Commission has asked me to give evidence is defined in a letter which I received from the Secretary on 17th August 1895, and which is to the following effect:—

"I am directed to inform you that the members of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, at their meeting held yesterday, passed the following resolution:—

"That the Inland Revenue Department be invited to prepare and give evidence upon the amount of Imperial Taxation borne by rateable and non-rateable properties respectively, and the estimated annual value of each of these properties, distinguishing as far as possible agricultural lands from other rateable properties, and also detailed evidence as to the history and present incidence of the Inhabited House Duty, similar to that already given by Mr. Robinson with regard to the Land Tax."

The result of my efforts to carry out these instructions is shown in the subjoined tables, in which an attempt has been made to distribute the taxation upon property raised by the Government of the United Kingdom in 1894–5, between the different classes of property specified in the letter of the Commission. All the evidence I have to give consists simply in an explanation of the principles upon which those calculations have been based.

Part I.

The first table is intended to show the incidence of taxation on different classes of property. Before explaining its details I must say a few words at the outset (1) on the exact nature of the problem presented for solution, and (2) on the great inadequacy of the material which I possess, or anyone at present possesses, for arriving at a really accurate solution of that problem.

I.—With regard to the *nature* of the problem, I beg to point out that this is, to the best of my belief, the first statistical enquiry that has been attempted in this country into the distribution of national burdens, as between Rateable Property and Non-Rateable, and, again, under the general head of Rateable, as between Agricultural and Non-Agricultural Property. Attempts have been made more or less frequently to determine how much taxation was borne by Realty as compared with Personalty. That is the basis of the Treasury Return of 1885, known as Paget's Return. But the division of property into Realty and Personalty is a division based on a legal, not on an economic or material, distinction. No two kinds of property could be more unlike in their economic aspect, especially at the present time, than a tract of arable land in Suffolk or Lincolnshire, and a London suburb covered with villa residences. Yet they may both be Realty. Here there is legal similarity, and the greatest possible economic difference.

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Again, there may be, there constantly are, two houses side by side in a town, alike in all other respects, but one freehold and the other leasehold. The former is Realty, the latter for five-sixths of its value, may be Personalty. Here there is economic similarity, but the greatest possible legal difference. Instances might be multiplied. I will not labour the point which is doubtless present to the mind of the Commission; but I feel bound just to call attention to it, because in controversies about the incidence of taxation, especially in the newspapers, the greatest confusion constantly arises from the use of the words "Realty" and "Personalty," as if they corresponded to some great economic distinction. When it is said that "Realty" bears a higher or a lower burden of taxation than "Personalty," what the speaker or writer usually means is, either that land bears a higher or a lower burden than other forms of property, or that land and the buildings fixed upon it—*immobilia*—bears a higher or lower burden. But as I have pointed out, even if we could arrive at an accurate conclusion as to the burdens respectively borne by Realty or Personalty, no valid inference could be drawn from it as to the relative taxation either of land, as distinguished from all other things, or of *immobilia* as distinguished from *mobilia*.

The return now presented to the Commission disregards entirely the distinction of Realty and Personalty, and divides property, not according to its legal, but to its physical or economic character. Thus it distinguishes in the first place between *immobilia* and *mobilia*, between (1) land with all the buildings and constructions permanently fixed upon it or under it, and (2) all other kinds of property—a distinction which corresponds roughly to that of Rateable and Non-Rateable Property. In the second place, it divides *immobilia*, or Rateable Property, into (1) land used for agricultural (including pastoral) purposes, or unused, and (2) land which is built upon and used, whether for human habitation or for industrial and commercial enterprise, railways, mines, docks, canals, factories. In the value of the former—*i.e.*, agricultural land—are included the farmhouses and other buildings erected on it and necessary for carrying on the business of agriculture. In the case of the latter no attempt is made to distinguish between the value of the land itself and that of the constructions upon it. Such a distinction is not practicable, nor would it, for present purposes, have any value. In dealing with Rateable Property, which is not land in the sense previously defined, the tables regard it as a whole. No separation is attempted between the value of the land on which a house stands and that of the house itself, between the value of the land, over which a railway passes, and that of the embankments, roadway, &c., of which it consists. They are all lumped together as Rateable Property other than Land, that is, than agricultural land, or more shortly, "Other Rateable Property." This appears to me, for practical purposes, the most useful distinction.

The classes of property then with which we have to deal are (1) Rateable Property, and (2) Non-Rateable Property, and as a subdivision of (1), (A) Lands, and (B) "Other Rateable Property."

II. With regard to the difficulties of the inquiry my preliminary observations may be very brief. Those difficulties will sufficiently appear when I come to describe the manner in which the various items have been dealt with. I will only observe that in the several heads, under which Imperial Taxation is classified in the public accounts, there is nothing corresponding to the divisions of property to which I have just referred. More than half of our Imperial Taxation falls not upon property at all but upon articles of consumption—tea, tobacco, spirits, beer. A certain, though much smaller, amount of it falls neither on articles of consumption nor yet on property in the strict sense of the term, but on business transactions. I refer to such duties as the penny stamp on cheques and receipts, bill-stamps, licences to carry on particular businesses, composition for bankers' notes, &c. The rest of our National Taxation, which does fall upon property, is levied in a manner which often renders it extremely difficult to determine what is the precise nature of the property which bears the burden. In some cases the facts are obscure. In other cases, though the facts are clear enough, there may be considerable difference of opinion as to the true incidence of the tax. Instances of both these difficulties will appear in the course of discussion. All I want to emphasize now is, that the calculations which I venture to put before the Commission, though they are the best which, with the assistance of skilful and experienced men, I have been able to produce, are, from the very nature of the case, only approximate. And in the present state of our knowledge any calculations of this kind can be nothing else. I propose to give the Commission the frankest possible account of the assumptions which I have been obliged to make in order to arrive at any calculations at all. It is for them to judge what may be the value of a calculation, the bases of which are necessarily, to a great extent, hypothetical.

I now proceed to explain the tables in detail. There are six great heads into which the Inland Revenue is divided. They are Income Tax, Land Tax, House Duty, Death Duties, Stamps other than Death Duties, and Excise.

Death Duties, and Stamps other than Death Duties, are sometimes lumped together under the general head of "Stamps." But it is better to distinguish them. The fact, that Probate Duty in the past was collected by means of stamps, served to hide the essential difference between it and such duties as those on transfers or on marketable securities. The Treasury propose in future to distinguish in the published accounts of Revenue between Stamps and Death Duties, and this is very desirable.

Of the six great heads of Revenue just enumerated, we can afford entirely to disregard one, namely, Excise. Excise, like Customs Duties, do not fall on property at all. Of the five categories that remain, three, Death Duties, Land Tax, and Inhabited House Duty, fall entirely upon property, and our only concern will be to divide them as best we can between the different classes of property with which our enquiry deals. The two remaining categories, Income Tax and Stamps, fall partly on property and partly on other things, on transactions or on the profits of business. With regard to these duties, we have to determine, first what portion of their yield is attributable to property at all, and next how the portion so attributable is to be distributed between the different kinds of property.

Income Tax.

There are five schedules of the Income Tax, A., B., C., D., and E. Three of these present little or no difficulty in this enquiry. E. is a tax on salaries and pensions, and has nothing to do with property. For the present purpose it may be entirely disregarded. C is a tax on the income derived from Government Securities—Home, Colonial, and Foreign. These are property, but they are clearly not rateable property. The whole produce of C, therefore, is allotted to the second of the two great categories into which property is divided in this Return. A. is a tax on lands and buildings, including business premises and factories, but not including the buildings or other constructions connected with railways, canals, mines, quarries, waterworks, and gasworks, all of which are included under Schedule D. Schedule A. of the Income Tax, therefore, deals almost entirely with Rateable Property. There is only about ½ per cent. of it, due to items too trifling to enumerate, which is attributable to property which is not rateable. But in this instance there is no great difficulty in separating that portion which falls upon land as above defined, that is to say, agricultural land and the buildings appertaining to it, and unused land, from that portion which falls on "Other Rateable Property," *i.e.*, houses, factories, and other business premises. The Returns have always been kept in a form which distinguishes the one from the other.

I will next take Schedule D., which involves much more complicated considerations. The profits here taxed are classified in the table under the following heads:—

1. *Fishings and Shootings.*—The Income Tax paid by these sources of profit is attributed to "Lands."

2. *Railways in the United Kingdom.*—The tax borne by these is attributed partly to "Other Rateable Property," and partly to "Non-Rateable Property." The division is made on the following principle. We know from the Income Tax Assessments the total profits on which railways are charged. We know from the returns of Local Taxation their "Gross Estimated Rental." The tax on so much of the profits as is equal to gross Estimated Rental has been attributed to "Other Rateable Property," the tax on the balance to "Non-Rateable Property."

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3. *Quarries, Mines, Canals, Iron Works, Waterworks, Gas Works, Salt Springs or Works, Markets, Tolls, and Cemeteries.*—The profits of all these sources of Revenue, the four last of which are almost a *quantité négligéable* have been dealt with together and on the same principle. Like railways, they are all rateable, and, like railways also, they are rateable only on a portion of their profits. In order to divide Income Tax paid by them between "Other Rateable Property" and "Non-Rateable Property" we have followed the same system as in the case of Railways.

4. *Railways out of the United Kingdom.*—The tax on these should clearly be credited, in its entirety, to "Non-Rateable Property," these undertakings being, of course, not subject to rates so far as this country is concerned.

5. *Foreign and Colonial Securities (including Coupons).*—This includes all foreign and colonial securities not assessed under C. These, again, are entirely "Non-Rateable Property."

6. *Other Interest.*—This is a small item, and again is "Non-Rateable Property." Annuities and interest charged on or proceeding out of *immobilia* are included under other heads.

7. *Public Companies.*—This head comprises all Companies other than Railway Companies and Companies owning property already dealt with under 3. The Income Tax paid by such companies under Schedule D. is entirely credited to "Non-Rateable Property." No doubt a portion of their property (such as factories or business premises) is rateable. But such portion pays Income Tax under Schedule A., and has therefore already been dealt with. Their profits under Schedule D. are arrived at after deducting the assessments on their *immobilia*, which are charged under Schedule A.

8. *Trades and Professions.*—This head comprises all profits made in industry, business, or the exercise of any profession by individuals as distinct from Public Companies. The assessments on the *immobilia* of such individuals, like those on the *immobilia* of Public Companies, are made under Schedule A. and are deducted in arriving at their profits under Schedule D. Therefore so much of the Income Tax paid on the profits of "Trades and Professions" as is attributable to property at all must be credited to "Non-Rateable Property." But no materials exist for determining what proportion of the incomes arising from "Trades and Professions" as above defined is derived from property, *i.e.*, from capital, as distinct from personal exertion. Sir Robert Giffen, in his "Growth of Capital," following Mr. Dudley Baxter, estimates it at one-fifth. In a matter where admittedly "no exactness is possible" I have been content to follow the procedure of these eminent economists. I have accordingly credited "Non-Rateable Property" with one-fifth of the Income Tax on the profits of "Trades and Professions," while I have ignored the other four-fifths as taxation not falling on any sort of property.

The considerations just advanced affect also the distribution of the proceeds of Schedule B., the only schedule of the Income Tax which still remains to be dealt with. The Income Tax paid under Schedule B. to which is added in the present case the amount (a very small amount) of Income Tax paid by farmers assessed under D. is a tax on farmers' profits. I imagine that there may be a good deal of discussion as to which kind of property should be regarded as bearing this tax. Personally I do not see how it can be regarded in any degree as a tax upon "Lands" or "Other Rateable Property." In so far as it is a tax upon property at all, it is a tax on the capital of the farmer, and should be dealt with, in my opinion, according to the analogy of the tax on "Trades and Professions" under Schedule D. and regarded as in part falling on "Non-Rateable Property" and in part falling, not on property at all, but on personal exertions. But in what proportions should the yield of Income Tax under Schedule B. be divided between these two heads? I cannot but think that the proportion of farmers' profits attributable to capital should be larger than the one-fifth which has been assumed in the case of "Trades and Professions." I put it at one-third. I am not sure that even that is not an under-estimate. But, putting it at one-third I credit one-third of the yield of Schedule B. to "Non-Rateable Property," and I exclude the other two-thirds from the calculation altogether as not a tax on property at all. If I am wrong in this, it is a consolation to think that the mistake will not greatly affect the calculation as a whole. Schedule B. is rapidly becoming a farce. Last year it only amounted to 190,000*l.*, or little more than 1 per cent. of the total Income Tax, and its tendency is still to diminish.

Land Tax.

This would appear to be the simplest of all the taxes with which we have to deal. Evidently the whole of it is borne by "Rateable Property." But two considerable difficulties arise:—First, the question how to divide the Land Tax between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property"; and second, the question whether we ought to include or exclude from our account the amount of Land Tax redeemed.

(1.) In order to distribute the yield of Land Tax between "Lands" and "Other Rateable property," the following procedure has been followed. The Land Tax in the Metropolis and in all County Boroughs has been attributed to "Other Rateable Property," and so has the Land Tax in all Land Tax parishes having a population of more than 5,000. This was necessary in order to bring in the smaller towns. It is evident that in the latter item must be included a considerable amount of Land Tax really paid by "Lands." But, on the other hand, a certain amount of the Tax in Parishes of less population than 5,000 falls upon houses other than farmhouses. This again is one of the cases where "no exactness is possible" without entering into minute inquiries, which would take a long time and involve very considerable expense. Under no circumstances do I think that such an inquiry would be worth while here, for I feel confident that the system which has been actually followed does result in a very close approximation to the true division of Land Tax between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property."

(2.) The question whether Land Tax which has been redeemed should be brought into the present calculation at all is, in my opinion, a very difficult one, and there seem to me to be a good many arguments which can be used on either side of the case. It appears to me to be quite outside my province to determine whether this item should or should not be included. That is a question for the Commission. But in order to enable the Commission to adopt either course as seems good to them, I have divided the Redeemed Land Tax between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property" on the same principle as the Unredeemed, and have placed it in a separate line at the bottom of the General Account. The Table thus shows two totals, one including and one excluding the amount of Redeemed Land Tax, and it is free to the Commission to adopt either, according as they think that this item should be taken into account or not.

Inhabited House Duty.

Like Land Tax this falls entirely on "Rateable Property." The duty paid on farmhouses has been separated from the rest and attributed to "Lands." The rest will be found under the head of "Other Rateable Property.

Death Duties.

The difficulties of distributing the yield of these Duties between different classes of property are exceptionally great. They would be considerable at any time but are more numerous and more formidable than ever at the present moment, owing to the fact that as regards Death Duties we are in a state of transition. Throughout these tables the net receipts of the year 1894–5 have been taken as the bases of calculation, but the year 1894–5 was that in which the Finance Act, 1894 effected a fundamental change in the system of Death Duties, and the receipts of the year were partly collected under the new and partly under the old law. It may be asked why under these circumstances an earlier year was not taken. The answer is that the Finance Act, 1894, effected a considerable readjustment of the burden of the Death Duties on different classes of property, and that the receipts of 1894–5, however inadequate a guide to the distribution of the burden of these Duties in the future, are yet less misleading than would be the receipts of any previous year. But it must be borne in mind that the Death Duty figures in the Table, though they deal with a year, during about half of which the new Estate Duty was already in operation, do not show either the full amount of taxation which will be derived from this source in future years, or the exact distribution of it between different kinds of property. According to the best estimate that can be formed, the normal

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yield of Death Duties in the early future will be between two and three millions a year greater than in the year 1894–5, and though the distribution of this new burden between the various classes of property will not be very different from that of the Duties actually paid in 1894–5, the proportion will to some extent be altered to the disadvantage of "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property." In other words, they will pay a somewhat larger—not I think a much larger—share of the two and a half millions that are yet to come than they do of the 11 millions which were brought in by the Death Duties in 1894–5.

It should be here stated that in the figures of the Death Duties given in the Table we have included the share of Probate and Estate Duty surrendered by the State to the localities in relief of local burdens. It may be doubtful whether this was the proper course to follow; but on the whole it seemed right that, in analysing Imperial Taxation upon property, we should take into account all the money actually received from property by the Central Government, irrespective of its subsequent distribution. It should, however, always be borne in mind that this sum, which amounted in 1894–5 to 2,140,000*l.* (in future years it will probably be greater, say two and a half millions) though raised from Personal Property, is devoted exclusively to the relief of Rateable Property. It is raised, as will be seen hereafter, in the proportion of 73·5 per cent. from Non-rateable to 26·5 per cent. from Rateable. Therefore, it is to the extent of 73·5 per cent. of its amount or, in a normal year, some 1,840,000*l.*, a contribution from Non-rateable to the relief of Rateable Property.

It seemed undesirable to encumber the account with all the details of the very numerous and complicated calculations, by means of which the yield of each separate head of the Death Duties has been attributed to that species of property to which it properly belongs. But I will state briefly the principles by which we have been guided in making the attribution.

Owing to the fact that, as already explained, we are in a state of transition, there are five duties to be dealt with: The Probate Duty, the Estate Duty 1889, the Estate Duty 1894, the Legacy Duty, and the Succession Duty of these the Probate Duty and the Estate Duty of 1889 are now rapidly fading out of existence. They have been superseded by the Estate Duty of 1894; but as the latter Duty is only applicable to the estates of persons dying after the 1st of August of last year, the operation of the superseded Duties during the twelve months ending 31st March 1895 was still considerable. In the present and future years, on the other hand, their proceeds will be very slight, and after two or three years they will disappear from the public accounts altogether. The Estate Duty 1894, on the other hand, which will bring in between two and three times as much in the present year as in 1894–5, will continue to grow for some time to come. The Legacy Duty, which was of all the Death Duties the least affected by the changes of last year, is likely to produce very much the same results in the future as in the past. The Succession Duty, on the other hand, although as yet but slightly affected by the introduction of the Estate Duty 1894, will, in the course of a few years, show a very considerable diminution, as it is to a great extent superseded by and merged in the latter duty.

In analysing the proceeds of these five Duties for the year 1894–5 the following plan has been adopted:—

Probate Duty.

A register is kept at the Inland Revenue Office, in which the capital becoming subject to Probate Duty is distributed under its principal heads, such as Stock or Funds in the United Kingdom, Stock or Funds in the Colonies and in foreign countries, Shares and Debentures in Public Companies, money out on mortgage, cash, book debts, &c., &c. These items have been carefully examined with a view to dividing the property comprised under them, first into "Rateable" and "Non-rateable," and next, as regards "Rateable" into "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property." As might have been expected, the bulk of the property subject to Probate Duty — a Duty falling exclusively upon Personalty belongs to the category of "Non-rateable." Cash, of course, is non-rateable, funds are non-rateable, foreign securities are non-rateable, household furniture is non-rateable. Still there are very considerable items in the property subject to Probate Duty which belong in whole or in part to the rateable class. This is a point which, owing to the confusion already referred to arising from the use of the words "Personalty" and "Realty," has frequently been overlooked. The items to which I refer are (1) Shares, &c. of Public Companies; (2) Money out on mortgage; (3) Real Estate devised to be sold; (4) Shares of deceased persons in Real Estate as partners in firms; and (5) Leaseholds.

(1.) In the case of Public Companies—a very large item—we have divided the property between "Rateable" and "Non-rateable" on the principles already explained in dealing with the Income Tax, Schedule D. (2, 3, and 7). The result is to give 35·85 per cent. to "Rateable" and 64·15 per cent. to "Non-rateable." The rateable belongs, of course, entirely to the category of "Other Rateable Property" and not to "Lands."

(2.) Mortgages have been entirely included under "Rateable Property."

The distribution of them between "Lands" and Other Rateable Property" has been one of the most difficult points in the whole Inquiry.

I am obliged to go rather fully into the course which has been pursued with regard to it, because the methods adopted are of great importance with relation to other items far more considerable than that of mortgages subject to Probate Duty.

In the first place it must be observed that, in this instance, we have not to take into consideration the whole of "Other Rateable Property." The item "Mortgages" in the analysis of capital subject to "Probate Duty" does not include mortgages, taking the form of Debentures or Debenture Stock, on the property of Public Companies, or Railways, Canals, &c. It is confined to mortgages of land, houses, or business premises belonging to individuals or private firms, whether freehold or leasehold. But no Death Duty statistics at present available enable us to say what is the proportion of "Lands" to that section of "Other Rateable Property," which alone has to be taken into account in this connexion. If instead of only one year's experience of the Estate Duty 1894, we had had several years, it would be possible to speak with some confidence on this point. But no conclusion can be drawn from the statistics of a single year, and that the first of a new system, especially in view of the fact that "Lands," for excellent reasons, come more slowly under the operation of Estate Duty than other forms of "Rateable Property." We are therefore thrown back upon the Income Tax figures, and must see what we can learn from them as to the comparative values of "Lands," and of "Other Rateable Property" (exclusive of that belonging to Public Companies and to Railways, Canals, &c.).

Now the gross assessment of "Lands" to Income Tax is, in round figures 57 millions. ("Lands," Schedule A., 56,212,000*l.* + "Fishings and Shootings," Schedule D., 732,000*l.* = 56,944,000*l.*) The gross assessment of "Messuages" (Schedule A.) is 149,625,000*l.* From this, however, must be deducted the estimated value of "Messuages" belonging to Companies and one other small item, which reduces it to about 132,000,000*l.* Now capitalising the 57,000,000*l.* at 18 and the 132,000,000*l.* at 15 years' purchase—the reasons for these numbers being taken will appear hereafter—we get 1,026,000,000*l.* for "Lands" as against 1,980,000,000*l.* for "Messuages." It would not, however, be wise to rush to the conclusion that Mortgages should be attributed to "Lands" and "Messuages" respectively in this proportion, for it is an ascertained fact—and here the Estate Duty figures do come materially to our assistance—that "Lands" are on the average more heavily mortgaged than other kinds of "Rateable Property." The following figures, taken from the statistics of the Estate Duty for the first twelve months of its existence—*i.e.*, to 1st August 1895—are interesting in this connexion:—

Description of Property.		Capital Value.	Mortgages.	Per-centage of Mortgages to Capital Value.
		£	£	
Realty	Agricultural	11,430,000	2,609,000	22·82
	Non-agricultural	23,955,000	4,346,000	18·21
Leaseholds		6,715,000	1,242,000	

Thus "Lands" would seem to be mortgaged in round figures to the extent of 22½ per cent., as compared with

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only 18 per cent. in the case of "Messuages." Taking this greater average indebtedness of lands into account, the proper distribution of mortgages subject to Probate Duty between "Lands" and "Messuages," would seem to be 39·3 per cent. to the former and 60·7 per cent. to the latter. This figure has accordingly been adopted in our calculation.

(3.) *Real Estate directed to be sold.*—This is a small item in the Probate Duty accounts, much smaller than that of mortgages. But the analysis of it requires care, for it raises the very important question, what proportion of "Real Estate," as distinct from "Rateable Property" generally, is agricultural? As I have already said, the Estate Duty figures, which a few years hence will be conclusive on this point, as yet afford us no guidance. We have therefore once more to consult the Income Tax figures, and the very same figures just referred to in relation to Mortgages, but with a certain difference. For while the gross assessment of "Lands," under Schedule A. may still be taken as a guide to the amount of Agricultural Realty, the capital value of which at 18 years' purchase, has been found to be 1,026,000,000*l.*, the gross assessment of "Messuages" (excluding those of Public Companies) 132,000,000*l.*, cannot be taken as a guide to the amount of Real Property that is not agricultural, for "messuages" include Leaseholds, and we are now considering only Realty. A deduction has to be made for leasehold interests in Messuages, and the deduction, which, after calculations too long to enter into, has appeared the most reasonable, is one-sixth. Here again, only the roughest approximation is possible. But deducting one-sixth from 132,000,000*l.* we get 110,000,000*l.*, and capitalizing that figure at 15 years' purchase, we arrive at 1,650,000,000*l.* as the total value of Non-Agricultural realty (exclusive of Railways, Mines, Canals, Waterworks, Ironworks, &c., and of the Realty of Public Companies). This includes not only absolute freeholds, but the freehold interest in leasehold property, *i.e.*, ground rents. Deducting the value of the mortgaged portion of the property in either case, viz., 22½ per cent. and 18 per cent. respectively, we get the following figures —

	£
Agricultural Realty - -	795,150,000
Non-Agricultural Realty -	1,353,000,000

or 37 per cent. and 63 per cent. respectively, and these are the proportions which have been followed wherever in these calculations it has been necessary to divide taxes on Realty between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property."

(4.) *Shares of Deceased Persons in Real Estate as Partners in Firms.*—This item is attributed entirely to "Other Rateable Property."

(5.) *Leaseholds.*—This likewise is attributed to "Other Rateable Property." The leaseholds paying Probate Duty, are, as a matter of fact, almost entirely leasehold Houses.

The capital subject to Probate Duty in 1894–5 divided on these principles comes out as follows:

	£	Per cent.
Lands - -	2,562,331	26·5
Other Rateable Property - -	19,351,221	
Non-Rateable Property - -	60,780,996	73·5
Total -	£82,694,548	

The Duty paid in 1894–5 has accordingly been distributed in these proportions between these three forms of property.

Estate Duty 1889.

The amount of this Duty collected in 1894–5 was paid partly by Personalty and partly by Realty.

The Duty paid by Personalty has been divided between the various classes of property in the proportions ascertained by the analysis of Personalty subject to Probate Duty. The Realty has been divided between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property," in the proportions of 37 to 63, previously explained.

Estate Duty 1894.

The Estate Duty 1894 falls on three classes of property: (1) Personalty formerly subject to Probate Duty; (2) Other Personalty; (3) Realty. The Duty on the two former classes has been distributed on the same principles as have governed the distribution of Probate Duty. The Duty on Realty has been distributed between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property" in the proportions of 37 to 63 per cent.

Legacy Duty.

The Legacy Duty is paid by the same class of property that pays Probate Duty. It has therefore been distributed in accordance with the proportions ascertained in the analysis of property subject to Probate Duty.

Succession Duty.

A careful inquiry made some years ago and based on the examination of a large number of Succession Duty Accounts, led to the conclusion that one-fifth of the Succession Duty was paid by Personalty and four-fifths by Realty. There is no reason to assume that this proportion has since been altered. I have accordingly distributed one-fifth of the Succession Duty as being paid on Personalty between "Lands," "Other Rateable Property," and "Non-Rateable Property," in accordance with the results obtained, from the analysis of property subject to Probate Duty, while four-fifths, regarded as paid on Realty have been divided between "Lands," and "Other Rateable Property" in the proportions of 37 to 63.

Corporation Duty.

This Duty—a very small item—has been included in the total of Death Duties. In the Inland Revenue Accounts it has hitherto appeared as a separate item between Death Duties and Stamps other than Death Duties. It belongs, however, very clearly to the Death Duty class inasmuch as it is a special tax placed on the property of Corporations in consideration of the fact that such property never becomes subject to the ordinary Death Duties. In this instance our accounts enable us to distribute the Duty accurately between the different kinds of property.

Stamps.

The revenue derived from Stamps is classified in the Accounts of Inland Revenue under the following heads:—

1. Deeds and other Instruments.
2. Securities to Bearer.
3. Joint Stock Companies' Capital.
4. Contract Notes above 1*d.*
5. Bills of Exchange and Promissory Notes.
6. Bankers' Notes.
7. Composition for Duty on Bankers' Bills and Notes.
8. Cards.
9. Licences and Certificates.
10. Life Insurances.
11. Marine Insurances.
12. Patent Medicines.
13. Receipt, Draft, and other 1*d.* Inland Revenue Stamps.

Of these items all, except the four first and 10 and 11, may be excluded from consideration as representing taxes not falling on property at all. The first item, "Deeds and other Instruments," is far the most important, but its analysis does not present much difficulty.

Of the £2,867,000 obtained under this head of Duty in the year 1894–5, about one-sixth may be excluded from consideration as consisting of documents having no distinct reference to any particular kind of property. With regard to the rest, of which the principal items are Stamps on Conveyances, Mortgages, Leases, Transfers of Stocks and Shares, details are kept at the Inland Revenue showing the proportion attributable to lands and houses. This amount has been distributed between "Lands" and "Other Rateable Property" in proportion to the relative value of these two classes of property as already established in dealing with mortgages subject to Probate Duty. The remainder has been mainly attributed to "Non-Rateable Property." But an allowance has been made—in accordance with the principles of distribution applied to the capital of Public Companies subject to Probate Duty—for the element of Rateable Property which is hidden away in the gross assessment of such Public Companies.

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Of the remaining items, (2) Stamps on Securities to Bearer are clearly attributable to Non-Rateable Property, and (3) Stamps on Joint Stock Companies' Capital, have also been so attributed; for although, for reasons already explained, the property of Joint Stock Companies must be regarded as partially rateable, this does not appear to apply to the liquid capital about to be invested in Companies, out of which liquid capital the Companies' Capital duty is paid.

The fourth item, Stamps on Contract Notes, has been divided between "Non-Rateable Property" and "Other Rateable Property" in the same proportions as Stamps on Deeds and Other Instruments not relating distinctly to Lands and Houses.

Items (10) Stamps on Life Insurances and (11) Stamps on Marine Insurances have been attributed to Non-Rateable Property.

This is all I have to say in explanation of Table No. 1.

Part II.

Table No. 2 fortunately does not require any lengthy explanations. The Commission only asked for a statement of the annual value of the different forms of property, but it seemed desirable to add an estimate of their capital value also.

The *Annual Value* is taken from the Income Tax returns for 1893–4, the latest available. Income Tax does substantially reach all classes of *property* in the United Kingdom, though, of course, it does not touch a very large amount of *income*, *i.e.*, the wages of the bulk of the industrial population and the earnings of small traders below the 160*l.* limit. But the former are not property in any sense and the latter are only derived from property to the very limited extent, to which they can be regarded as profits on the capital invested by these small traders in their businesses.

The annual value column, therefore, speaks for itself, and I have only four remarks to make about it.

1. In dealing with "Lands" and "Messuages" under Schedule A. the annual value after deduction of ⅛th in the case of "Lands" and ¼th in the case of "Messuages" has been taken. This is only fair, as the income from property taxed under the other Schedules is net income.

2. Schedule B. gives us no guidance at all as to the real profits of farmers, therefore it is practically idle to speculate what these profits are; and not knowing the profits as a whole, nothing can be inferred as to the amount of that share of them, which is attributable to capital invested, as distinct from personal exertions. Paget's Return, already referred to, estimated farmers' capital in 1885 at 300,000,000*l.* The losses since then have been enormous, and the figure now taken is 200,000,000*l.* Five per cent. on this is 10,000,000*l.*, and that is the figure which has been adopted, but it is pure speculation.

3. In dealing with "Trades and Professions" one-fifth of the income subject to Income Tax has, for the reasons already explained, been regarded as interest on capital and twenty-five per cent. has been added as representing the interest on the capital of those small traders who escape assessment altogether.

(4.) The annual value of those foreign and colonial investments which escape Income Tax altogether has been ignored. No doubt the amount of these investments is very considerable, though the guesses which have been made with regard to it are very wild. But the investments abroad which escape Income Tax, almost invariably also escape Death Duties, and therewith all taxation in this country. To bring them into this account at all would, therefore, be unfair to Non-Rateable Property, for it would reduce its apparent contribution to taxation by distributing the burden over a portion of it, which, as a matter of fact, does not bear taxation in this country at all. Table II. professes to give the annual and capital value *not of all property owned in the United Kingdom, but only of all property contributing to any extent to the Revenue.*

In estimating the *Capital Value* of various forms of property Table II. follows, in the main, Paget's Return, which, in its turn followed, with a few exceptions, Sir R. Giffen's calculations in the "Growth of Capital." The points in which the present estimate differs from Paget's Return are the following:—

1. *Lands and Messuages.*—These are here capitalised at 18 and 15 years' purchase of the gross annual value (which is equivalent to 20½ and 18 of the net) as against 25 and 16 respectively in Paget's Return. This has been done in consequence of our experience of valuations for Estate Duty, which show an average of 18 years' purchase of the gross for agricultural property and 15 for house property. As has been stated, we have not yet sufficient experience to guide us as to the relative amounts of these two kinds of property, but the large number of estates of different kinds already estimated for duty offer, I think, sufficient indication of their average relative values.

Eighteen years' purchase may seem little for "Lands," but it must be remembered that even since the last valuation to Income Tax there has been a further considerable fall in this class of property, and 18 years' purchase of the Income Tax assessment often represents a greater number of years purchase of the actual present rental.

2. *Farmers' Capital.*—I have already stated that the figure taken in this case, where we get no help whatever from Schedule B., is a pure conjecture.

3. British securities assessed under Schedule C. have been capitalised at 33 years' purchase instead of 25. In view of the great appreciation of this class of security a lower figure would now be absolutely misleading. The foreign and colonial securities in the same Schedule are those of the most solid character, and 25 years' purchase of these is certainly not excessive.

4. The appreciation of high-class securities already referred to has led us further to increase the capitalisation of the annual value of waterworks from 20 to 25 years, and of railways in the United Kingdom from 25 to 30 years.

5. The capital invested in trade has been capitalised at 20 instead of 15 years.

In all other respects Paget's Return has been followed. I must, however, express my personal opinion that the figure of 1,000,000,000*l.* for property yielding no annual income, which, in view of the great amount of authority in its favour I have felt constrained to adopt, is decidedly too high.

Part III.

Inhabited House Duty.

This duty was re-imposed in 1851 by the Act 14 & 15 Vict. c. 36, sections 2 and 3, in part substitution for the Window Duty which was then repealed.

The Window Duty in the year 1850 produced 1,708,505*l.*, whilst the House Duty in the early years of its re-imposition realized little over 700,000*l.*

The produce of the House Duty, before the alteration of the incidence of duty in 1890, had risen to 1,978,000*l.*

The rates of duty in force from the re-imposition of the tax to the passing of the Act 53 Vict. c. 8. (1890) were 6*d.* in the £ on shops, &c., and 9*d.* in the £ on dwelling-houses (*i.e.*, private houses).

By that Act the rates of duty were altered as regards houses of small annual values at a cost to the Revenue of about 570,000*l.* per annum.

The rates then imposed which have since remained in force are as follows:—

Dwelling Houses:—
Of the Annual Value—
Of 20*l.* and not exceeding 40*l.*, 3*d.* in the £.
Exceeding 40*l.* and not exceeding 60*l.*, 6*d.* in the £.
Over 60*l.*, 9*d.* in the £, the former rate.

Shops, Beer Houses, Farm Houses, and Lodging Houses:—
Of the Annual Value—
Of 20*l.* and not exceeding 40*l.*, 2*d.* in the £.
Exceeding 40*l.* and not exceeding 60*l.*, 4*d.* in the £.
Over 60*l.* 6*d.* in the £, the old rate.

Relief has been granted in the case of premises used for Trade and Professional purposes, notwithstanding that there may be a resident caretaker, and it has also been afforded in the case of bonâ fide Lodging Houses and to Artizans' Dwellings where the Annual Value of the separate tenements does not amount to 20*l.*, &c.

The net produce of the House Duty in the financial year, 1894–5, was 1,366,174*l.* in England and 96,199*l.* in Scotland.

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Appendix A. XXXIII.

TABLE I.

STATEMENT showing the AMOUNT of IMPERIAL TAXATION levied upon PROPERTY and its distribution between RATEABLE and NON-RATEABLE PROPERTY, 1894–95.

Description of Tax.	Rateable Property.			Non-Rateable Property.	Total. (Cols. 3 and 4.)
	Lands.	Other Rateable Property.	Total.		
	(1.)	(2.)	(3.)	(4.)	
Income Tax:					
Schedule A.	£	£	£	£	£
Lands	1,337,378	—	4,727,671	—	4,752,224
Messuages	—	3,390,293			
Other properties	—	—	—	24,553	
Schedule B. (including farmers' profits assessed under Sch. D.), ⅓ of the net receipt.	—	—	—	63,186	63,186
Schedule C.	—	—	—	1,257,539	1,257,539
Schedule D.:					
Fishings and shootings	17,390	—	17,390	—	4,905,467
Railways in United Kingdom	—	502,181	502,181	347,390	
Quarries, mines, &c.	—	351,328	351,328	318,762	
Railways out of United Kingdom	—	—	—	335,970	
Foreign and colonial securities, including coupons.	—	—	—	407,350	
Other interest, &c.	—	—	—	200,600	
Public companies	—	—	—	1,562,825	
Trades and professions (⅓ of the net receipt).	—	—	—	861,671	
	1,354,768	4,243,802	5,598,570	5,379,846	10,978,416
Land Tax (unredeemed)	802,705	219,000	1,021,705	—	1,021,705
Inhabited House Duty:					
Farm houses	6,900	—	1,462,373	—	1,462,373
Other houses, shops, &c.	—	1,455,473			
Death Duties:					
Probate Duty	68,729	518,702	587,431	1,629,289	2,216,720
Estate Duty, 1889 { Personalty	14,633	110,433	125,066	346,882	471,948
Estate Duty, 1889 { Realty	71,653	122,005	193,658	—	193,658
Estate Duty, 1894 { Personalty	92,970	818,507	911,477	2,541,087	3,452,564
Estate Duty, 1894 { Realty	133,458	227,239	360,697	—	360.697
Legacy Duty	87,092	657,284	744,376	2,064,591	2,808,967
Succession Duty	408,102	743,815	1,151,917	198,513	1,350,430
Corporation Duty	2,185	31,900	34,085	5,317	39,402
General Stamps:					
Deeds and other instruments	322,958	1,062,213	1,385,171	1,024,786	2,409,957
Securities to bearer	—	—	—	127,832	127,832
Joint stock companies' capital	—	—	—	159,870	159,870
Contract notes	—	40,200	40,200	71,935	112,135
Life insurances	—	—	—	57,522	57,522
Marine insurances	—	—	—	136,883	136,883
Total	3,366,153	10,250,573	13,616,726	13,744,353	27,361,079
Per cent.	12·30	37·47	49·77	50·23	100
Land Tax redeemed	693,330	188,770	882,100	—	882,100
Total	4,059,483	10,439,343	14,498,826	13,744,353	28,243,179
Per cent.	14·37	36·96	51·33	48·67	100

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TABLE II.

Appendix A. XXXIII.

A STATEMENT showing the ANNUAL and the CAPITAL VALUES of the several kinds of PROPERTY, and the AMOUNT per £ of the ANNUAL and CAPITAL VALUES contributed by each of them to IMPERIAL TAXATION.

Description of Property.	Annual Value.				Number of Years Purchase of Annual Value.	Capital Value.			
	Rateable Property.		Non-Rateable Property.	Total.		Rateable Property.		Non-Rateable Property.	Total.
	Lands.	Other Rateable Property.				Lands.	Other Rateable Property.		
	£	£	£	£		£	£	£	£
Lands under Schedule A. (*Net, i.e.*, after deduction of one-eighth.)	49,186,142	—	—	49,186,142	20½ (18 on gross).	1,011,829,212	—	—	1,011,829,212
Messuages under Schedule A. (*Net, i.e.*, after deduction of one-sixth.)	—	124,688,320	—	124,688,320	18 (15 on gross).	—	2,244,389,760	—	2,244,389,760
Other profits assessed under Schedule A.	—	—	903,167	903,167	25	—	—	22,579,175	22,579,175
Farmers' capital	—	—	10,000,000	10,000,000	—	—	—	200,000,000	200,000,000
Schedule C., Income Tax. Home Securities.	—	—	15,096,874	15,096,874	33	—	—	498,196,842	498,196,842
Schedule C., Income Tax. Foreign and Colonial Securities.	—	—	23,816,614	23,816,614	25	—	—	595,415,350	595,415,350
Fishings and shootings	732,598	—	—	732,598	18	13,186,764	—	—	13,186,764
Quarries	—	546,573	496,181	1,042,754	7	—	3,828,111	3,473,267	7,301,378
Mines	—	6,460,272	5,861,437	12,321,709	7	—	45,221,904	41,030,059	86,251,963
Ironworks	—	960,679	871,629	1,832,308	5	—	4,803,395	4,358,145	9,161,540
Gasworks	—	2,501,375	2,269,510	4,770,885	25	—	62,534,375	56,737,750	119,272,125
Salt springs	—	137,775	125,004	262,779	15	—	2,066,625	1,875,060	3,941,685
Waterworks	—	1,996,628	1,811,551	3,808,179	25	—	49,915,700	45,288,775	95,204,475
Canals	—	1,831,689	1,661,901	3,493,590	20	—	36,633,780	33,238,020	69,871,800
Markets, tolls, &c.	—	363,725	330,009	693,734	20	—	7,274,500	6,600,180	13,874,680
Railways in the United Kingdom	—	21,153,499	14,633,169	35,786,668	30	—	634,604,970	438,995,070	1,073,600,040
„ out of the „	—	—	14,152,214	14,152,214	20	—	—	283,044,280	283,044,280
Foreign and Colonial Securities (including coupons).	—	—	17,158,861	17,158,861	20	—	—	343,177,220	343,177,220
Other interest	—	—	8,449,807	8,449,807	25	—	—	211,245,175	211,245,175
Public Companies	—	—	65,831,141	65,831,141	20	—	—	1,316,622,820	1,316,622,820
Capital in trades and professions (one-fifth of assessment to Income Tax plus 25 per cent. for exemptions).	—	—	45,370,402	45,370,402	20	—	—	907,408,040	907,408,040
Property yielding no annual income (viz., furniture, works of art &c.).	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1,000,000,000	1,000,000,000
Total	49,918,740	160,640,835	228,839,471	439,399,046	—	1,025,015,976	3,091,273,120	6,009,285,228	10,125,574,324
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. Amount of Taxation (as shown by Table I.).	3,366,153	10,250,573	13,744,353	27,361,079	—	3,366,153	10,250,573	13,744,353	27,361,079
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. Amount of Taxation in the £.	*d.* 16·18	*d.* 15·31	*d.* 14·41	*d.* 14·94	—	*d.* 0·78	*d.* 0·79	*d.* 0·54	*d.* 0·64
Including Land Tax Redeemed. Amount of Taxation (as shown by Table I.).	£ 4,059,483	£ 10,439,343	£ 13,744,353	£ 28,243,179	—	£ 4,059,483	£ 10,439,343	£ 13,744,353	£ 28,243,179
Including Land Tax Redeemed. Amount of Taxation in the £.	*d.* 19·51	*d.* 15·60	*d.* 14·41	*d.* 15·42	—	*d.* 0·95	*d.* 0·81	*d.* 0·54	*d.* 0·66

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TABLE III.

Inhabited House Duty, 1893–4.

County.	Shops, Beer Houses, Farm Houses, Lodging Houses.							Dwelling Houses.							Total Amount of Duty assessed for each County.
	No. of Houses charged to Duty.			Rental or Annual Value charged.			Amount of Duty assessed at Rates of 2d., 4d., and 6d. in the £.	No. of Houses charged to Duty.			Rental or Annual Value charged.			Amount of Duty assessed at 3d., 6d., or 9d. in the £.	
	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.		20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.		
							£							£	£
Bedford	1,575	244	198	41,684	12,096	21,258	1,080	2,081	681	629	59,764	34,431	64,792	4,039	5,119
Berks	2,451	527	568	67,186	26,662	66,986	2,678	3,714	1,027	1,667	103,144	52,176	251,490	12,026	14,704
Bucks	1,876	264	144	48,730	13,162	14,258	982	1,638	453	751	45,713	23,179	123,115	5,767	6,749
Cambridge	1,693	272	293	44,709	13,908	31,692	1,395	2,572	522	651	71,537	26,307	83,839	4,698	6,093
Chester	6,302	1,297	963	175,616	65,773	108,085	5,260	10,717	2,765	3,163	307,412	140,796	374,613	21,412	26,672
Cornwall	1,256	309	237	34,524	15,708	24,377	1,159	2,322	454	314	63,777	22,882	31,224	2,540	3,699
Cumberland	1,645	368	305	46,062	18,490	38,123	1,645	2,596	451	355	71,967	23,073	36,772	2,856	4,501
Derby	3,718	755	749	102,349	38,101	99,815	3,989	5,977	849	898	110,361	42,813	106,571	6,446	10,435
Devon	5,535	1,623	1,467	157,404	82,451	173,470	7,023	14,279	3,044	2,854	397,905	154,109	302,729	20,179	27,202
Dorset	1,864	356	244	49,505	18,285	23,343	1,299	2,263	695	778	63,467	35,551	86,913	4,944	6,243
Durham	5,829	1,225	1,315	162,025	61,873	166,139	6,535	10,063	1,194	985	264,061	59,839	117,883	9,217	15,752
Essex	8,060	1,971	1,347	226,021	96,453	169,070	7,750	25,129	2,861	2,062	644,991	143,100	221,172	19,934	27,684
Gloucester	5,216	913	890	139,496	46,301	96,182	4,337	9,209	2,737	3,147	262,742	140,418	336,264	19,402	23,739
Hereford	1,221	150	158	31,163	7,626	17,504	823	1,188	337	350	34,108	17,860	41,896	2,446	3,269
Hertford	2,504	428	222	67,990	21,789	20,965	1,454	3,373	979	1,441	95,284	50,437	187,948	9,496	10,950
Hunts	550	57	29	13,942	2,835	2,896	236	498	93	97	13,892	4,720	10,598	689	925
Kent (Extra-Met.)	9,614	2,617	2,504	273,134	132,971	287,828	11,690	15,359	4,486	6,362	428,013	228,462	817,565	41,719	53,409
Lancaster	33,483	7,998	8,090	945,118	402,416	1,062,151	41,635	46,338	9,063	8,116	1,286,164	459,590	1,028,379	66,131	107,766
Leicester	3,171	539	569	85,550	27,449	70,094	2,922	3,727	842	909	106,326	42,892	109,637	6,514	9,436
Lincoln	4,389	583	503	115,927	29,360	54,670	2,818	3,871	631	528	106,376	32,066	60,404	4,398	7,216
Middlesex (Extra-Met.)	5,499	2,292	1,780	163,609	116,352	179,685	7,805	33,265	8,765	6,299	951,988	440,687	679,276	48,386	56,191
Monmouth	1,652	414	446	47,214	21,166	56,880	2,167	2,459	415	347	65,766	20,932	35,344	2,673	4,840
Norfolk	4,902	600	555	112,614	30,354	66,884	3,109	3,867	971	769	108,679	49,276	80,310	5,805	8,914
Northampton	2,825	437	357	74,512	22,167	39,948	1,990	2,797	560	624	76,569	28,488	80,897	4,703	6,693
Northumberland	2,899	617	699	81,714	31,107	113,019	4,024	8,992	1,450	1,101	250,355	72,622	125,752	9,661	13,685
Nottingham	3,635	677	990	98,906	34,844	123,956	4,502	4,409	1,080	986	124,518	54,771	111,648	7,115	11,617
Oxford	2,015	340	367	53,673	17,137	46,729	1,902	2,703	723	1,032	74,838	36,818	129,594	6,714	8,616
Rutland	224	16	7	5,589	803	584	74	148	50	90	4,319	2,544	12,382	582	656
Salop	2,371	351	242	60,269	18,059	24,647	1,418	2,106	582	567	59,917	29,733	65,505	3,949	5,367
Somerset	5,556	1,314	1,489	151,314	66,957	100,147	6,532	8,345	2,439	2,193	232,902	123,741	229,280	14,596	21,128
Carried forward															

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County.	Shops, Beer Houses, Farm Houses, Lodging Houses.							Dwelling Houses.							Total Amount of Duty assessed for each County.
	No. of Houses charged to Duty.			Rental or Annual Value charged.			Amount of Duty assessed at Rates of 2d., 4d., and 6d. in the £.	No. of Houses charged to Duty.			Rental or Annual Value charged.			Amount of Duty assessed at 3d., 6d., or 9d. in the £.	
	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.		20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.	20l. and not exceeding 40l.	Over 40l. and not exceeding 60l.	Over 60l.		
Brought Forward							£							£	£
Southampton	7,743	1,893	2,542	215,160	96,844	333,626	11,750	10,986	3,565	4,855	311,184	183,031	582,235	30,299	42,049
Stafford	8,712	1,677	1,342	239,452	84,595	144,595	7,019	8,930	1,852	1,490	247,171	93,809	166,185	11,668	18,687
Suffolk	3,069	480	451	80,898	24,446	47,378	2,267	3,369	915	879	94,909	46,234	103,259	6,214	8,481
Surrey (Extra-Met.)	5,726	1,830	1,969	165,093	93,236	215,623	8,318	18,245	6,055	9,555	511,376	311,323	1,243,783	60,818	69,136
Sussex	5,940	2,214	3,703	171,690	113,224	494,760	15,685	15,986	4,769	7,251	446,623	243,953	914,500	45,978	61,663
Warwick	8,334	1,861	1,783	230,413	94,084	257,118	9,515	9,744	2,384	2,614	269,150	119,318	317,214	18,241	28,156
Westmoreland	369	157	99	10,340	7,894	13,905	565	745	178	273	20,251	9,077	32,023	1,631	2,246
Wilts	2,452	401	252	66,145	20,052	27,857	1,581	2,439	617	592	67,327	31,787	70,336	4,273	5,854
Worcester	4,052	588	590	107,866	29,683	67,108	3,068	5,748	1,370	1,468	163,237	69,568	163,442	9,906	12,974
York	22,241	4,603	4,286	611,789	232,784	568,869	23,204	29,130	6,218	5,910	815,075	315,689	692,525	44,047	67,251
Metropolis	27,611	18,960	30,411	862,763	966,471	4,878,968	145,265	225,660	61,265	56,517	6,506,434	3,042,916	9,597,344	517,336	662,591
Total England	229,189	64,221	75,145	6,439,130	3,258,768	10,437,192	368,870	564,967	140,410	141,499	15,941,571	7,061,038	19,826,538	1,119,288	1,488,158
Anglesea	228	24	8	6,148	1,246	1,578	112	261	66	55	7,129	3,423	7,251	447	559
Brecon	345	58	26	9,349	2,924	2,380	185	336	82	70	9,276	4,127	7,386	495	680
Cardigan	240	55	26	6,742	2,717	2,669	168	285	69	40	7,927	3,504	3,925	334	502
Carmarthen	467	105	59	12,296	5,319	5,353	326	526	107	76	14,386	5,388	7,332	589	915
Carnarvon	931	380	367	26,542	19,145	45,099	1,667	1,029	369	277	29,558	19,088	30,926	2,007	3,674
Denbigh	764	224	178	20,835	11,519	18,710	833	846	297	265	24,577	15,141	33,984	1,921	2,754
Flint	609	113	107	16,465	5,785	9,620	474	565	179	194	15,610	6,571	20,801	1,141	1,615
Glamorgan	5,198	1,594	1,374	149,678	81,146	295,108	9,976	11,624	1,541	1,193	320,485	77,615	137,888	11,116	21,092
Merioneth	328	52	32	9,286	2,639	3,108	202	325	81	74	9,154	4,234	8,658	544	746
Montgomery	322	56	30	8,688	2,754	2,612	185	379	63	75	10,315	3,217	7,231	490	675
Pembroke	382	77	58	10,549	3,907	5,691	296	575	143	105	15,962	7,249	9,775	746	1,042
Radnor	149	35	29	4,111	1,734	3,622	152	114	46	36	3,158	2,321	3,652	236	388
Total Wales	9,963	2,773	2,794	280,689	140,835	395,550	14,576	16,865	2,993	2,460	467,527	151,878	277,809	20,056	34,632
Total England and Wales	239,152	66,994	77,939	6,719,819	3,399,603	10,832,742	383,446	581,852	143,403	143,959	16,409,098	7,212,916	20,104,347	1,139,344	1,522,790

Inland Revenue,
October 1895.

C. Turner,
Accountant-General.

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Appendix A.
XXXIV.

XXXIV.

(Handed in by Sir Alfred Milner. See Question 63,408.)

TABLE showing the actual Imperial Taxation paid in the Year, 1894–5, on Rateable and Non-Rateable Property, with Computations based on the Rates of Taxation respectively borne by "Lands" and Non-Rateable Property in relation to Annual and Capital Values.

A. Actual Imperial Taxation Year, 1894–5.
B. Result of a Contribution on an equal basis by each description of property.
C. " " based on the rate now paid by "Lands."
D. " " " " " Non-Rateable property.

	Annual Value.				Capital Value.			
	Rateable Property.		Non-Rateable Property.	Total.	Rateable Property.		Non-Rateable Property.	Total.
	Lands.	Other Rateable Property.			Lands.	Other Rateable Property.		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Value	49,918,740	160,640,835	228,839,471	439,399,046	1,025,015,976	3,091,273,120	6,009,285,228	10,125,574,324
"A." *Actual Imperial Taxation Year, 1894–5.*								
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	3,366,153	10,250,573	13,744,353	27,361,079	3,366,153	10,250,573	13,744,353	27,361,079
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	16·18*d.*	15·31*d.*	14·41*d.*	14·94*d.*	0·78*d.*	0·79*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·64*d.*
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	4,059,483	10,439,343	13,744,353	28,243,179	4,059,483	10,439,343	13,744,353	28,243,179
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	19·51*d.*	15·60*d.*	14·41*d.*	15·42*d.*	0·95*d.*	0·81*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·66*d.*
"B." *Result of a Contribution on an equal basis by each Description of Property.*								
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	3,108,405	10,902,996	14,249,678	27,361,079	2,769,771	8,353,163	16,238,145	17,361,079
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	14·94*d.*	14·94*d.*	14·94*d.*	14·94*d.*	0·64*d.*	0·64*d.*	0·64*d.*	0·64*d.*
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	257,748 Less.	247,577 Less.	505,325 More.	—	596,382 Less.	1,897,410 Less.	2,493,792 More.	—
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	3,208,620	10,325,487	14,709,072	28,243,179	2,859,068	8,622,461	16,761,650	28,243,179
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	15·42*d.*	15·42*d.*	15·42*d.*	15·42*d.*	0·66*d.*	0·66*d.*	0·66*d.*	0·66*d.*
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	850,863 Less.	113,856 Less.	964,719 More.	—	1,200,415 Less.	1,816,983 Less.	3,017,397 More.	—
"C." *Result of a Contribution based on the Rate now paid by Lands.*								
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	3,366,153	10,832,437	15,431,254	29,629,844	3,366,153	10,151,744	19,734,500	33,252,397
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	16·18*d.*	16·18*d.*	16·18*d.*	16·18*d.*	0·78*d.*	0·78*d.*	0·78*d.*	0·78*d.*
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	—	581,864 More.	1,686,901 More.	2,268,765 More.	—	98,829 Less.	5,989,147 More.	5,890,318 More.
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	4,059,483	13,063,606	18,609,645	35,732,734	4,059,483	12,242,706	23,799,230	40,101,419
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	19·51*d.*	19·51*d.*	19·51*d.*	19·51*d.*	0·95*d.*	0·95*d.*	0·95*d.*	0·95*d.*
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	—	2,624,263 More.	4,865,292 More.	7,489,555 More.	—	1,803,363 More.	10,054,877 More.	11,858,240 More.
"D." *Result of a Contribution based on the Rate now paid by Non-Rateable Property.*								
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	2,998,174	9,648,265	13,744,353	26,390,792	2,344,401	7,070,317	13,744,353	23,159,071
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*
Excluding Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	367,979 Less.	602,308 Less.	—	970,287 Less.	1,021,752 Less.	3,180,256 Less.	—	4,202,008 Less.
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Amount of taxation	2,998,174	9,648,265	13,744,353	26,390,792	2,344,401	7,070,317	13,744,353	23,159,071
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — Rate in the £	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	14·41*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*	0·54*d.*
Including Land Tax Redeemed. — More or less than actual contribution	1,061,309 Less.	791,078 Less.	—	1,852,387 Less.	1,715,082 Less.	3,369,026 Less.	—	5,084,108 Less.

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APPENDIX B. 1.

Appendix B. 1.

COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE between the Local Government Board and the Clerk to the Assessment Committee of the Holbeach Union Assessment Committee.

Local Government Board,
Whitehall, S.W.,
SIR, August 6, 1895.

I AM directed by the Local Government Board to forward to you, for the information of the Royal Commission on Agriculture, the enclosed copy of correspondence between the Board and the clerk to the Assessment Committee of the Holbeach Union relative to the gross estimated rental and rateable value of "lands" in that union given in the Parliamentary Return recently issued.

I am, &c.
(Signed) ALFRED D. ADRIAN,
Assistant Secretary.

The Secretary to the
Royal Commission on Agriculture,
Great George Street, S.W.

Local Government Board,
Whitehall, S.W.,
SIR, July 10, 1895.

I AM directed by the Local Government Board to state that they observe from the return of the gross estimated rental and rateable value of lands, &c. at Lady Day 1894 in the Holbeach Union, which you forwarded to the Board on the 25th September last, that there is a very slight diminution in the rateable value of lands in the union in 1894 as compared with 1870, whereas in the great majority of the Lincolnshire unions, the rateable value of lands has fallen very considerably between those years.

The Board will be obliged if you will inform them of any local circumstances within your knowledge which have prevented the rateable value of lands in the Holbeach Union from falling as in the rest of the county, and whether the system of assessing lands in the union differs from that adopted in neighbouring unions.

I am, &c.
(Signed) C. N. DALTON,
Assistant Secretary.

To R. P. Mossop, Esq.,
Clerk to the Assessment Committee
of the Holbeach Union.

Holbeach Union,
Holbeach, Lincolnshire,
SIR, July 23, 1895.

I AM directed by the Assessment Committee of the Holbeach Union to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 10th instant with reference to the return recently made as to the gross estimated rental and rateable value of lands, &c. in this union, and in reply to your enquiry to inform you that none of the parishes in this union have been re-rated since 1870, which explained the reason of the slight diminution in the rateable value of lands, such slight reductions having only been made by the Committee in case of appeal. I may, however, add that new valuation lists are now in the course of preparation, and when the same come into force, it will be found that the values of farm lands have been materially reduced.

I am, &c.
(Signed) RICHD. P. MOSSOP.

To the Secretary,
Local Government Board,
Whitehall.

APPENDIX B. 2.

Appendix B. 2.

COPY OF CORRESPONDENCE between the Local Government Board and the Town Clerk of the Municipal Borough of Liskeard.

Local Government Board,
SIR, Whitehall, S.W., June 6, 1895.

I AM directed by the President of the Local Government Board to forward to you, for the information of the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression, the enclosed copy of a correspondence which has taken place between the Board and the Town Clerk of the Borough of Liskeard, with reference to a statement made before the Commission to the effect that rates amounting to 6*s.* in the £ were levied in an urban district in the Liskeard Union.

The statement on which the correspondence arose is contained in the answers to questions numbered 37,392–6, in the Minutes of Evidence taken before the Commissioners.

I am, sir,
The Secretary to Your obedient servant,
the Royal Commission ALFRED D. ADRIAN.
on Agricultural Depression.

Local Government Board,
SIR, Whitehall, S.W., May 21, 1895.

THE attention of the Local Government Board having been called to a statement made before the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression, from which it would appear that rates amounting to 6*s.* in £ are levied in an urban district in the Liskeard Union, the Board have caused reference to be made to returns annually furnished to them relative to the rates raised in and the rateable value of the only urban district in the Union, viz., the Borough of Liskeard.

It appears from the Report of the Union Assessment Committee, furnished by the clerk, that, at Lady-day, 1893, the rateable value of the borough was 18,424*l.*, and from the Poor Rate return for the year 1893–94, that the poor rates raised during that year in the borough amounted to 2,574*l.*, including 1,285*l.* entered as "Payments for or towards the county, borough, or "police rate." Calculated on a rateable value of 18,424*l.* a sum of 2,574*l.* is equivalent to a rate of 2*s.* 9·5*d.* in the £. From the annual returns furnished by you, it appears that a sum of 298*l.* was raised during the year 1893–94, by a rate of 6*d.* in the £ on an assessable value of 11,949*l.*, to meet the cost of lighting and watering the streets, and that a sum of 1,000*l.* was raised by a borough rate of 1*s.* 2*d.* in the £ on the rateable value to the poor rate, for municipal, sanitary, and school board purposes, but this sum of 1,000*l.* was, it is assumed, included in the sum of 2,574*l.* raised by poor rates. The total rate in the £ of the rates

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Appendix B. 2.

accounted for in the returns for the year 1893–94 received from yourself and the clerk to the guardians amount, therefore, to 2*s.* 9·5*d.*, +6*d.*, or about 3*s.* 3½*d.*

The Board will be obliged if you will inform them what rates (if any) other than the poor rate and the lighting and watering rate, are raised in the Borough of Liskeard, and will furnish them with a statement showing the rates in the £ of all the rates made in the borough during each of the five years ended Lady-day, 1894, and the current year.

I am, sir,
Your obedient servant,
(Signed) C. N. DALTON,
Assistant Secretary.

H. L. Caunter, Esq.,
Town Clerk of the
Municipal Borough of Liskeard.

Town Clerk's Office, Liskeard.
May 22, 1895.

SIR,

I BEG to acknowledge receipt of your letter of yesterday's date. The statement made before the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression that rates amounting to 6*s.* in the £ are levied in the Borough of Liskeard is very inaccurate. There are only two rates levied in the borough, the poor rate and the lighting and watering rate. The poor rate meets the cost of municipal sanitary, school board, poor law, and county purposes. The lighting and watering rate is levied on house property and gardens within a small area to meet the cost of lighting and watering the streets of the town of Liskeard. This latter rate, therefore, should not be taken into consideration when dealing with the question of agricultural depression, as the rate is not levied on agricultural property. As a matter of fact, this rate has for the six years ending Lady-day, 1895, been at the rate of 6*d.* in the £ per year.

The only other rate levied in the borough, viz., the poor rate, amounted, in the year ending Lady-day:—

	s.	*d.*	
1890 - - -	to 2	9	in the £.
1891 - - -	,, 2	10	,,
1822 - - -	,, 3	0	,,
1893 - - -	,, 2	11	,,
1894 - - -	,, 3	0	,,
1895 - - -	,, 3	3	,,

Any other information I can afford you I shall be very happy to supply.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient servant,
H. LYDE CAUNTER,
Town Clerk.

C. N. Dalton, Esq.,
Assistant Secretary,
Local Government Board,
Whitehall, S.W.

Appendix C. 1.

APPENDIX C.

Those of the Land Office Inspectors of the Board of Agriculture who reported in December 1893 that land had gone out of cultivation in their respective districts were in December 1894, by the instructions of the Commissioners, requested to furnish a further statement specifying the acreage of the uncultivated land referred to in their previous communications. (*See* Vol. I. of Evidence, Appendix D.)

The statements received are appended hereto:—

	Counties.	Name of Inspector.
1	Dorset - - - - Hants - - - -	Mr. C. Paterson.
2	Warwick - - -	Major W. T. E. Fosbery.
3	Cambridge - - - Hertford - - - Huntingdon - - - Suffolk - - -	Mr. J. Looker.
4	Bedford - - -	Mr. W. H. Haughton.
5	Berkshire - - -	Mr. A. Castle.
6	Hereford - - - Shropshire - - - Worcestershire - -	Mr. H. J. Wyley.
7	Essex - - - -	Messrs. A. Darby & Co.

The points upon which the Land Office Inspectors were requested to give information were the following:—

1. An approximate estimate of the extent of land which, having been arable within the last five or 10 years, is no longer cultivated, and has since then been left to the unaided efforts of nature, and is of little or no value.
2. Any instances in which all the land having been arable on a farm comes within the above definition.
3. As to whether any farms are entirely derelict in the sense that they are no longer occupied or cultivated either by a tenant or by the owners.

1.

Report prepared by Mr. C. Paterson upon the Counties of Hampshire and Dorset.

DORSET AND HANTS.

Canford Estate Office,
Wimborne, Dorset,
April 5, 1895.

DEAR SIR,

I BEG herewith to forward my answers to the three questions stated in your's of 19th December last. Having resided continuously in Dorsetshire for the last 21 years I am personally in close touch with the state of matters in that county, but notwithstanding that fact I have fortified my own opinions by consulting land agents, valuers, and other public men in a position to form a correct judgment in various parts of Dorsetshire.

As regards Hampshire, although frequently over it on business from "The Land Office," my personal observation and acquaintance are not so extensive as in Dorset. I have, therefore, specially visited some of its worst districts in connection with this enquiry, and have been in communication with some 12 public men in the county, so that I hope the information may be relied upon as fairly representing the actual state of things over the county as a whole. I have found it extremely difficult to get uniform data, as people's ideas within the limits of the same parish differed in the most extraordinary manner.

I am,
Your obedient servant,
C. PATERSON.

Herbert Lyon, Esq.,
Secretary,
Royal Commission on Agriculture,
23, Great George Street,
Westminster, S.W.

AGRICULTURE IN HAMPSHIRE.

Question No. 1.

"Give an approximate estimate of the extent of land which having been arable within the last five or ten years, is no longer cultivated, and has since then been left to the unaided efforts of nature, and is of little or no value?"

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Answer.

I should say that at present 10 per cent., or 44,743 acres, would fall under this heading, and a very much larger area is closely approaching it.

Question No. 2.

"Give any instances in which all the land having been arable on a farm comes within the above definition?"

Answer.

I can find no cases which come absolutely under this description.

Question No. 3.

"Are any farms entirely 'derelict' in the sense that they are no longer occupied by a tenant or by the owner?"

Answer.

The only "derelict" farm that I have been able to hear of is one in the Basingstoke Union called 'Nutley Farm," comprising some 750 acres. It is no longer cultivated, and is struck off the assessment for poor rate.

NOTE.—Hampshire is in a much worse position agriculturally than Dorsetshire, and consequently the depression is much more severely felt. A large proportion of the Hampshire farms are long and narrow in shape. The highest and most distant portion of the farm has in numerous cases gone quite out of cultivation; the middle portion will soon follow, but the lower portion nearest to and including the homestead will probably continue to receive attention for some time to come as the land is generally of better quality, with a proportion of good meadow, and all lying handy.

AGRICULTURE IN DORSETSHIRE.

Question No. 1.

"Give an approximate estimate of the extent of land which having been arable within the last five or ten years is no longer cultivated, and has since then been left to the unaided efforts of nature, and is of little or no value?"

Answer.

Not more than 2½ per cent., or 4,798 acres, of the arable land in the county would fall strictly under this description, but quite 10 per cent. of it has been sown down to pasture within that time in very poor condition, and more is gradually following.

Question No. 2.

"Give any instances in which all the land having been arable on a farm comes within the above definition?"

Answer.

There are no instances in this county, so far as I have been able to find out, in which a whole farm has been left to the unaided efforts of nature.

Question No. 3.

"Are any farms entirely 'derelict' in the sense that they are no longer occupied by a tenant or by the owner?"

Answer.

There are no farms in the county entirely "derelict."

NOTE.—I quite think, however, that the whole of the third class land—being some 30 per cent.—is on the very eve of going out of cultivation, and an equally large per-centage of the second class is rapidly drifting in the same direction. This state of matters would have arrived sooner but for the fact that the arable land in Dorsetshire is of a very kindly and grateful nature. Although known as "light land," it is, nevertheless, unusually susceptible to good treatment, and as the greater number of farms have a suitable proportion of meadow land attached to them the tenants are able thereby to make ends meet in a way that they would not otherwise do. The large landowners in Dorsetshire are wealthy, and having realised the agricultural depression at an early stage of its existence they assisted their tenants liberally by timely remissions of rent as well as by other means, so that the actual distress has not been nearly so acute in Dorsetshire as many other counties.

C. PATERSON.

Appendix C. 2.

2.

Report prepared by Major W. T. E. Fosbery, Land Agent, upon the county of Warwick.

SIR, Warwick, May 20, 1895.

SINCE the receipt of your letter of the 27th February last, I have endeavoured to obtain the information asked for in that letter, and in yours of the 21st December last.

I have addressed a circular to all the overseers in the different parishes in the county of Warwick, and now beg to give you a short statement compiled from the replies I have received.

I may mention that I sent out 224 notices, but 44 out of these have not been returned.

In the interview which I had with you I pointed out that it would be impossible to arrive at very accurate information by seeking it through these channels, but I could not see any way of arriving with accuracy at the facts your Commission require without incurring a very much larger expense than authorised by your letter.

As you are aware, many of the overseers in the country parishes are men who have really no practical knowledge of agriculture. Many of their replies, therefore, do not convey accurately the information sought.

You will observe on the enclosure that on sending out my circular I slightly altered the wording of the questions contained in your letter, having regard to the class of men to whom it was addressed.

It may be interesting to the Commission to know that in the year 1874 the arable and grass land of this county were almost equal in extent, but that during this last 20 years 76,000 acres of arable have been laid down to grass.

Now it is quite possible some of the land referred to in the answers to No. 1 may have been seeded down, and may possibly not come quite within the scope of the proper answer to this question.

As a matter of fact, a considerable area of the land covered by the 76,000 acres does not bring in a sufficient sum to pay the rates and taxes chargeable upon it, and some of the answers received refer to this without giving any areas.

You will observe that the answers to No. 3 question represent only two farms as uncultivated. The fact is that all through this part of the kingdom farms are partly arable and partly pasture, and the grass is, of course, stocked, and therefore occupied.

I am, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,
WM. T. E. FOSBERY.

H. Lyon, Esq.,
The Royal Commission on Agriculture,
23, Great George Street, Westminster,
London, S.W.

THE COUNTY OF WARWICK.

Summary of replies received from the overseers of the various parishes to the questions below.

Questions.	Replies.
No. 1. An approximate estimate of the extent of land in the above parish which having been arable within the last five or ten years is no longer cultivated, and remains in that condition, and is now of little or no value?	5,476 acres.
No. 2. Are there any instances in which all the arable land on a farm is no longer cultivated, and is now of little or no value?	Yes, seven.
No. 3. Are there any farms in your parish which are entirely uncultivated, either by a tenant or by the owner.	Two farms.

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Appendix C. 3.

3.

Report prepared by Mr. J. Looker upon the counties of Cambridge, Hertford, Huntingdon, and Suffolk.

Wyton Manor, Huntingdon,
April 27, 1895.

SIR,

I HAVE the honour to present my Report, on the estimated quantity of land in the counties of Cambridge, Hertford, Huntingdon, and Suffolk, that has gone out of arable cultivation within the last few years, and is now in inferior pasture and is of little or no value either for feeding or mowing.

In collecting evidence on this subject, I found it necessary to visit the chief towns in each county, and to put myself into personal communication with those fellow members of the Surveyors' Institution, whom I knew in each district, and who gave me—

(1) generally some idea of the soils and methods of cultivation in each particular locality, with which their practice made them acquainted, and

(2) the name of some prominent agriculturist, either owner or occupier, in each parish who would be most likely to answer any written applications from me, and on whose information I could rely as being in the main representative of that particular parish, or in some cases a group of three or four parishes.

In this way, by taking every union in each county as a centre, and either personally or by letter communicating with someone in each parish, I am enabled to give the desired information for the four counties, and which I venture to think may be considered as approximately correct.

SUFFOLK.

Taking this as a county, it will not be found that there is a great proportion of land recently laid down to grass, and the reasons for this are these :

(1) A great proportion of the soil is chalk, which, growing one-fourth roots and one-fourth seeds, in the first and third years of the ordinary system of cultivation, is not so expensive to work as far as horse labour is concerned, and is more of a stock-raising than a corn-producing district.

(2) It is unsuited for layers, either permanent or temporary, from the fact that many of the fields are large and unfenced, but also more from there being no available water supply, except by boring into the chalk at a great depth and expense.

The same remarks apply to the red crag districts, and also to all that class of sandy gravels in the neighbourhood of Thetford, Brandon, and Mildenhall, although in this district out of a parish of 9,000 acres, I found on one estate 2,500 acres that had ceased to be cultivated as arable, and was producing little of value as pasture.

There is near Lakenheath some few hundreds of acres of weak fen land that was never very desirable, and which is gradually going back to a state of nature.

But besides the various subsoils named above, there exists intermittently, sometimes in whole parishes, and sometimes confined to one farm, or even to a part of a farm, the London clay strata, and here we find the larger proportion of fresh laid down land, in fact, it may be said that apart from the clay lands there is very little land in Suffolk on which any alteration in the system of farming has taken place.

This equally applies to the other counties embraced in this enquiry and it is almost an invariable guide that where it requires three horses to turn one furrow, there you find the land fast going out of arable cultivation.

It must not be inferred that, although there is very little change of cultivation in those parts of Suffolk and other counties on land other than where clay is the prevailing soil, that the land is in profitable occupation, yet from the fact that the clay is the much more expensive to work, and is least adapted for root cultivation, it is the first to throw up corn-growing and to adopt a system which, although bringing no profit, at least has the merit of reducing expenditure and confining the loss into a narrower compass.

HERTS.

Apart from the chalk soils which join Cambridgeshire, and which lie in a district of which Royston is somewhat the centre, the soil of this county will be found to be very various, and although in the west and north-west, the prevailing strata is chalk, yet intermixed with this are instances of clay lands, and in Mid Herts some thin soils, and stronger and heavier land, as one approaches the north.

Where the chalk predominates little alteration will be found in the cultivation, and generally where barley and roots are found to be the most suitable crops there will very little of this poor pasture be found, and it may be taken that the greater part of the lands, now in rough and poor pasture, is on those clay lands, either in whole parishes or in isolated farms or parts of farms, and for the same reasons which govern the cultivation in the other counties, namely, expense out of proportion to the value of the resulting produce.

Nearer London there is more land in pasture devoted to haymaking, and in the immediate vicinity of the towns the accommodation character of the land takes it out of the ordinary corn-growing routine.

CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

From Newmarket to Cambridge, and on to Royston, on both sides of the Great Eastern and London and North-Western Railways, the soil is of a similar description to that of the greater part of the adjoining county of Suffolk, viz., chalk, and here there has been hardly any alteration from the root and barley cultivation, which is best suited to the district.

But, starting again from Cambridge, taking the St. Neots road as a centre, and going west right up to the boundary of Huntingdonshire, on either hand will be found a district of poor strong clay, which has very much changed in cultivation, and in which a vast amount of rough, weedy pasture will be found on land that a few years ago was a corn-producing country.

This district extends to the Cambridge and St. Ives Railway on the north, but there must not be included in it a few parishes on the north of this line of railway, which are more convertible soil, and are on the edge of the fen lands running down to the Isle of Ely.

In this district, which includes Cottenham, Willingham, and Over, a good deal of fruit is grown, and the land is of much better quality and easier to work.

Adjoining the town of Newmarket there are some hundreds of acres of land, which have been recently laid down to grass, and are used entirely for training purposes, and I have not included these in any of the figures I have given.

I have not taken any account of the Isle of Ely, which I considered separate from Cambridgeshire, and the soil and cultivation is of an entirely different character.

HUNTINGDONSHIRE.

In this small county clay is the rule instead of the exception, and hence comparatively the greater proportion of land, which has ceased to be under the plough.

With the exception of the valley of the Ouse, which runs from 1½ to 2 miles wide, from Earith to St. Neots, and excepting also the fen soils lying on the north from Colne, through Ramsey to Holme and Yaxley, and also leaving out a small area in the extreme north of the county, the remainder may be said to be all clay soil of a very tenacious nature, very hard and expensive to work, and on all this, as on similar soils in Cambridgeshire, there are found large areas of land, which have lost their corn-producing power, and which contribute very little to the food supply of the country.

GENERALLY.

The figures I have given below must only be taken to include the land, which I have been able to ascertain is, at this moment, in poor pasture, and which a few years since was under the plough ; but to this might be added many instances of land in temporary pasture, and some quantity under sanfoin, both of which will probably not come under the plough again.

In addition to this, my inquiries have brought out from my correspondents the strong opinions that every year will greatly increase the area of land which will

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cease to grow corn, and a great number of them impress upon me (unasked) their convictions, that, with the present prices, the bulk of the land in these counties must sooner or later cease to be in cultivation.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,
JOHN LOOKER.

Herbert Lyon, Esq.,
Secretary,
The Royal Commission on Agriculture,
23, Great George Street,
Westminster.

County.	Estimated extent of Land which having been Arable within the last few Years, is now in Pasture, and of little or no Value.	Per-centage of Arable Land recently converted to Pasture.	Instances in which all all Arable Land on a Farm has ceased to be cultivated.	Number of Farms entirely Derelict.
1. Herts -	2,341	1·01	—	—
2. Cambs -	10,750	2·85	3	3
3. Suffolk -	19,888	3·40	20	15
4. Hunts -	15,299	12·06	5	1

4.

Report prepared by Mr. W. H. Haughton upon the County of Bedford.

The Highlands, Great Barford, St. Neots,
SIR, 25th May, 1895.

I NOW have the honour of submitting the returns I have received to the questions on which you desired me to collect information in the county of Bedfordshire.

I. An approximate estimate of the extent of land which in the above parish having been arable within the last ten years is no longer cultivated, and has since been left to the unaided efforts of Nature, and is of little or no value?

The total amount of the returns under the above head amount to 8,904 acres.

The above-mentioned land used to be all under "the plough" in a clean state of cultivation, growing good crops of corn, and fat stock were sold out of the farm-yards every winter.

The landlord received his rent, and the land supported prosperous tenant farmers, and a large number of agricultural labourers.

Now, nearly all the old farmers of the above reported land are gone, having lost their capital.

The land being out of cultivation the labourers' occupation on it is gone, and they have been driven to seek work elsewhere.

The landlord gets little or no rent for the land, which has returned, and is returning, to its natural wild condition, and is now only of use as a rough run for stock and a few sheep from June to the end of October.

Stock in winter can not be kept on the above land as there are no roots, hay, or straw on it to carry them through the winter.

In the districts of this land the village blacksmiths, carpenters, and harness makers are very short of work, and complain that money is very hard to get for any work they do for farmers on better land who still hang on and cultivate their farms.

Since the disastrous season of 1879 agriculture in Bedfordshire has been year by year declining. The clay land farms that before that date were eagerly sought after and competed for are now sad to look upon as they are overrun with couch grass, water grass, docks, thistles, rest harrow (*Ononis arvensis*), thorns, &c., &c., with only here and there a few young stock or sheep to be seen.

The farm buildings are fast going out of repair, with the fences and field gates to keep them company. Appendix C. 4.

The bulk of the above land could not be brought into cultivation again under an expenditure (according to the state the fields are in) for bare fallowing, &c., of from 7*l.* to 10*l.* per acre.

The landlords would also in many cases have to lay out a large sum on repairs to the farm houses, cottages, and remodelling the farm buildings, which on many of the farms are in a very bad state of repair, and without proper accommodation for stock or arrangement of buildings suited to save labour in attending the stock.

The old system of large open yards with scanty open hovel room for the stock is most wasteful, and the cattle in them in winter are often "starved with cold and wet."

The waste of straw is enormous in the large open yards, often surrounded with unspouted buildings. The manure made in them is of a very poor quality compared to that made under cover.

These large open yards cause three losses to the farmer:—

I. Extra food required to fat stock kept in such cold, wet yards.

II. The large amount of straw required to keep the stock from being up to their knees in wet muck.

III. The poor quality of muck made in them, a large part of the manurial qualities having been washed and dried out of the manure.

The poor clay land under consideration in this report will never make good pasture however carefully cleaned and sown down with good pasture seeds; after a few years all the good grasses die out, and the land returns to being covered with its natural covering, couch grass, water grass, rest harrow, docks, thistles, thorns, &c., &c.

A large number of the clay land farms that are still being cultivated will go out of cultivation if corn remains at its present low value.

II.—Any instances in which all land having been arable on a farm comes within the above definition?

There are only 498 acres returned under Question II.

III.—As to whether any farms are entirely derelict in the sense that they are no longer occupied or cultivated either by a tenant or by the owner?

There are only 118 acres returned under Question III.

On all sides I hear of tenants who hardly know how to keep on.

Their capital has seriously decreased, their credit is gone, the merchants, cattle auctioneers, and tradesmen are now very shy of giving any fresh credit to the men who, a few years ago, were their best customers, and whose names they were only too glad to have on their books for good round sums.

The result of this long period of unduly low prices is that many farmers have not now the capital to cultivate their land properly, and if they did cultivate the poor "three-horse" clay land thoroughly it would not pay at present prices, so field by field it is sown down, or "tumbles down," to grass, &c., and in most cases, after a few years, there is no difference in the value of the herbage under the two systems.

A large number of farmers are going to let a considerable quantity of their land "go to grass" this year.

One who farms largely informs me he is going to put down 500 acres.

In this one case alone the loss to the country is large—loss of home-grown food, of employment for labourers, blacksmiths, carpenters, harness makers, agricultural implement makers, &c., &c.

On all sides in the agricultural districts distress and loss of capital is increasing.

The landlord each year is getting less out of his property.

The clergyman's income decreases.

The farmers, in numberless cases, get no return from their farms, and are losing capital.

The merchants and tradesmen in the country towns suffer, the mechanics in all trades connected with the manufacture of implements for agriculture must suffer from loss of work, so it is not the landlord and farmer alone who suffer from agricultural depression.

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Appendix C. 4.

This is a point I consider is not brought sufficiently to the front, as a large proportion of the voters in the country believe that agricultural depression hurts no one but the landlord and farmer, and as long as they get the benefit of the low prices for corn they do not think it matters if the landlords and farmers in the country are ruined, and the clay land goes out of cultivation.

I am,
Your obedient Servant,
W. H. HAUGHTON.

Herbert Lyon, Esq.,
Secretary,
The Royal Commission on Agriculture.

LIST of PARISHES in the County of Bedfordshire from which returns under Question I. have been made of land that has gone out of cultivation, and is of little or no value.

With the Parishes I give the names and addresses of the persons who have most kindly supplied the information required.

—	—	Acres.
Barford, Great	B. R. Jefferies, Great Barford	403
Barford, Little	Julius Alington, Little Barford	250
Biddenham	H. J. Peacock, Biddenham	23
Bletsoe	M. G. Townley, Melchbourn	9
Bolnhurst	B. R. Jefferies, Great Barford	720
Cardington	G. Malden, Cardington	20
Clapham	J. Bosworth, Clapham	170
Colmworth	W. Addington, Chawston	790
Cranfield	M. H. Bliss, Cranfield	510
Dean	B. Measures, Tilbrook	150
Eaton Socan	W. Addington, Chawston	275
Everton	J. Brashier, Everton	200
Harrold	J. H. Osborne, Harrold	139
Keysoe	B. Hartop, Keysoe	400
Knotting	J. Wootton, Knotting	80
Lidlington	T. Battams, Lidlington	170
Marston Morteyne	H. Randall, Marston	100
Maulden	S. Street, Maulden	20
Millbrooke	T. Cranfield, Millbrooke	200
Milton Ernest	H. Newbery, Milton Ernest	172
Northill	H. Dullaman, The Hutch Sandy	26
Oakley	R. Horrell, Oakley	80
Odell	J. Rogers, Odell	100
Pertenhall	J. Banks, Pertenhall	200
Potton	W. Smith, Potton	125
Ravensden	J. Westley, Ravensden	20
Renhold	T. Harrison, Wilden	36
Roxton	J. Day, Roxton Park	50
Shelton	B. Measures, Tilbrook	250
Staughton, Little	F. Bates	120
Stevington	R. Horrell, Oakley	400
Studham	G. Barnard, Studham	176
Swineshead	J. Lewin, Swineshead	70
Tempsford	J. Wetherell, Tempsford	126
Tilbrook	B. Measures, Tilbrook	240
Toddington	G. Foxon, Toddington	100
	G. W. Finch, Turvey	150
Warden, Old	E. Fisher, Old Warden	11
Wilden	S. Harrison, Wilden	613
Wootton	L. Whitworth, Kempston	700
Yelden	B. Measures, Kilbrook	400
Bromham	R. Gibbons, Bromham	80
Nuppershall	E. J. Roberts, Nuppershall	30
	Acres	8,904

5.

Report prepared by Mr. Arthur Castle upon the County of Berkshire.

11, King Edward Street, Oxford,
20th June 1895.

DEAR SIR,

IN accordance with your instructions I now forward herewith a statement which gives such information as I have been able to obtain upon the questions in your original communication of December 20, 1894.

I may say at once that I do not myself regard the information supplied as of a very reliable or valuable nature.

Circular letters were sent by me to residents in or near 44 parishes, practically comprising the whole district to which reference was made.

It will be observed from a comparison of this list with that as to which some information is forthcoming that some of the more important parishes do not appear.

I am unable, through the apathy or unwillingness of those to whom application was made, to obtain the data as to these.

Anyone who knows the district will, I think, agree that the figures bear no actual relation to the existing conditions, which, moreover, are much influenced by the fact that a large area is owned by wealthy proprietors, who will, under any circumstances, keep land in cultivation which otherwise would almost certainly go neglected.

A very large area, formerly let at rents which would, perhaps, average 18*s.* to 25*s.* an acre, is now let at amounts which barely do more than pay the outgoings.

The question No. 1 is also to some extent, perhaps, misleading.

It is seldom indeed that under any circumstances land is absolutely left without any kind of seeding at all.

In the worst cases a tenant or landlord will roughly harrow in some grass and clover seeds, and then leave the land to take its chance. Such land would not perhaps by most people be described as being out of cultivation.

It is only a few years since that a large and important farm of nearly 500 acres in the parish of East Garston was absolutely derelict within my own knowledge.

Nothing whatever was done to it for some considerable time, and finally possession was taken by the owners of the tithes, for whom my firm acted, who let the farm as a sheep run for the amount payable as tithe. After some years of this state of things, up to about 1890, the farm was taken for a small advance on this amount, and parts were again cultivated.

Better information than that I have been able to obtain by "circularising" the principal inhabitants could no doubt be obtained by an exhaustive local inquiry, but I am bound to say I have great doubt if, however accurate and however instructive the result, it would justify the expense incurred.

I am, dear Sir,
Yours faithfully,
ARTHUR CASTLE.

The Secretary,
Royal Commission on Agriculture.

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Parish.	Acreage.	Approximate Estimate of the Extent of Land which having been Arable within the last (*a*) 15 Years; (*b*) 5 Years, is no longer cultivated, and has since then been left to the unaided Efforts of Nature, and is of little or no Value.		Any Instances in which all the Land having been Arable on a Farm comes within the above Definition.	As to whether any Farms are entirely derelict in the Sense that they are no longer occupied or cultivated either by a Tenant or by the Owner.
		(*a*.)	(*b*.)		
Uffington	2,871	185	25	No case	None
Compton Beauchamp	1,796	20	25	"	"
Woolstone	1,933	192	—	"	"
Astbury	5,845	Probably 400	—	"	"
Sparsholt					
Kingston Lisle		76	50	"	"
Childrey	2,850	300	—	"	"
Letcombe Regis	2,459	250	—	"	"
Letcombe Basset	1,611				
Blewbury	4,037	500	—	"	"
Streatley	2,000	650	—	"	"
Compton	2,863	60	—	"	"
East Ilsley	2,979	—	300	"	"
West Ilsley	3,670	—	100	"	"
Catmore	710	—	—	"	"
Farnborough	1,844	—	300	"	"
Great and Little Fawley	2,112	—	250	"	"
Lambourn	14,873	160	—	"	"
Ashbury	5,578	—	—	"	"
East Garston	4,409	Perhaps 400	—	"	One case some years since, but land now partly re-occupied
Leckhampstead	1,777	—	50*a*	"	None
Chaddleworth	3,319	60 to 80	12	"	"
Brightwaltham	2,038	—	—	"	"
Peasemore	2,049	—	—	"	"
Beedon	2,012	—	50*a*	"	"
East Stratford	1,053	—	—	"	"
West Stratford	2,248	—	Smallquantity	"	"
Welford	5,199	—	—	"	"
Cherveley	5,328	—	150	"	"
Winterbourne	2,112	—	80	"	"
Boxford	2,807	—	110	"	"

6.

Report prepared by Mr. H. J. Wyley, Land Agent and Surveyor upon the counties of Hereford, Shropshire, and Worcestershire.

Bridgnorth,
July 8th, 1895.

DEAR SIR,

As soon as possible after the receipt of your instructions in March last, I communicated with the principal land agents residing in Shropshire, Worcestershire, and Herefordshire, with a view of obtaining the information you required. The questions put to them were as follows:—

1. An approximate estimate of the extent of land which having been arable within the last five or ten years is no longer cultivated, and has since then been left to the unaided efforts of nature, and is of little or no value.
2. Any instances in which all the land having been arable on a farm comes within the above definition.
3. As to whether any farms are entirely derelict in the sense that they are no longer occupied or cultivated either by a tenant or by the owners.

In answer to question No. 1, after considering the information I have received, I beg to report as follows:—

I find on comparing the returns of 1880 with those of 1894 that in the three counties before referred to there is an increase of pasture amounting to upwards of 115,000 acres, divided as follows:—

	Acres.
Shropshire, increase	44,000
Worcestershire, increase	42,000
Herefordshire ,,	29,000
	115,000

There is no doubt whatever that a very large portion of this area has been properly seeded down and is or will soon become fairly profitable, but a large quantity of the heavy clay loams which formerly paid well to cultivate, when wheat was worth 45*s*. per quarter, has been allowed to go out of cultivation and has been left very much to the unaided efforts of nature, and is now of very little value. I estimate the quantity to be in—

	Acres.
Shropshire	5,000
Worcestershire	4,000
Herefordshire	3,000
Total	12,000

No. 2. There are a few instances in which the whole of the arable has been allowed to go out of cultivation, but the quantity is insignificant, and to a great extent it has been caused by bad management.

No. 3. I am glad to report that I cannot hear of any farms being entirely derelict.

I am of opinion that the greater part of the land comprised in these three counties is at the present time well farmed and fairly well stocked, and that, as a rule, no great difficulty is experienced in finding tenants for farms if the landowners are willing to accept a fair rent. The rental value of farms has decreased about 30 per cent. on the average.

I have the honour to be,
Your obedient Servant,
H. J. WYLEY, F.S.I.

Herbert Lyon, Esq.,
Secretary,
Royal Commission on Agriculture,
23, Great George Street,
Westminster, S.W.

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Appendix C. 7.

7.

Report prepared by Messrs. Alfred Darby, & Co., Land Agents, upon the County of Essex.

Chelmsford,
May 30, 1895.

SIR,

In accordance with the instructions mentioned in your letter of the 14th March and confirmed in your letter of March 21st, we have the honour to submit to you our report upon the questions referred to therein.

To obtain the particulars embodied in this report, we divided the county into the Parliamentary divisions and communicated with the overseers of each parish, and paid personal visits to various districts where necessary, to obtain the information.

The results of our correspondence and inquiries tend to show that, although the state of agriculture in this county is bad, and a very considerable quantity of land is being farmed by landowners; most of the farms are let, although at low rents, and in some cases several fields on the occupations are not cultivated, yet the proportion of land of little or no value, and the number of farms entirely derelict in the sense that they are no longer occupied by either a tenant or by the owners is very small when the area of the county of Essex is taken into consideration, and such fields as are referred to as being uncultivated could be used as rabbit warrens, or poultry runs. if properly wired in, and we have heard of several cases in which a good profit has been made from this source.

In one district (Roxwell), the return states "all the farms in our parish are let; more wanted."

In many others, "no land out of cultivation, although "several farms are let at low rents," and in hundreds of cases the returns have been "no land out of cultivation;" and "no land which has not been cultivated "within the last five or ten years which is of little "or no value."

Personally we have many applications for farms, but we are pleased to state we have none on our list to let, and the applications for holdings of from 50 to 30 acres are very numerous, which tends to show, that if land could be divided into this size occupation, and an eight or ten-roomed house erected thereon, an estate would produce a much higher rent than it does in many instances where let in larger holdings.

A short time since we advertised a farm of about 200 acres, and for this we had no less than 21 applicants, and have re-let it at the same rent as the outgoing tenant is paying, who has been in occupation seven years.

In our immediate neighbourhood we have heard such remarks as these:—"I am perfectly satisfied with my farm, and am saving money."

This from a man who with his son and daughters work hard. Keep a splendid herd of Devonshire cows and find a ready market for their very excellent dairy produce.

Another. "I do not grumble about the times."

Another. "We have to work hard, very hard, but "we are not losing anything, and if one thing does not "pay, we try another."

And in this we think lies a great secret of success or non-success.

Then with small capitals who year after year farm on the same lines when they see no prospect of the present low prices improving, naturally make no headway, but we think the cry of "agricultural depression" has been made too much of, although we must admit in many districts there is good ground for sad complaint, and both landowners and tenants feel the effects of it to a very severe extent.

We cannot but express the hope that we have passed through the worst seasons, and that the future has a brighter prospect for a class of people who have certainly had great cause for complaint.

The following is an épitome of the result of our inquiries—

South-Eastern Division, comprising 69 parishes, viz.:—

South Benfleet. Canvey Island. Hadleigh. Bradwell-near-the-Sea. Burnham. Creeksea. Canewdon. Eastwood. South Fambridge. Paglesham. Great Stambridge. Foulness. Stifford. Grays Thurrock. Little Thurrock. Althorne. North Fambridge. Latchingdon. Snoreham. Mundon. Leigh. North and South Ockendon. Bulpham. Orsett. Cold Norton. Haseleigh. Purleigh. Stow Maries. Rainham. Wennington. Hockley. Rawreth. Rayleigh. Thundersley. Ashingdon. Eastwood. Hawkwell. Rochford. Shopland. Little Stambridge. Sutton. North Shoebury. South Shoebury. Prittlewell. Southchurch. Asheldham. Mayland. Southminster. Steeple. Corringham. Fobbing. Horndon-on-Hill. Laindon Hills. Mucking. Stanford-le-Hope. Aveley. West Thurrock. Chadwell. East Tilbury. West Tilbury. Dengie. St. Lawrence. Tillingham. Barling. Havengore Marsh. Great Wakering. Little Wakering. Woodham Mortimer. Woodham Walter.

In the parishes of South Fambridge, Rawreth, Purleigh, Paglesham, Cold Norton, Corringham, Hockley, and St. Lawrence, there are 2,816a. 1r. 23p. land of little or no value, and in the parishes of Foulness, Eastwood-Steeple, Cold Norton, Corringham, Mucking, and South Benfleet, 951a. 3r. 26p. not cultivated by either landlords or tenants.

In this division great complaint is made that although many of the farms are occupied, yet very much of the land is not cultivated.

The South-Western or Walthamstow division divided into 11 parishes, viz.

Harrow Green (A.), Leyton.
Leyton (B.), Leyton.
Leytonstone (C.), Leyton.
Hoe Street (D.), Walthamstow.
North Walthamstow (E.), Walthamstow.
Saint James (F.), Walthamstow.
Wood Street (G.), Walthamstow.
Woodford Bridge (H.), Woodford.
Woodford Church End (J.), Woodford.
Woodford Wells (K.), Walthamstow, Woodford.

The Returns are nil.

This is accounted for by land being in close proximity to the metropolis.

The North-Eastern or Harwich Division, 65 parishes viz.:—

Abberton. Fingringhoe. Langenhoe. Peldon. Ardleigh. Great Bromley. Little Bromley. Great Bentley. Little Bentley. Frating. Thorington. Bradfield, Wix. Wrabness. Brightlingsea. Great and Little Clacton. Little Holland. Colchester. Berechurch. Greenstead. Lexden. Dedham. Langham. Dovercourt. Ramsey. West Bergholt. Wakes Colne. Fordham, Mount Bures. St. Nicholas Harwich. Boxted. Great Horkesley. Little Horkesley. Wormingford. Great and Little Burch. Layer Briton. Layer-de-la-Haye. Layer Marney. Lawford. Manningtree. Mistley. East and West Mersea. Great and Little Oakley. St. Osyth. Copford. Stanway. Beaumont-cum-Mose. Tendring. Great Holland. Kirby. Thorpe. Weeley. Frinton. Walton. Salcot. Virley. Great and Little Wigborough. Alresford. East Donyland. Elmstead. Wyvenhoe.

In the parishes of Little Clacton, St. Osyth, Weeley, Layer Marney, Great Oakley, Fordham, Kirkby-le-Soken, East and West Mersea, Great Wigborough, Wormingford and Ardleigh, there are 483½ acres of little or no value, and 1,184 acres entirely unoccupied or uncultivated by either landlords or tenants.

In addition to this, in the parish of Langenhoe, there is land, owned by Lord Carlingford, and Mr. T. B. Pertwee, amounting to 1,303 acres, which is for the most part, laying itself down, and going out of cultivation.

The Northern or Saffron Walden Division, 82 parishes viz.:—

Alphamstone. Bures Hamlet. Lamarsh. Ashdon. Bartlow Hamlet. Hadstock. Ballingdon Hamlet. Bulmer. Middleton. Great and Little Henney. Great Bardfield. Little Bardfield. Bardfield Saling. Belchamp Otten, St. Paul, and Walter. North Wood. Little Yeldham. Birdbrook. Helions and Steeple-Bumpstead. Haverhill Hamlet. Kedington Hamlet. Sturmer. Great and Little Chesterfield. Strethall. Great and Little Chrishall. Chrishall. Elmdon. Heydon. Wendon Lofts. Arkesden. Berden. Clavering. Langley. Finchingfield. Little Samford. Birley. Foxearth. Liston. Pentlow. Gestingthorpe. Castle Hedingham. Sible Hedingham. Great and Little Maplestead. Wickham St. Paul. Great Yeldham. Debden. Newport. Quendon. Rickling. Wicken. Bonhunt. Widdington Colne Engaine. White Colne. Pebmarsh. Twinstead. Hempstead. Radwinter. Great

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Sampford. Wimbish. Ashen. Ovington. Ridgewell. Stambourne. Tilbury. Toppersfield. Littlebury. Saffron Walden. Wenden Ambo. Birchanger. Elsenham. Farnham. Henham. Manuden. Ugley. Stanstead, Mountfitchet. Thaxted.

In the parishes of Finchingfield, Thaxted, Twinstead, Little Bardfield, Ashdon and Bishops Stortford, there are 419 acres which come under the heading of little or no value, and in parishes of Stambourne and Wimbish, 149 acres uncultivated by either landlord or tenant.

In this division very much land is cultivated at a loss by the owners.

The Eastern and Maldon Division comprising 53 parishes, viz.:—

Bocking. Braintree. Black Notley. Great and Little Braxted. Marks Hall. Great and Little Coggeshall Chapel. Earls Colne. Bradwell Cressing. White Notley. Felstead. Goldhanger. Tolleshunt Major. Little Totham. Gosfield Halstead Urban and Rural. Hatfield Peverel. Ulting. Heybridge, Langford. Feering. Inworth. Kelvedon. All Saints, St. Mary and St. Peter Maldon. Easthorpe. Messing. Panfield. Rayne. Great Saling. Shalford. Pattiswick. Stisted. Fairsted. Terling. Aldham. Marks-Great-and-Little-Tey. Tollesbury. Tolleshunt d'arcy. Tolleshunt Knights. Wethersfield. Great Totham. Wickham, Bishops Faulkbourne. Rivenhall. Witham.

In the parishes of Wethersfield and Felstead there are 40 acres of little or no value; and

In the Parishes of Gosfield, Tolleshunt Major, Hatfield Peverel Rivenhall, and Great Saling there are 272½ acres totally unoccupied or uncultivated by either landlord or tenant.

In parts of this division a very large extent of land is farmed by the owners. Other land is let at low rents, and in several cases fields belonging to various farms are not cultivated.

The Soutnern or Romford division comprising 23 parishes, viz.:—

Barking. Beckton. East Ham. Wanstead. Dagenham. Chadwell Heath Ilford. Hornchurch. Plashet. Manor Park. Little Ilford. Havering. West Ham. Wanstead

Note.—Barking, East and West Ham, Plashet, Ilford, Wanstead, Romford, and Hornchurch are divided into several parishes.

In this division there are about 40 acres of land in the parish of Hornchurch, which may be considered of little or no value, and 163 acres totally unoccupied or uncultivated by either landlord or tenant.

The Western or Epping division comprising 68 parishes including:—

Blackmore. Norton Mandeville. Stondon Massey. Broxted. Chickney. Great Easton. Tilty. Buckhurst Hill. Chigwell. Chigwell Row. Chingford. Barnston. Great Dunmow. Little Dunmow. Little Easton. High Easter Pleshey. Aythorpe Roothing. High Roothing. Epping. Theydon Bois. Theydon Garnon. Theydon Mount. Harlow. Latton. Matching. Nettleswell. Little Parndon. Sheering. Great Canfield. Great and Little Hallingbury. Hatfield. Broad Oak. Loughton. Bobbingworth. High Laver. Little Laver. Magdalen Laver. Moreton. Shelley. Kelvedon Hatch. Navestock. North Weald Bassett. Greenstead. Chipping Ongar. High Ongar. Stamford Rivers. Abbotts Roothing. Leaden, Margaret and White Roothing. Great Parndon. Roydon. Lambourne. Stapleford Abbott. Stapleford Tawney. Lindsell. Stebbing. Little Canfield. Takeley. Nazing. Waltham Holy Cross. Willingale Doe. Willingale Spain. Fyfield. Beauchamp Roothing. Beaners Roothing. Shellow Bowels.

In the parishes of Aythorpe Rootning, Abbotts Roothing, Chickney, Takeley, and Broxted there are 509⅓ acres of land which come under the term "of little or no value" and in the parishes of White Roothing, High Ongar and Great Easton 180 acres, totally unoccupied or uncultivated by either landlord or tenant. Appendix C. 7.

The Mid or Chelmsford division comprising 57 parishes, viz:—

Billericay. Great Burstead. Little Burstead. Ramsden Bellhouse. Ramsden Crays. Basildon. North Benfleet. Bowers Gifford. Laindon. Lee Chapel. Nevenden. Pitsea. Vange Brentwood. Doddinghurst. Hutton. Shenfield. South Weald. Great Baddow. Boreham. Broomfield. Chelmsford. Springfield Widford. Chignal. Good Easter. Mashbury. Little Baddow. Danbury. Sandon. Childerditch. Dunton. East and West Horndon. Ingrave. Ingatestone. Fryerning. Margaretting Mountnessing. Downham. Rettendon Runwell. Wickford. Buttsbury. South Hanningfield. West Hanningfield. Stock. Cranham. Upminster. Great Leighs. Little Leighs. Great Waltham. Little Waltham. Great Warley. Little Warley. East Hanningfield. Woodham Ferris. Roxwell. Writtle.

In the parishes of Mountnessing, Great Burstead, Upminster, Dunton, Little Warley, Vange, Danbury, Sandon, Basildon, Nevenden and Laindon, there are 1,465 acres of land which may be considerrd of little or no value, and in the parishes of Basildon, Ramsden Crays, Sandon, Pitsea Ingrave, East Horndon, Cranham, Buttsbury, Boreham, Billericay, South Benfleet, Hanningfields and Danbury there are 559½ acres totally unoccupied or uncultivated by either landlord or tenant.

In parts of this division, a very large extent of land is farmed by the landlords; other lands are let at low rents, and in some cases, fields belonging to various farms are not cultivated.

It will be seen by the following summary that very little more than one hundredth part of the land in Essex (consisting of something over 800,000 acres) is entirely unoccupied or uncultivated, or of little or no value, owing to its not having been cultivated within the last 5 or 10 years.

SUMMARY.

Division.	No. of Parishes.	Land which has not been cultivated within the last 5 or 10 years, and since left to the unaided efforts of Nature, and of little or no Value.	Land entirely unoccupied or uncultivated.
		A. R. P.	A. R. P.
South-eastern -	69	2,886 1 23	951 3 26
South-western -	11	—	—
North-eastern -	65	483 2 0	1,184 0 0
Northern - -	82	419 0 0	149 0 0
Eastern - -	53	40 0 0	272 0
Scuthern - -	23	40 0 0	163 0 0
Western - -	68	309 2 0	180 0 0
Midland - -	57	1,465 0 0	559 2 0
	428	5,843 1 23	3,459 3 26

We have the honour to remain
Your obedient Servants,
ALFRED DARBY & Co.

Herbert Lyon, Esq.,
Royal Commission on Agriculture,
23, Great George Street,
Westminster, S.W.

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Appendix D.

APPENDIX D.

CORRESPONDENCE between MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE and LORD LEICESTER.

Oldbury Place,

DEAR LORD LEICESTER, September 16, 1895.

I OBSERVE that Mr. Rew, in his report to the Royal Commission on Agricultural Depression in the County of Norfolk, states that on his visit to your estate at Holkham you personally explained to him the system which you have adopted on your home farm, in subversion of the old four-course system, the adherence to which on the light lands of Norfolk you emphatically said "would ruin anybody."

He states that you have adopted the system of laying down the land in grass for 6 or 8 years, mowing it the first year and then feeding it continuously by sheep.

Mr. Rew adds that a remarkable feature of this system is that no manure whatever is applied. He says that you have adopted this method over 524 acres at a cost of 12*s.* to 15*s.* per acre, thus throwing about half of your arable land in hand out of the Norfolk system and resting it temporarily in grass.

As Mr. Rew has not stated what economy has been effected in labour and horse-power by this change of system, I shall be much obliged if you will inform me, for the benefit of the Commission, what reduction you have made in the number of labourers and horses employed on your farm, and whether the financial result has been satisfactory.

I observe from the census returns that there has been a smaller reduction of late years in the number of labourers in the county of Norfolk than in any other county in England. This would tend to show that the four-course system has been generally adhered to and that little change has been effected in the direction you have yourself adopted.

Believe me,
Yours faithfully,
G. SHAW-LEFEVRE.

The Earl of Leicester, K.G.

Holkham, September 20, 1895.

DEAR MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE,

MY farm consists of 879 acres of arable land beside permanent pasture, formerly farmed under the four-course system.

At the present time 524 acres are laid down to temporary pasture, the date of their being laid down varying from 1 to 16 years. By this system I have been able to reduce my horses from 34 to 18, and the labourers employed upon the farm from 22 to 12. I employ the same number of labourers as I used to do, but not on unprofitable farming.

The financial result has been very satisfactory. The reason why this system has not been adopted by Norfolk farmers is owing to their failure to obtain a pasture. They hoped to succeed by leaving down the annual and biennial grasses and clovers; the result has of course been utter failure. I select those grasses that are adapted to establish themselves on light soils, the cost of seed not exceeding 15*s.* per acre. I do not find that the pastures deteriorate much by constant sheep feeding even to the length of 16 years, but as sheep do not do as well as on land more newly laid down, I break up from 40 to 50 acres annually, and obtain by the aid of the nitrogen that has accumulated in the soil four productive crops—two of corn, two of roots—without the application of any manure. I then put the land down again to grass, in a corn crop. An objection has been made that the expense of cleaning land that has been laid down to grass for so many years would on breaking it up be very great. I do not find it so. The pasture should be ploughed in the winter, cross ploughed after a few weeks, and pulled about in the early summer; the turf, with the couch grass that would be in it, would be killed by the aid of the sun. This is then turned in by the plough early in July, pressed by a drill roll, and a crop of turnips or rape sown, which effectively kills all weeds by its luxuriance, and during the four years following under cultivation the land is thoroughly clean and free from couch grass, which would not be the case if a corn crop directly followed the pasture. You state in your letter that by the census returns there has been a less reduction in the number of labourers in Norfolk than in other counties. I think this is partly owing to Norfolk labourers being less induced to seek work elsewhere than those who are more connected with the great centres of industry, and partly owing to the unwillingness of the Norfolk farmer to depart from the existing system of farming. The slight reduction in the numbers of horses is probably due to the latter cause. Ruin has overtaken many of the light land farmers, and not nearly the labour is employed that should be upon the land under cultivation.

To the present system of farming every description of land under the four-course system I attribute much of the ruin that has fallen upon landlord, tenant, and labourer. The latter will be the last to suffer, but suffer he must. Mr. Walter Forbes, agent to the Duke of Richmond, was my agent from 1885 to 1887, and was thoroughly acquainted with my estate, and will, I believe, corroborate my views. He predicted ruin to many of my light land tenants if they persisted in farming their poor lands under the four-course system. His prediction has, unfortunately, come too true, though when he gave that warning corn was of considerably more value than it is at present. These remarks apply solely to poor lands, lands subject to drought, lands that, in my opinion, cannot be kept in constant cultivation at the present price of corn without entailing serious loss. Unfortunately, there are some thousands of acres on my estate of this description. I would also remark that by the system I adopt there is a great saving in the purchase of artificial manure, the application of which in many seasons gives but little return for the outlay.

Since Mr. Rew's visit to Norfolk the agricultural depression is greatly intensified.

Yours very truly,
LEICESTER.

Holkham, September 23, 1895.

DEAR MR. SHAW-LEFEVRE,

I HAVE no objection to your publishing the correspondence in connexion with Mr. Rew's report; in fact I should be glad if it would induce farmers of light lands to inspect my farm and judge for themselves. As long as the price of corn remains as low as it has done the last few years, the system I adopt is the only way to prevent light land farms with their occupiers going to ruin. Tenants on my estate have generally been very slow to alter their system to meet the great change that has latterly taken place in the value of corn; but I find that several have been making application for a list of the seeds I use for temporary pastures.

Yours very truly,
LEICESTER.

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APPENDIX E.

COPY of LETTER from LORD WANTAGE to MR. SHAW LEFEVRE.

Lockinge House, Wantage,
DEAR MR. SHAW LEFEVRE, November 25th, 1895.

SINCE I had the honour of giving evidence in 1893 there has been a considerable increase in the amount of land thrown upon my hands. I have now 10,676 acres in hand; 5,997 lie on the elevated down land of the parishes of Ilsley, Compton, Beedon, and Blewbury. There are no special observations to be made with regard to these hill farms beyond what I have already stated in my evidence. Their condition is slightly better than it was in 1892. The price of sheep has risen about 10*s.* a head on an average, and wheat fetches 5*s.* more per quarter. But the failure of crops, resulting from exceptionally bad seasons of the last two years, has prevented farmers from deriving the benefit which ought to have accrued from this amelioration in prices. There is a continued exodus of tenant farmers from the district. And almost the only tenants that can be found to take the land are those that use it for the purpose of training race horses.

Owing to the diminished amount of land under cultivation, a heavy charge falls upon those who continue to farm, owing to the increased number of labourers who are thrown out of work during the winter months.

The landowner, or (where he still remains) the tenant farmer, has to elect between employing more men than he actually requires, or letting them seek parish relief. In the event of his employing the men, labour will become disproportionally heavy, though to each individual labourer the weekly wage may remain low.

The villages which are scattered over this Down country are occupied by families who have been settled on the land for generations, and who in more prosperous times were, in point of numbers, not too numerous for the due cultivation of the land.

The changes which are now in process of being carried out, both as regards the use of labour-saving machines and alterations in the nature of crops grown, do, at the present time, and must for a long period, continue to bear very hardly upon the people in the districts in question. Social reasons and moral obligations prevent the agriculturist from farming his land to the best advantage, and precludes him from freely using the labour-saving machinery. The apprehension also of adding to the rates doubtless influences his conduct.

Young unmarried men can and do emigrate, but the married men are practically anchored to the soil, and wisely, no doubt, decline to leave home with their wives and families in a hopeless search for other employment.

Lord Leicester, in a letter of September 20th, 1895, addressed to you, states that by means of alterations in the system of farming his land, he has been able to reduce his horses from 34 to 18, and the labourers employed on his farm from 22 to 12. He adds that he still employs the same number of labourers as formerly, but not on the unprofitable business of farming. It is therefore to be presumed that he finds employment for the remaining ten men on estate work other than actual farming, such as road making, planting, &c.

My own position is precisely similar to his. I am employing the men not needed for farm work, in planting, road-making, and other works.

But in this I cannot hold myself up as an example to tenant farmers, and even in any case there must in time come a natural end to such like works.

The depressed condition which I have described as existing in the Down land districts of Berkshire, is not, however, to be found to the same degree in other districts where I possess property. In the vale district of Berkshire, in Buckinghamshire, and in Northamptonshire, there is a fairly active demand for farms, though at largely reduced rentals. And small farms, from one to two hundred acres, are being competed for.

In these districts the labourers are decidedly better off than they have ever been; and were they more capable of taking advantage of the very low price of food, by becoming better skilled in marketing, their position would be capable of still further improvement.

The singular apathy of both men and women in the labouring classes as to the quality and the cheapness of the articles they consume is truly remarkable. There is scarcely an article which the poor man buys from the ordinary village shop which is not both stale, dear, and inferior, but which might, under a better organized system, be reduced in price and improved in quality.

A large portion of the advantages of free trade are lost to the country by the indifference and ignorance of the labouring population in these matters. This seems to me to be one explanation of the fact that vast quantities of inferior food coming from abroad, such as foreign bacon, butter, tinned meats, cheese, &c., are marketed in our village shops, to the exclusion of similar articles made at home.

In the stores that have been established in the village of Ardington, Italian butter still holds the market, and no less than 15*l.* is spent on it every week, although excellent butter is made in the surrounding parishes, the price of which, however is decidedly higher. The prices are as follows:—Italian, 1*s.* 0½*d.* per pound; English, 1*s.* 2½*d.*

As a general rule the milk from these parishes—namely, the district between Swindon and Didcot—all goes to London, and, roughly speaking, the price obtained for it by the farmer is a penny a pint. The retail price of milk to the consumer being never less than 2*d.*, and often 3*d.* a pint.

By this it will be seen that the farmer, on whom falls the whole cost of rearing and feeding the cows, with all the attendant expenses, such as conveying the milk to the station, &c., obtains as his remuneration the same amount as the middleman obtains from retailing the article. Fifty per cent. of the profits goes to the middleman, and this is in a great measure due to the want of market facilities. The difficulty of supplying milk to the agricultural labourer arises in great measure from the uncertainty of the demand and the capriciousness with which it is taken, rendering it impossible to calculate upon anything like a regular demand for a given quantity.

In my evidence before the Small Holdings Committee I have laid stress upon the importance of a wider diffusion of ownership of land and I still hold that among the foremost of our present needs is a more easy and simple system of conveyance. In the case of large estates, when the title has been once for all verified, there could surely be little difficulty in letting that title hold good for the sale of separate portions, without further expense being incurred. I am now alluding to the desirability of facilitating the increase of small holdings, but the same principle applies to persons who desire to purchase land for the sake of the amenities that attach to it.

As a general rule the combination of ownership and occupation whether on a large or a small scale of land, tends to promote the interests of agriculture and the general welfare of the community. There never was a time when the acquisition of land has been brought by circumstances more within the reach of the community than is the case now. The taste for rural life which prevails in all classes of society has never at any previous period been capable of being so easily gratified.

There are no doubt reasons which deter people from investing in land. But it is my conviction that those deterrent causes are unduly magnified. And that land, at the present low prices, can be invested in on terms as favourable as what are called first-class securities.

My own experience in cultivating the large tract of down land to which I have already alluded, is that the singularly adverse seasons of 1894–5, have unduly depreciated the value of land. The unprecedently severe and long frost of last winter, followed by the long period of drought in the summer, destroyed the vegetation of thousands of acres. And the complaints of the parishes to which I am especially alluding is not so much owing to the low prices of grain crops as to the fact that there were no grain crops to sell. On the other hand, the price of sheep has been steadily rising.

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Appendix E.

and the average price may be said to be 10*s.* a head higher than during the low prices of 1894. The depressed state of agriculture at the present moment and the bad seasons are causes which I hope will not prove permanent; and that with the return of better seasons, and the influx of some extraneous capital, which may, as I have said, be invested in land with a fair amount of security, a more hopeful state may arise in the near future.

Nevertheless the prosperous days of agriculture, such as were known five-and-twenty years ago, are departed. The diffusion of English capital all over the world has cheapened the transit of food, and thereby helped to lessen its price in the market. By the aid of English capital spent on railways, steam ships, and water ways abroad, especially on the other side of the Atlantic, and in India, the produce of the fertile lands of the world are brought to our ports. To crowd into the English market is the ambition of cultivators of every country in the world. Their own energies are directed to this end, as are also those of the legislators who direct their policy.

The community in England benefits enormously by this unrestricted competition. But the industry with which I am now dealing, especially under influences I am about to describe, suffers to an extent which has now raised the sympathy of the country at large. There is scarcely a home industry which is not now rendered more costly by the effects of legislative interference. The business of agriculture, to which I am specially referring, cannot be carried on except under regulations which however beneficial in themselves, are both costly and expensive to those who are compelled to adopt them. The restrictions and regulations which concern sanitary matters, education, labour, in short all the legislation that appertains to a high state of civilization, adds to the cost of produce, and has to be paid for out of the narrow profits obtained from the cultivation of land. There is not an animal in our land which does not cost more tokeep in this country than it would abroad. Such are the penalties we have to pay for the high state of civilisation to which Great Britain has attained. Stringent laws are enforced by highly paid inspectors. In the pursuit of this legislation we have handicapped the trade of agriculture to such an extent as to result in our being individually beaten in competition by the foreigner whose hands are less tied.

A recent instance of the extravagant demands of Parliament in their desire to attain an ideal condition of purity of the River Thames is now before us. The result is the imposition of a rate, under the Thames Conservancy Act, upon all the parishes in the counties through which the Thames flows, within a distance of 10 miles from it. In the case of the two parishes in which I am the chief ratepayer, and which are eight miles distant from the river, the rate imposed will be 2*d.* in the £ for 25 years.

The tendency of these public burdens is to increase in amount, and the results upon agriculture are easy to perceive.

If I am right in the view I have expressed, namely, that nations untrammelled by regulations, which belong to a highly civilised community such as ours, can undersell us in our own markets, there seems to me only one course open to us in order to ensure our self-preservation: it is to lighten the burdens which, by the will of the community, have been imposed on our home industries.

It is generally expected that some reduction of the rates and taxes which press unduly upon land, will be among the measures introduced in the coming session.

Whether this proposed legislation will be accepted as a remedy depends on the extent to which the relief is carried, and on the sources from which the necessary funds are derived.

Putting aside prejudice, and the party feeling which surrounds and obscures questions connected with import dues, there is no doubt in my mind that the community, if unbiassed by such considerations, would decide in favour of raising a revenue, by means of a fee imposed on all articles of agricultural produce imported into this country.

This fee should be fixed at such an amount as would preclude any idea of its being used for "protective" purposes. It should be fixed, and it should not vary, in order that the foreign producer may calculate upon the charge which he will have to pay for the privilege of selling his goods in the English market. As an illustration of my meaning I would point to the dues which are imposed by corporations and individuals who own markets. England is the best market in the world, and the foreigners who use it should pay for the privilege.

This proposal will not in itself have the effect of raising the price of the articles which the farmer sells, and will therefore be of no direct advantage to him.

The revenue thus raised should therefore be devoted to the relief of the burdens which now press so heavily on land.

As I am now, and have been for some years, the largest farmer probably in England, and consequently the largest ratepayer, I have thought it permissible to express my views upon the questions which are now occupying the Royal Commission of which you are President. You were good enough to express a wish that I should supplement the evidence which I gave in 1893 by ome further remarks derived from subsequent experience. My views with regard to fees for agricultural produce were not known to you when you made the request. But I nevertheless beg that you will be good enough to lay them before the Commission over which yo preside.

I remain,

Yours very faithfully,

WANTAGE.

The Rt. Hon. George Shaw Lefevre.

Appendix F.

APPENDIX F.

LETTER addressed by Lord Vernon to Mr. Shaw Lefevre with reference to the Evidence given by Mr. R. Finney and Mr. S. Osborne, published in Vol. III. of the Evidence, page 59.

Villa Edelweiss, Cannes.
Alpes Maritimes,
November 26th, 1895.

DEAR MR. SHAW LEFEVRE,

HAVING been far from well, I have not been able till quite lately to study the reports of the Royal Commission on Agriculture.

I hope you will allow me, although rather late in the day, to rectify statements made by Mr. Osborne in Vol. III., page 61, which are slightly misleading.

In answer to Questions 35,341–42, 45–46, he says that the factory at Sudbury is a company; that it has not been a benefit to the farmers on the estate for a long time; that a good many of the farmers have sold their milk away, and have not sent it to the factory; that they have sent it to London or elsewhere as they found they could get a better price.

The factory was nominally formed into a company to release it from an entailed estate.

5,000*l.* at 5 per cent. was raised on the land and buildings, which is mostly held by the local lodge of Oddfellows, a branch of the Manchester Unity of Oddfellows; this benefits the inhabitants of the village.

Although a company, it is essentially co-operative in practice; for, with the exception of the 5 per cent. mentioned above, no one has received any interest.

I am sending you a statement (*see below*) showing the annual quantity of milk purchased, and the prices paid since first the factory was started.

I think it compares very favourably with the price mentioned by Mr. Osborne in answer to Question 35,349.

He said he was receiving 6½*d.* per gallon, sending milk to London.

I am sorry no one asked him under what restrictions his contract placed him as to *quantity*.

The London dealers force farmers selling milk to supply in winter two-thirds of what they send in summer. This is extremely expensive to the producer.

We, at Sudbury, allow the farmers to send exactly what quantity they please, the result being that by

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April they send twice, and by the end of June three times, as much as they do in January.

This prevents us paying a higher price.

More than half my tenants have never ceased sending their milk to the factory; those who have tried selling their milk elsewhere have almost invariably returned.

Only the other day I received a letter from one of them, saying that he should never be grateful enough for the benefits that the factory had conferred upon him; and that even now it was returning a much better price than could be obtained from similar institutions elsewhere.

Having devoted a considerable amount of my money, time, and energy during the last 10 years to the development of this industry, it would, I think, only be fair that some notice should be taken of the misstatements made by Mr. Osborne before such an important Commission as that over which you have the honour to preside.

The figures I send would, I should think, be a sufficient contradiction to Mr. Osborne's statements; but I shall be quite willing for my land agent, the manager of the butter factory, or any of my tenants to appear and give evidence before the Commission.

Yours truly,
VERNON.

Appendix F.

STATEMENT ABOVE REFERRED TO.

Date.	Gallons purchased.	Price paid.	Average.
		£ s. d.	d.
1882 - - -	221,202	6,714 3 8	7·28
1883 - - -	447,867	13,636 6 3	7·41
1884 - - -	662,987	20,056 10 3	7·26
1885 - - -	777,961	21,891 2 2	6·59
1886 - - -	804,962	21,307 19 2	6·35
1887 - - -	815,723	22,404 6 2	6·59
1888 - - -	1,021,315	26,371 1 2	6·19
1889 - - -	1,294,972	32,205 3 0	5·96
1890 - - -	1,397,197	34,485 19 1	5·92
1891 - - -	1,360,538	33,376 5 2	5·88
1892 - - -	1,195,473	29,191 9 3	5·86
1893 - - -	898,715	22,432 3 7	5·99
1894 - - -	1,140,314	28,730 5 11	5·99

APPENDIX G.

Appendix G.

REPORT upon DAIRYING in DERBYSHIRE by MR. GILBERT MURRAY, ESTATE OFFICE, ELVASTON CASTLE.

During the latter part of the Sixties cheese-making in Derbyshire had reached a very low point as regards quality, prices had correspondingly receded, owing chiefly to American competition, both landlords and tenants were suffering. Cheese and butter were the only dairy industries; cheese was made for six or seven months of the year, the cows were dried off and remained so for a period of three or four months; no artificial food was used, the average value of the produce of a dairy cow varied between 12*l*. on the best lands to 8*l*. on the inferior and high-lying soils.

In order to discuss and devise some practical method of improvement the Agricultural Society of the county, as being in touch with the landlords and tenants, was urged to call a meeting of its members and others interested in the cheese-making industry. The meeting was representative, being largely attended; cheese-making was fully discussed, and a resolution passed to give the American system of factory cheese-making a trial; this necessitated the importation of an American expert; a committee was appointed to discuss and draw up a report to present at a future meeting. The late Lord Vernon, the Hon. E. K. W. Coke, and Mr. J. G. Crompton were the leading spirits; this was in 1869. In order to cover the preliminary expenses a guarantee fund was originated and liberally supported by the landlords and others, this liberal support induced the committee to start a factory both in an urban and a rural district; no time was lost in securing the services of skilled experts from America, who brought over plans of the necessary buildings and plant; these were constructed here under the direct supervision of the American experts. Two factories were started, one on the estate of the Hon. E. K. W. Coke at Longford, and the other in the town of Derby; these have worked continuously up to the present date. To Derbyshire is due much credit for the practical action taken at this time in inaugurating a new departure in dairying which has now attained enormous magnitude. Previous to the Derby movement there was no railway milk trade to the large towns. The committee of management, who were personally known to the railway authorities, asked them as a favour to carry a few churns of milk in the guard's van, a distance of four miles, in order to supply the Derby factory. Some idea may be gathered of the expansion from the fact that the Midland Railway run special milk trains morning and evening to London. During the first two years of the experiment the committee guaranteed the suppliers a fixed price for their milk; at the end of the second year the farmers were so far satisfied as to release the guarantors from any further responsibility as to price.

No. 1 is a correct copy of the balance-sheet of a small factory in the valley of the Derwent, four miles north of Derby; this shows the cost of making, including all incidental expenses, is practically the same; the management is almost invariably done by contract. In addition to a fixed price on the cheese when sold, the manager usually has a small bonus on all cheese which exceeds a fixed price.

No. 1.
WINDLEY DAIRY, 1875.
April to October.

	April.	May.	June.	July.	August.	September.	October.
Lbs. of milk supplied - - -	128,340	219,302	239,901	220,011	192,222	150,096	54,368
Lbs. of cheese produced - - -	12,080	20,834	22,678	21,326	19,195	16,011	5,954
Average No. of lbs. of milk to lbs. of cheese	Lbs. oz. 10 10	Lbs. oz. 10 8½	Lbs. oz. 10 9	Lbs. oz. 10 5	Lbs. oz. 10 0	Lbs. oz. 9 6	Lbs. oz. 9 2

Total lbs. of milk, 1,204,240. Total lbs. of cheese made, 118,078.

	Lbs. oz.
Average lbs. of milk to 1 lb. of green cheese through the season - - - -	10 3
Average lbs. of milk to 1 lb. of matured cheese - - - - - -	11 3

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Appendix G.

	Tons.	cwt.	qrs.	lbs.
Weight of cheese when made	49	3	3	28
Weight of cheese when sold	44	18	2	27
Shrinkage (9 per cent.)	4	5	1	1

Value of cheese, 3,381*l.* 10*s.* 7*d.*, averaging 3*l.* 15*s.* 2*d.* per cwt. of 120 lbs.

Cost of making, 5*s.* 2¼*d.* per cwt.

Cost per cwt.	Payments.	£ s. d.	£ s. d.	Receipts.	£ s. d.
s. d.	Dividend at 6¼*d.* and a fraction, or nearly 7*d.* per gallon (10 lbs. 4 ozs. to the gallon) on 118,393 gallons milk		3,379 5 4	Cheese = 44 tons 18 cwts. 2 qrs. 27 lbs. sold at 75*s.* 2*d.* per cwt.	3,381 10 7
	Labour:—			Whey, butter = 1,170 lbs. at 11¼*d.* per lb.	57 18 0
	Makers' wages	75 0 0		Milk = 906 gallons	33 18 7
	Assistant makers' wages	34 4 0		Whey = 88,045 gallons at ¼*d.* per gallon	183 8 6
	Making and washing cheese bandages	2 9 9		Banker's interest	2 19 11
1 2			111 13 9		
	Material:—				
	Rennet	38 9 6			
	Annatto	1 16 0			
	Salt	3 14 3			
	Cheese cloths	7 5 6			
	„ paper	1 4 6			
0 4			52 9 9		
	Fuel:—				
	Coal	13 16 5			
	Coke	1 3 3			
0 3¾			14 19 8		
	Sundries:—				
	Brushes, soap, &c.	0 13 6			
	Stationery, stamps, &c.	3 9 0			
	Carriage and weighing cheese	4. 5 6			
	Haulage of fuel and salt	1 19 5			
	Insurance	1 11 9			
	Sundries	2 7 0			
0 10½			14 6 2		
	Rent:—				
5 2¾	One year's rent of buildings and plant	40 0 0	40 0 0		
	Dray and dray cover		20 18 0		
	Bank charges		6 2 11		
	Secretary and accountant		20 0 0		
			3,659 15 7		3,659 15 7

No. 2 is the actual prices realised by a purely co-operative factory in the peak district of Derbyshire. In the farmhouse dairies, where the cheese is kept three or four months, there is frequently as much as 10 per cent. of the whole cracked or otherwise depreciated 50 per cent. in value, and the price of this is consequently not included in the factory price.

No. 2.

	s.	d.	
1874	80	10	per cwt.
1875	75	0	,,
1876	65	6	,,
1877	71	0	,,
1878	53	6	,,
1879	60	0	,,
1880	68	0	,,
1881	58	0	,,
1882	60	0	,,
1883	60	0	,,
1884	*50	0	,,
1885	*41	0	,,
1886	*43	0	,,
1887	62	0	,,
1888	51	0	,,
1889	54	0	,,
1890	54	0	,,
1891	55	0	,,
1892	57	0	,,
1893	57	0	,,
1894	49	0	,,

* Sold on commission by a Derby firm.

No. 3 is a factory on a nobleman's estate erected solely for the use of his tenantry, who manage and work it on co-operative principles. The building was erected at the cost of the landlord, who charges a moderate per-centage on the cost. Again, the appended figures show the actual prices. Owing to circumstances over which the tenants had no control, the first two years' working were unsatisfactory, and hence are not included in this statement.

No. 3.

	s.	d.	
1887	63	4	per cwt.
1888	52	2	,,
1889	53	3	,,
1890	55	8	,,
1891	56	2	,,
1892	60	11	,,
1893	57	2	,,
1894	50	6	,,

No. 4 is a list of prices obtained from one of the largest wholesale cheese factors in the Midlands. They extend over a period of 23 years, and I have no doubt, so far as they go, are practically correct, but do not serve as fair comparison. These are the prices of fine cheese, and therefore must be considered over the average of the different years. Nevertheless they are valuable, as showing the value of fine Derbyshire cheese for a lengthened period.

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No. 4.

	s.	d.	
1872	60	0	per cwt.
1873	75	0	„
1874	75	0	„
1875	75	0	„
1876	60	0	„
1877	72	0	„
1878	60	0	„
1879	65	0	„
1880	75	0	„
1881	67	0	„
1882	68	0	„
1883	70	0	„
1884	64	0	„
1885	51	0	„
1886	58	0	„
1887	63	0	„
1888	55	0	„
1889	59	0	„
1890	60	0	„
1891	60	0	„
1892	63	0	„
1893	63	0	„
1894	60	0	„

The keenest advocates of the factory system admit that under peculiarly favourable circumstances, in isolated cases, better cheese may be made in the farm-house than is possible in a factory. The factory pulls up the average of a district. The farmer who can make a really fine cheese will, no doubt, realise more money by making his cheese at home. The difficulties which beset this course are numerous, there is no certainty of uniformity from year to year. The wheel of progress jibes the farmer's heel at every turn; the distaff and spindle, the flail and the reaping hook, are relics of ancient history, to which, I fear, farmhouse cheese-making will shortly be relegated. Like every innovation on established custom, the factory system of cheese-making has had from the first to contend with much opposition, nevertheless it has survived, and is likely to become more general. Amongst the working classes the consumption of cheese has greatly fallen off. Public taste has likewise considerably changed. A rich mild clean-flavoured cheese is now most readily sold, and commands the best prices. Speaking generally, the Cheddar system is the best, these find a ready market at a fortnight to three weeks from the press. This is a considerable advantage to the farmer, as the loss by shrinkage is small compared with cheese kept three or four months; in this case the loss of weight is from 8 to 10 per cent. The rich mild English factory cheese made on the Cheddar system are generally preferred, and realise better prices either than the American or Australian makes. Cheese of this class made 50*s.* per 112 lbs. at the Derbyshire Agricultural Show this week. The output of Scotch Cheddars, the make of 1894, made a higher average than the ordinary English makes Owing to various causes the dairy interests are in a depressed state—foreign competition, an inferior quality of cheese, and over-production are the principal. Both Canadian and Australian cheese are delivered here in prime condition and of such quality as suits the tastes of the masses. Delivered in Derby the prices range between 38*s.* and 42*s.* per cwt. of 112 lbs. Cheese at 40*s.* per cwt. of 120 lbs., local weight, means 4*d.* per imperial gallon for the milk with the labour of making added. Even at the present low rates the output of milk is likely still further to increase; with a rapidly increasing population prices are not likely to recede to any extent. The farmer has little to fear from the importation of raw milk, whether in a liquid or in a frozen state. A single outbreak of disease of a contagious character traceable to imported milk would immediately put a stop to the trade. The boom of technical education has not greatly benefited the dairy interests from a commercial standpoint. I despair of home dairying ever being able to successfully compete with butter factories or creameries. Farmers are conservative in their ideas and slow to change their stereotyped systems. If the English farmer would adopt the system of manufacturing his butter in bulk he would have no difficulty in successfully competing with the finest produce of other countries. The demand for butter entirely free from salt is steadily increasing. This department of production is likely to remain with the English creameries. The cream trade is likewise rapidly developing. It is to the cured butter trade that we look with hopeful anticipation to benefit the struggling farmer. A creamery on a large scale can be started and run with a small capital, providing the tenants will take an active interest in the venture. We cannot disguise the fact that no creamery, whether worked on co-operative or on proprietory lines, will succeed, unless the bye products, the separated milk and the butter-milk, can be utilised to the best advantage. No one can do this more profitably than the farmers themselves. The stock of the country is, so to speak, under the normal standard of population, and considering the earlier age at which they are now made fit for the butcher the number cannot rapidly increase.

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What we strongly advocate is the establishment of creameries in different stations close to a railway station, where the farmer can either deliver his new milk twice a day, at the same time taking back his proportion of the separated milk and buttermilk, or, what is better still, set up a separator on the farm: on occupations under 25 cows a hand separator would suffice, whilst on larger occupations a small oil engine would do the work expeditiously and cheaply. Here the farmer has the best of all foods, fresh separated milk, on the spot either for the use of his family and servants and the rearing of young stock or the production of pork, in this case the expenses would be still further reduced as the cream need only be sent once a day. The cream when it arrives at the factory is ripened and churning goes on every day; the butter is more or less salted in accordance with the tastes of the different markets. Each day's make is made up separately, packed in nice clean casks or cools, and despatched to the wholesale or retail dealers daily. English butter made in this way would be superior to that of any other country and would readily find a market at the top prices of the day. The competition of other countries will undoubtedly have a tendency to reduced prices. Nevertheless the best English butter put on the market in this way will invariably command the highest price of the day. There is another important point in this connexion, that is, the quality of the milk, the present Somerset House standard is very low, 2·75 butter fat. The farmers are clamorous as to adulteration. This low standard appears to me to place a premium on adulteration than otherwise. They are not willing that the standard should be raised, on the plea that the poor keeper may occasionally be pulled up on account of his milk not coming up to the standard. As matters now stand it is unfair to the liberal feeder whose milk shows 4 per cent. of butter fat if he receives no more than the man whose milk only contains 2·75 of butter. I am interested in the working of a creamery in Cheshire where the milk is paid for according to quality, the normal standard is 3 per cent. butter fat, the milk is tested periodically, the producer whose milk contains 4 per cent. of fat enhances the price one penny per gallon, if less than 3 per cent. he is depreciated in equal corresponding ratio.

I am unable to give you any reliable statistics as to the price of Derbyshire cheese prior to 1868 or 1870, the information can only be obtained through the large cheese factors, who cannot state the average price owing to a large quantity of the secondary and lower qualities not having passed through their hands: prices would probably range for many years between 35*s.* and 75*s.* per 120 lbs. When I came into the county in 1865 the system adopted by the native valuers in fixing the rent of the best dairy land in Derbyshire was based on cheese at 60*s.* per cwt. of 120 lbs., cheese being then the chief saleable product. The flourishing state of trade in the mining and manufacturing industries throughout the greater part of the seventies materially increased the value of all food products. Nevertheless the prices realised by the factory cheese give the average value of the whole of the output at each separate centre whilst the prices obtained from the cheese factor was representative of the best makes, and many shillings per cwt. in excess of those made in the farmhouses. The town milk trade is to a large extent due to the factory movement in Derbyshire and although prices have fluctuated considerably, the farmer who can now net 6½*d.* per imperial gallon with prompt payments, is in a better position than either the cheese or butter maker. Admitting that Jesse Williams was the father of co-operative cheesemaking in America, yet the Americans were indebted to McAdam and other skilled makers who emigrated from the south-west of Scotland for perfecting their system, and so it occurred in the case of Derbyshire, though the county gets little credit from the doctrinaris who are never tired of extolling the skill and knowledge of other countries, and yet during the early seventies, Russia, Switzerland, Denmark and Holland

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Appendix G.

sent experienced scientists to study and investigate the system of co-operative cheesemaking here. Each of these representatives returned to their native land; many of them carried with them manufactured plant, and all had scale drawings. One of our experts spent several seasons in Russia in organising and furnishing factories with plant made in Derby; several trained men were engaged for Australia carrying with them the necessary plant. Harding, a name well known amongst cheddar makers in the south-west, managed a factory for some time in Derbyshire; tempted by a high salary he emigrated to South Australia, where he introduced the system. These countries can now produce cheese equal, and in many cases superior, to our own at a less price than the British farmer, hence the decay of the industry.

The great depreciation in the value of cheese is due to various causes. Technical education has not improved the quality, the system of quicker ripening is a benefit to the farmer provided they can be put into consumption at once, if not they entail a heavy loss either on the farmer or the factor, the latter has been hard hit and is now shy of purchasing only sufficient to meet his immediate wants. Owing to various causes the consumption of cheese by the working classes has greatly fallen off, foreign mutton is largely taking the place of cheese. The young female operative prefers a lighter food, principally fruit tarts, and preserved meats. The Canadian and Australian cheese at 38*s*. to 40*s*. per 112 lbs. in Liverpool is preferred to ordinary Cheshire at a similar price, but only in small quantities, owing to the great improvements of the dairy pastures by draining and artificial manures and the use of supplemental foods has with our chemical knowledge rendered the making of really fine cheese difficult and uncertain of accomplishment.

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ABSTRACT OF ACCOUNTS OF AGGREGATE OF LOCAL RATES SUPPLIED TO THE COMMISSION BY WITNESSES.

Name.	Union.	County.	Acreage.	Rent.	Assessment.		Rates in £. 1894.					Total Rates.	
				1894.	1894.	1878.	Poor Rate.	County Rate.	Highway.	Sanitary.	School Board.	1894.	1878.
				£	£	£	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Adams, George	Faringdon	Berks	2,527 (9 farms)	2,452	1,970	—	--	—	—	—	—	1 8	—
Baker, G. F.	Oundle, Barnwell St. Andrew parish.	Northampton	327	440	365	—	0 6¼	0 4¾	0 10½	1 2	—	2 11	—
„	Oundle, Oundle parish	„	230	212	188	340	0 6¼	0 4¾	—	1 10	0 5 miscellaneous	3 2	3 4
Bomford, H. B.	Alcester	Warwick	375	458	458	—	2 1	—	0 6	—	—	2 7	—
Britten, Richard	Northampton, Abington	Northampton	367	480	441	—	1 7	—	0 9	0 3	0 2½	2 9½	2 5½
„ „	„ Little Billing	„	389	518	470	—	1 7	—	0 9	0 3	0 2½	2 9½	—
Broughton, J. W.	Skipton	York	430	475	414	—	0 8	0 8	0 6½	0 1½	—	2 0	—
Brown, George E.	Ampthill	Bedford	342	—	256	342	0 10	0 10	0 7	—	0 9	3 0	—
Davies, J. J.	Lampeter	Cardigan	30	32	15	—	2 8	*	0 8	—	—	3 4	3 6
Davies, William	Ruthin	Denbigh	200 and 300 of sheep walk.	300	276	—	0 9¼	0 4¾	0 6	0 0¾	0 4½	†2 3	2 2½
Dewar, Charles	Freebridge Lynn	Norfolk	780	376	296	—	1 9	—	0 3	—	—	2 0	—
Dobson, William	Brampton	Carlisle	4,180	648	582	—	1 5¾	—	0 4¾	0 3	0 10	2 11½	—
Drummond, D. W.	Carmarthen	Carmarthen	499	622	544	—	1 0	0 7	3 8½	0 9	—	5 7½	—
„	Llanelly	„	268	445	389	—	1 6	0 9	2 0	0 3	1 0	5 6	—
„	Landilo	„	272	450	393	—	1 3	0 7	0 7	0 1	—	2 6	—
„	Llandovery	„	1,719	185	161	—	—	--	—	—	—	2 2	—
„	Newcastle	„	311	300	262	—	1 9½	1 2	1 0	0 0½	0 8	4 8	—
„	Lampeter	„	187	109	95	—	2 8½	0 7	0 10	0 0½	0 10	5 0	—
Duckham, T.	Dore	Hereford	100	62	62	96	0 8	0 6½	0 9½	0 0½	0 8	2 8½	4 8½
Edwards, John	Nantwich	Chester	286	420	379	310	1 5	—	0 6	0 3	—	2 2	2 0
Epton, R. J.	Spilsby	Lincoln	1,238	1,926	1,240	—	1 6	—	0 6	—	—	2 0	—
„	Horncastle	„	478	In hand	469	—	2 4	—	0 6	—	—	2 10	—
Finn, George W.	Faversham, Preston	Kent	229	616	497	—	0 7	0 8	1 3	0 3	1 6	4 3	—

* Included in Poor Rate.

† Including other items.

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Abstract of Accounts of Aggregate of Local Rates supplied to the Commission by Witnesses—*continued.*

Name.	Union.	County.	Acreage.	Rent.	Assessment.		Rates in £. 1894.					Total Rates.	
				1894.	1894.	1878.	Poor Rate.	County Rate.	Highway.	Sanitary.	School Board.	1894.	1878.
				£	£	£	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Finn, George W.	Faversham, Boughton	Kent	140	330	236	—	0 7	0 8	1 3	0 3	—	2 9	—
Finney, R.	Shardlow	Derby	446	625	528	—	0 11	0 6	0 7	—	0 6	2 6	—
Fisher, John T.	Haverfordwest, Steynton	Pembroke	494	300	270	—	1 11	0 4	0 8	—	0 8	3 7	3 1
Forster, J. S.	Glendale	Northumberland	1,159	750	699	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 10¾	1 5
,,	Rothbury	,,	283	130	123	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 4	1 8
Griffith, James	Haverfordwest, Mathry	Pembroke	410	341	272	—	1 10	—	0 6	0 0½	0 4	2 8½	—
,,	,, Llanrithan	,,	174	149	121	—	2 1½	—	0 7	0 0½	0 4	3 1	—
Hall, J. F.	Wells	Somerset	160	160	150	—	1 1	0 3	0 4½	0 1½	0 8	2 6	2 6
Hall, W. H.	Newmarket	Cambridge	520	390	427	—	1 4	—	0 8	—	—	2 0	—
,,	Linton	,,	698	350	349	—	2 7	—	0 10	—	—	3 5	—
Harrison, W.	Malton	York	234	314	282	—	0 7½	0 3	0 8	0 0¼	0 3¼	1 10	—
Huskinson, W. L.	Basford	Nottingham	136	88	90	—	3 3	—	3 4 District Rate.	—	—	6 7 On buildings.	—
,,	Southwell, Epperstone parish.	,,	198	148	141	—	1 7½	—	—	0 3½	—	1 11	—
Hutchinson, T. H.	Richmond	York	600	1,095	759	—	0 10	0 1	0 6	0 2	—	1 7	—
Jenkins, Blandy	Bridgend	Glamorgan	245	260	204	232	0 8½	0 6	0 8	0 0½	0 9	2 8	—
,,	,, Llanharan	,,	353	200	169	169	0 8½	0 5	0 8	0 6	0 4	2 7½	—
Johnson, O. D.	Thingoe	Suffolk	1,099	850	629	—	—	—	—	—	—	2 6	—
Jones, J. Bowen	Atcham	Salop	720	1,076	912	1,064	0 5¼	0 5¾	0 3⅞	0 0⅜	—	1 3¼	1 1
Kidner, S.	Wellington	Somerset	243	449	373	373	1 3½	0 6	0 6¾	0 2	0 4¾	2 11	2 9
Kirby, John G.	Swansea	Glamorgan	240	120	120	—	1 4	—	3 0	—	1 3	5 7	3 4
Lander, W. H.	Newport	Salop	261	407	328	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 6	—
Lipscomb, W.	Dewsbury	York	222	336	333	418	1 2	—	2 10* District Rate.	—	—	4 0 On buildings.	3 6
,,	Wakefield	,,	135	95	87	120	1 6	—	1 4* District Rate.	0 10	—	3 8 On buildings.	3 10
,,	North Brierley	,,	53	60	66	87	1 8	—	1 6* District Rate.	—	—	3 2 On buildings.	2 3
,,	Huddersfield	,,	28	64	64	77	0 6	0 5	2 6* District Rate.	0 9	—	4 2 On buildings.	4 2

* Land assessed at one-fourth its value for the District Rate.

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Abstract of Accounts of Aggregate of Local Rates supplied to the Commission by Witnesses—*continued.*

Name.	Union.	County.	Acreage.	Rent.	Assessment.		Rates in £. 1894.					Total Rates.	
				1894.	1894.	1878.	Poor Rate.	County Rate.	Highway.	Sanitary.	School Board.	1894.	1878.
				£	£	£	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Lipscomb, W.	Halifax	York	179	237	107	110	2 8	0 7¼	2 4* District Rate.	—	0 8⅓	6 3¾ On buildings.	3 9
„	Todmorden	„	42	38	35	58	2 6	—	0 3	—	—	2 9	2 2
Little, William C.	Wisbech	Cambridge	640	834 for 595 acres.	881	948	1 11	—	0 10	—	—	2 9	2 6
Looker, John	St. Ives	Huntingdon	365	573	457	—	1 2	0 5	0 5½	—	0 7	2 7½	2 7
Lousley, J.	Wantage	Berks	769	252	241	600	1 6	0 5	0 9	—	—	2 8	2 11
Martin, Joseph	Ely	Cambridge	500	In hand	599	—	1 7⅓	—	1 0	0 1	0 7	3 3½	—
Matthews, Christopher	Chelmsford	Essex	1,774 (6 farms)	1,245	1,336	1,980	1 6	0 8	0 10	†	1 0	4 0	3 6
Mercer, T.	West Derby	Lancashire	209	427	421	—	1 2⅓	0 9	1 1½	0 2	0 1	3 4	2 4
Middleton, C.	Middlesborough	Yorks	320	579	504	474	1 5	0 2	0 7	0 2	—	2 4	2 0
Murray, G.	Shardlow, Alvaston parish	Derby	143	288	256	—	1 2	0 6¼	0 4	2 4	1 4	5 8¼	—
„	Shardlow, Elvaston parish	„	330	668	567	—	1 4	0 6¾	0 3	—	—	2 1¾	—
„	Shardlow, Shardlow parish	„	148	273	232	—	1 3	0 6	0 4	—	—	2 1	—
„	Shardlow, Draycott parish	„	147	300	218	—	1 10	0 6	0 4	1 4	1 0	5 0	—
„	Shardlow, Sawley parish	„	212	428	364	—	1 7⅓	0 6	0 4	—	—	2 5⅓	—
Noakes, John	Ticehurst	Sussex	196	218	215	288	—	—	—	—	—	3 6	4 0
Norfolk, Parker	Wetherby	York	146	206	180	—	1 8	—	0 8	—	—	2 4	—
Nunneley, E. M.	Wellingborough	Northampton	345	297	245	—	—	—	—	—	—	2 2¼	—
Olver, R. S.	Bodmin	Cornwall	296	274	253	345	1 3	—	0 7	0 0½	—	1 10½	2 10
Osborne, S.	Belper	Derby	250	472	430	—	1 8	—	0 7⅓	—	—	2 3⅓	—
Pears, John	Lincoln	Lincoln	620	In hand	762	—	—	—	—	—	—	1 11	—
Pell, A.	Brixworth	Northampton	288	387	285	349	0 8½	0 5⅓	0 9⅞	0 0½	—	1 7	2 5
Pennant, P. P.	St. Asaph	Denbigh	185	220	202	—	—	—	—	—	—	2 4	—
Price, Owen	Brecknock	Brecon	170	70	70	—	0 8	0 6	1 1	0 1	0 3	2 7	2 4
Punchard, F.	Kendal	Westmorland	210	350	323	370	0 5¼	0 5	0 8	0 0⅓	—	1 6¾	1 7
Rankin, James	Hereford	Hereford	278	441	411	—	0 8⅓	0 6⅓	0 4¾	0 0¼	—	1 8	—
Raynbird, H. F.	Kingsclere	Hants	1,073	107	95	—	1 2	0 5	0 8	0 0⅓	0 0½	2 4	—

* Land assessed at one-fourth its value for the District Rate.

† Included in Highway Rate.

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Abstract of Accounts of Aggregate of Local Rates supplied to the Commission by Witnesses—*continued.*

Name.	Union.	County.	Acreage.	Rent.	Assessment.		Rates in £. 1894.					Total Rates.	
				1894.	1894.	1878.	Poor Rate.	County Rate.	Highway.	Sanitary.	School Board.	1894.	1878.
				£	£	£	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.	s. d.
Raynbird, H. E.	Stockbridge	Hants	251	50	45	—	—	—	—	—	—	2 6	—
,,	Basingstoke	,,	459	186	176	—	1 1½	0 10½	0 5	0 0½	—	2 5½	—
Reynolds, J. C.	Shipston-on-Stour	Worcester	665	486	483	—	2 1½	—	0 6	—	—	2 7½	—
Roberts, Thomas	Bangor	Carnarvon	671	420	314	—	1 7	0 5½	0 3	0 0½	0 2	2 6	—
Roberts, G. J.	Carnarvon, Llanidan	Anglesey	313	500	343	—	2 3	0 3	0 7	0 2	0 4	3 7	—
,,	Carnarvon, Llanfairisgaer	Carnarvon	190	164	166	—	3 3	—	—	0 1½	0 4	3 8½	—
Rolleston, J. F. L.	Blaby	Leicester	60	120	107	—	1 0½	0 5½	0 5	0 2	1 6	3 7	—
Rowlandson, S.	Darlington	Durham	789	800	677	1,013	1 0	0 2½	0 5	0 0½	—	1 8	1 10
Scott, H. H.	Rothbury	Northumberland	2,844	886	822	—	1 4	—	—	—	—	1 4	—
,,	Alnwick	,,	300	478	435	—	2 2¼	—	—	—	—	2 2¼	—
,,	Belford	,,	632	300	237	—	1 4	—	—	—	—	1 4	—
,,	Glendale	,,	1,700	302	289	—	1 4	—	—	—	—	1 4	—
Simpson, W. T.	Guiltcross	Norfolk	470	535	497	778	1 8½	0 6¼	0 6	0 0¼	0 3	3 0	2 7
Smith, T. Carrington	Uttoxeter	Stafford	200	895	278	330	—	1 0	—	0 3	—	1 3	1 3
,, ,,	Lichfield	,,	41		43	53	—	1 5	—	0 5	—	1 10	2 1
Stratton, R.	Newport	Monmouth	375	376	340	463	2 1	—	0 7	—	1 0	3 8	3 0
Strutt, Hon. E. G.	Maldon	Essex	346	130	214	—	—	—	—	—	—	3 7¼	—
,,	,,	,,	500	160	240	—	—	—	—	—	—	3 4	—
Treadwell, J.	Aylesbury	Buckingham	1,140	1,395	1,563*	—	—	—	—	—	—	2 0	—
Turnor, E.	Grantham	Lincoln	703	In hand	578	—	1 10	—	0 6	—	—	2 4	—
Wantage, Lord	Wantage	Berks	4,530	—	3,920	—	0 9¾	0 5	0 7¼	0 1½	—	1 11½	—
Watson, John	Shirburn	Oxford	475	In hand	675	676	2 0	—	0 7	0 1	—	2 8	—
,,	Henley	,,	74	In hand	133	160	1 11	—	0 7	—	—	2 6	—
Williams, Owen	Ruthin	Denbigh	142	242	208	242	1 1¾	0 5¾	0 3½	0 0½	0 0½	2 0	—
Woodward, J. K.	Evesham, Norton	Worcester	322	339	308	565	1 8	0 4 1/16	0 3	—	—	2 3	1 10
,,	Evesham, Aldington	,,	106	160	147	—	1 10	—	0 3	—	—	2 1	—
Worthington, T.	Wigan	Lancaster	42	55	49	—	2 0	—	2 0	—	—	4 0	—
Wyatt, R. G.	Chard	Somerset	460	280	252	—	1 6	—	District rate. 0 4½	0 3	—	On buildings. 2 4†	—

* About to be reduced.

† Including other items.

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I.

Rates raised in certain Unions.

The accompanying statements have been prepared, showing the amount of the rates raised, and the rate in the £ of the rates, in 11 out of the 13 unions, as to which Mr. Shaw Lefevre asked for these particulars in his letter of the 12th ultimo. These Unions are wholly rural, and the statements contain all the public rates raised in those Unions (other than rates raised by Commissioners of Sewers and Drainage Boards, if any), so far as we are aware. It is probable that in some cases waywardens raised highway rates in 1878–79, but we have no returns giving information as to these rates. The rates in the £ have been arrived at by dividing the total amount raised by the total rateable value of the whole Union, but it must be remembered that some of the rates are not raised on the full rateable value according to the poor rate valuation, and some of them are levied in areas considerably smaller than the whole Union. In the case of the other two Unions mentioned by Mr. Shaw Lefevre, there are urban districts, and the rates in the rural portions of those Unions cannot be given. The statements are in the same form as those submitted to the Royal Commission on Agriculture. (*See* Vol. III. of Evidence, App. A. XXXII., Table 16.)

Statistical Department,
Local Government Board.
2nd November 1895.

SOUTHWELL UNION (NOTTS). Wholly Rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 201,789*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 216,906*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 177,742*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	3,535	0 4·2	3,502	0 3·9	4,571	0 6·2	Lands	170,405	120,184
Burial board rate	19	—	30	—	45	0 0·1			
Highway rate	3,977	0 4·7	4,314	0 4·8	3,409	0 4·6	Buildings	22,658	28,931
Church rate	554	0 0·7	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	77	0 0·1	80	0 0·1	118	0 0·1	Railways	9,680	27,721
Poor Law purposes	7,348	0 8·7	6,376	0 7·1	5,409	0 7·3			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	278	0 0·3	755	0 1·0	Other property	307	168
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	485	0 0·5	455	0 0·6			
Total	15,510	1 6·4	15,065	1 4·7	14,762	1 7·9	Total	203,050	7,004
Rate per acre	*2*s.* 2·5*d.*		—		†1*s.* 8·4*d.*		Acreage	117,631	

* $\frac{170,405}{203,050}$ of 15,510*l.* (rates raised) = 13,016*l.* = 2*s.* 2·5*d.* per acre on 117,631 acres.

† $\frac{120,184}{177,004}$ of 14,762*l.* (rates raised) = 10,023*l.* = 1*s.* 8·4*d.* per acre on 117,631 acres.

GLENDALE UNION (NORTHUMBERLAND). Wholly Rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 131,434*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 145,853*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 115,823*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	2,326	0 4·3	1,821	0 3·0	1,390	0 2·9	Lands	126,298	107,589
Burial board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
Highway rate	2,583	0 4·7	(*a*)	(*a*)	2,120	0 0·4	Buildings	5,573	5,338
Church rate	129	0 0·2	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	16	0 0·0	28	0 0·1	50	0 0·1	Railways	1,054	1,515
Poor Law purposes	4,477	0 8·2	3,280	0 5·4	1,930	0 4·0			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	69	0 0·1	517	0 1·0	Other property	1,325	1,255
School board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
School attendance committee rates	—	—	78	0 0·1	—	—			
Total	9,531	1 5·4	(*a*)	(*a*)	6,007	1 0·4	Total	134,250	115,697
Rate per acre	*1*s.* 2·6*d.*		—		†9·1*d.*		Acreage	146,971	

(*a*) These figures cannot be given as the returns are not complete.

* $\frac{126,298}{134,250}$ of 9,531*l.* (rates raised) = 8,966*l.* = 1*s.* 2·6*d.* per acre on 146,971 acres.

† $\frac{107,589}{115,697}$ of 6,007*l.* (rates raised) = 5,586*l.* = 9·1*d.* per acre on 146,971 acres.

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Appendix I.

SHIPSTON-ON-STOUR UNION (WARWICK). Wholly rural.

	1867-68. Rateable Value, 129,571*l.*		1878-79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 134,510*l.*		1893-94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 116,682*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	2,511	0 4·7	(*a*) —	(*a*)	8,391	0 7·0	Lands	106,350	77,434
Burial board rate	277	0 0·5	180	0 0·3	165	0 0·3			
Highway rate	4,354	0 8·2	(*b*) 3,879	0 6·9	3,689	0 7·6	Buildings	20,038	30,653
Church rate	465	0 0·9	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	113	0 0·2	194	0 0·3	76	0 0·2	Railways	575	6,360
Poor Law purposes	9,000	1 5·0	2,352	0 5·1	3,486	0 7·2			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	194	0 0·3	449	0 0·9	Other property	1,033	198
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	534	0 1·0	533	0 1·1			
Total	16,720	2 7·5	(*a*)	(*a*)	11,789	2 0·3	Total	127,996	114,645
Rate per acre	*s. d.* *3 6·6		—		†2*s.* 0·4*d.*		Acreage	78,189	

(*a*) This information cannot be given as no sum appears in the returns as paid in respect of county and police rate.

(*b*) Probably excluding small sums raised by waywardens of which no information appears in the returns.

* $\frac{106,350}{127,996}$ of 16,720*l.* (rates raised) = 13,892*l.* = 3*s.* 6·6*d.* per acre on 78,189 acres.

† $\frac{77,434}{114,645}$ of 11,739*l.* (rates raised) = 7,963*l.* = 2*s.* 0·4*d.* per acre on 78,189 acres.

BOURNE UNION (LINCOLNSHIRE). Wholly Rural.

NOTE.—Rates levied under Courts or Commissioners of Sewers are excluded from this Table. Rates (if any) levied by Drainage and Embankment Boards are also excluded.

	1867-68. Rateable Value, 152,731*l.*		1878-79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 169,182*l.*		1893-94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 137,349*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,725	0 2·7	1,435	0 2·0	8,039	1 2·0	Lands	121,528	86,024
Burial board rate	263	0 0·4	50	0 0·1	65	0 0·1			
Highway rate	5,618	0 8·8	(*a*) 6,593	0 9·4	3,192	0 5·6	Buildings	18,450	26,614
Church rate	486	0 0·8	17	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	402	0 0·6	361	0 0·5	330	0 0·6	Railways	10,128	37,775
Poor Law purposes	9,027	1 2·2	8,017	0 11·4	6,669	0 11·7			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	447	0 0·6	837	0 1·4	Other property	3,241	962
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	2,104	0 3·0	1,473	0 2·6			
Total	17,521	2 3·5	19,024	2 3·0	20,605	3 0·0	Total	153,347	151,375
Rate per acre	* 3*s.* 0·2*d.*		—		†2*s.* 6·5*d.*		Acreage	92,018	

(*a*) For year 1879-80. The figures for 1878-79 cannot be given.

* $\frac{121,528}{153,347}$ of 17,521*l.* (rates raised) = 13,885*l.* = 3*s.* 0·2*d.* per acre on 92,018 acres.

† $\frac{86,024}{151,375}$ of 20,605*l.* (rates raised) = 11,709*l.* = 2*s.* 6·5*d.* per acre on 92,018 acres.

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Appendix I.

FREEBRIDGE LYNN UNION. (Wholly Rural).

	1867–68. Rateable Value. 84,019*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878 99,243*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 76,837*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,122	0 3·2	1,120	0 2·7	2,190	0 6·9	Lands	72,465	53,986
Burial board rate	—	—	—	—	100	0 0·3			
Highway rate	800	0 2·3	(*a.*)2,852	0 6·9	1,265	0 4·0	Buildings	11,880	13,785
Church rate	212	0 0·6	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Railways	503	4,473
Poor Law purposes	7,787	1 10·2	5,467	1 1·2	3,029	0 9·5			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	131	0 0·3	267	0 0·8	Other property	721	35
School board and school attendance committe rates.	—	—	235	0 0·6	254	9 0·8			
Total	9,921	2 4·3	9,805	1 11·7	7,105	1 10·3	Total	85,569	72,289
Rate per acre	*2*s.* 3·3*d.*		—		†1*s.* 5·3*d.*		Acreage	73,827	

(*a.*) For year 1879–80, the figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

* $\frac{73,465}{85,569}$ of 9,921*l.* (rates raised) = 8,402*l.* = 2*s.* 3·3*d.* per acre on 73,827 acres.

† $\frac{53,996}{72,289}$ of 7,105*l.* (rates raised) = 5,307*l.* = 1*s.* 5·3*d.* per acre on 73,827 acres.

EAST ASHFORD UNION (KENT). Wholly Rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 76,729*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 104,136*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 90,326*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,845	0 5·8	1,771	0 4·1	3,205	0 8·5	Lands	57,259	41,116
Burial board rate	—	—	—	—	90	0 0·2			
Highway rate	3,768	0 11·8	3,904	0 9·0	4,608	1 0·4	Buildings	8,499	22,813
Church rate	432	0 1·3	94	0 0·2	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	50	0 0·2	63	0 0·1	69	0 0·2	Railways	7,704	18,276
Poor Law purposes	4,877	1 3·2	5,417	1 0·5	3,599	0 9·6			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	242	0 0·5	801	0 2·1	Other property	3,792	570
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	1,072	0 2·5	968	0 2·6			
Total	10,972	2 10·3	12,563	2 4·9	13,400	2 11·6	Total	77,254	82,775
Rate per acre	*2*s.* 11·8*d.*		—		†2*s.* 5·3*d.*		Acreage	54,582	

* $\frac{57,259}{77,254}$ of 10,972*l.* (rates raised) = 8,132*l.* = 2*s.* 11·8*d.* per acre on 54,582 acres.

† $\frac{41,116}{82,775}$ of 13,400*l.* (rates raised) = 6,656*l.* = 2*s.* 5·3*d.* per acre on 54,582 acres.

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Appendix I.

HUNGERFORD UNION (BERKS). Wholly rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 107,969*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value, at Lady Day, 1878, 124,126*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 85,745*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised :—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	2,467	0 5·5	1,898	0 3·7	2,201	0 6·2	Lands	90,790	52,439
Burial board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
Highway rate	2,057	0 4·6	*2,537	0 4·9	2,302	0 6·4	Buildings	17,210	23,244
Church rate	471	0 1·1	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	135	0 0·3	—	—	—	—	Railways	538	3,381
Poor Law purposes	11,315	2 1·3	7,081	1 1·7	3,575	0 9·5			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	172	0 0·3	179	0 0·5	Other property	1,227	3,949
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	592	0 1·1	546	0 1·5			
Total	16,445	3 0·8	12,280	1 11·7	8,603	2 0·1	Total	109,765	83,013
Rate per acre	†2*s.* 0·0*d.*		—		‡1*s.* 1·6*d.*		Acreage	96,118	

* For the year ended 25th March 1880; the figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

† $\frac{90,790}{109,765}$ of 16,445*l.* (rates raised) = 13,602*l.* = 3*s.* 0·0*d.* per acre on 96,118 acres.

‡ $\frac{52,439}{83,013}$ of 8,603*l.* (rates raised) = 5,434*l.* = 1*s.* 1·6*d.* per acre on 96,118 acres.

POTTERSPURY UNION (NORTHAMPTON). Wholly rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 62,030*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 70,361*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 65,965*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised :—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,090	0 4·2	1,140	0 3·9	1,871	0 6·8	Lands	32,775	23,054
Burial board rate	65	0 0·3	5	0 0.0	158	0 0·6			
Highway rate	1,119	0 4·3	(*a*)2,141	0 7·3	1,463	0 5·3	Buildings	20,618	24,351
Church rate	271	0 1·0	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Railways	6,422	18,650
Poor Law purposes	5,684	1 10·0	4,426	1 3·1	3,426	1 0·5			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	80	0 0·3	1,571	0 5·7			
School board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Other property	1,091	699
School attendance committee rates	—	—	105	0 0·3	121	0 0·4			
Total	8,229	2 7·8	7,897	2 2·9	8,610	2 7·3	Total	60,906	67,354
Rate per acre	*3*s.* 8·8*d.*		—		†2*s.* 5·8*d.*		Acreage	23,708*l.*	

(*a*) For year 1879–80; the figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

* $\frac{32,775}{60,906}$ of 8,229*l.* (rates raised) = 4,428*l.* = 3*s.* 8·8*d.* per acre on 23,708 acres.

† $\frac{23,054}{67,354}$ of 8,610*l.* (rates raised) = 2,947*l.* = 2*s.* 5·8*d.* per acre on 23,708 acres.

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Appendix 1.

NORTHLEACH UNION (GLOUCESTERSHIRE). Wholly Rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 77,717*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 80,894*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 47,626*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised :—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,418	0 4·4	1,353	0 5·5	1,687	0 8·5	Lands	67,359	37,831
Burial board rate	—	—	26	0 0·1	35	0 ·2			
Highway rate	3,121	0 6·5	4,090	1 0·1	2,225	0 11·2	Buildings	9,082	7,876
Church rate	131	0 ·4	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
Poor Law purposes	5,147	1 3·9	3,994	0 11·9	1,483	0 7·2	Railways	—	281
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	75	0 ·2	198	0 1·0			
School board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Other property	1,905	912
School attendance committee rate	—	—	76	0 ·2	96	0 ·5			
Total	8,817	2 3·2	10,114	2 6·0	5,674	2 4·6	Total	78,346	46,900
Rate per acre	*2*s.* 2·0*d.*		—		†1*s.* 3·7*d.*		Acreage	69,904	

* $\frac{67,359}{78,346}$ of 8,817*l.* (rates raised) = 7,581*l.* = 2*s.* 2·0*d.* per acre on 69,904 acres.

† $\frac{37,831}{46,900}$ of 5,674*l.* (rates raised) = 4,577*l.* = 1*s.* 3·7*d.* per acre on 69,904 acres.

WEST WARD UNION (WESTMORLAND). Wholly Rural.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 74,146*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 83,868*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 79,742*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised :—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,062	0 3·4	1,433	0 4·1	1,953	0 5·9	Lands	53,308	*55,331
Burial board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
Highway rate	929	0 3·0	(*a*) 845	0 2·4	643	0 1·9	Buildings	7,555	7,019
Church rate	239	0 0·8	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Railways	12,843	15,325
Poor Law purposes	2,614	0 8·5	2,410	0 6·9	1,566	0 4·7			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	113	0 0·3	128	0 0·4	Other property	686	1,608
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	511	0 1·5	681	0 2·			
Total	4,844	1 3·7	5,312	1 3·2	4,971	1 3·0	Total	74,392	79,283
Rate per acre	*0*s.* 7·0*d.*		—		†0*s.* 7·0*d.*		Acreage	119,563	

(*a*) For year 1879–80; the figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

* $\frac{53,308}{74,392}$ of 4,844*l.* (rates raised) = 3.471*l.* = 0*s.* 7·0*d.* per acre on 119,563 acres.

† $\frac{55,331}{79,283}$ of 4,971*l.* (rates raised) = 3.469*l.* = 0*s.* 7·0*d.* per acre on 119,563 acres.

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Appendix I.

(a) WETHERBY UNION (YORK, WEST RIDING). Wholly Rural.

	1870–71. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1870, 107,271*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 127,568*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 113,213*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police ate	2,102	0 4·7	2,070	0 3·9	2,987	0 6·3	Lands	84,915	61,333
Burial board rate	—	—	180	0 0·3	238	0 0·5			
Highway rate	(a)	(a)	(b)4,458	0 8·4	4,504	0 9·6	Buildings	17,902	36,374
Church rate	—	—	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	—	—	96	0 0·2	100	0 0·2			
Poor Law purposes	4,977	0 11·1	3,147	0 5·9	3,117	0 6·6	Railways	3,557	9,735
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	182	0 0·3	1,153	0 2·5			
School board rate	—	—	—	—	—	—	Other property	897	4,665
School attendance committee rates	—	—	30	0 0·1	60	0 0·1			
Total	(a)	(a)	10,163	1 7·1	12,159	2 1·8	Total	107,271	112,107
Rate per acre	(a)		—		* 2*s.* 0·4*d.*		Acreage	65,396	

(a) From 21st June 1869, 18 parishes were added to this Union; certain figures for 1870–71 are therefore given, this being the first year for which any information can be given as regards the extended Union. The amount of highway rate and the total rates &c., cannot, however be given.

(b) For year 1879–80; the figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

* $\frac{61,333}{112,107}$ of 12,159*l.* (rates raised) = 6,652 = 2*s.* 0·4*d.* per acre on 65,396 acres.

BILLERICAY UNION (ESSEX). Wholly Rural.

NOTE.—Rates levied under Courts or Commissioners of Sewers are excluded from this Table. Rates (if any) levied by Drainage and Embankment Boards are also excluded.

	1867–68. Rateable Value, 91,699*l.*		1878–79. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 102,416*l.*		1893–94. Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 112,293*l.*		Rateable Value of Lands, Buildings, Railways, and other Kinds of Rateable Property.		
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.		Lady Day, 1870.	Lady Day, 1894.
Rates raised:—	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*		£	£
County and police rate	1,913	0 5·0	1,633	0 3·8	4,741	0 10·2	Lands	64,799	36,571
Burial board rate	109	0 0·3	—	—	325	0 0·7			
Highway rate	2,208	0 5.8	3,129	0 7·3	2,149	0 4·6	Buildings	25,151	48,718
Church rate	415	0 1·1	—	—	—	—			
Lighting and watching rate	214	0 0·5	249	0 0·6	385	0 0·8	Railways	3,376	23,139
Poor Law purposes	7,111	1 6·6	(a)3,296	(a)7·7	6,264	1 1·4			
Rural sanitary rate	—	—	519	0 1·2	1,319	0 3·8	Other property	1,201	8,116
School board and school attendance committee rates.	—	—	783	0 1·9	668	0 1·4			
Total	11,970	2 7·3	(b)9,609	(b)1 10·5	15,851	2 9·9	Total	94,527	116,544
Rate per acre	*3*s.* 3·7*d.*		—		†2*s.* 0·0*d.*		Acreage	49,669	

(a) The poor-rate return for 1878–79 shows that expenditure exceeded receipts by 3,771*l.* during the year, the amount raised being insufficient.

(b) The total would be 13,380*l.*, and the rate in the £, 2*s.* 7·4*d.*, if the excess of expenditure referred to in note (a) were taken into account.

* $\frac{64,799}{94,527}$ of 11,970*l.* (rates raised) = 8,206*l.* = 3*s.* 3·7*d.* per acre on 49,669 acres.

† $\frac{36,571}{116,544}$ of 15,851*l.* (rates raised) = 4,974*l.* = 2*s.* 0·0*d.* per acre on 49,669 acres.

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APPENDIX J.

NOTES of the VISIT paid by Mr. SHAW-LEFEVRE to ESSEX.

On Monday, September 23rd, 1894, I left London with Mr. Lyon, the Secretary of the Commission, with the object of making an inspection of those parts of Essex which have suffered most severely from the depression of agriculture, and which have formed the subject of Mr. Hunter Pringle's report. We went by train to Blake Hall Station, near Ongar. Our first visit was to a farm tenanted by a Scotchhman, who has written largely on agricultural questions. He came from Ayrshire about 14 years ago and took this farm, which consists of 630 acres, the rent 500*l.* a year. He values the capital employed on the farm at 8*l.* per acre, say 5,000*l.* He said that on the average a profit at the rate of 10 per cent. had been made out of the farm, including in it the value of the house and the food supplied to the family, estimated at 100*l.* a year. He keeps 60 cows and sends their milk to London. He has laid down a great extent of grass. He has only 70 acres of arable now out of the 630, and he intends to reduce this. He sells both hay and straw.

We had much discussion with him as to the practicability of laying down the heavy clays of Essex with temporary or permanent grass. He said that their farm consisted of some of the stiffest clay in Essex. Some of the newly-laid down grass he maintains as such for four years; then ploughs again and takes two corn crops and one of roots. Other fields he retains permanently in grass, and thinks they have done well. We saw a field which had been six years in grass and looked very good. He manures heavily, and feeds cattle and sheep with cake on the land. From another field where grass was laid down last year he cut this year two crops of hay. He makes cheese when the milk is in excess of his contract, and says that he has no doubt good cheese can be made in Essex. He says that some of his neighbours who, at the commencement of these proceedings, looked over the hedges and laughed at him, are now following his example of laying down fields in temporary grass. He had no complaint to make of his profits. He thought there was no reason why any of the heavy clay lands in Essex should not be laid down in grass. He brought a Scotch family with him, father, mother, and two sons, to whom he pays 2*l.* a week. He employs 15 other labourers at 13*s.* a week, but making up an average of 18*s.* or 19*s.* for the whole year.

Leaving here, we drove on to Ingatestone, where we passed the night with Mr. Coverdale, the agent of Lord Petre's property. This property consists of 18,000 acres, formerly producing a gross income of about 20,000*l.* a year. The rent is now reduced below 50 per cent., with a much higher scale of outgoings. The net income to the landlord does not represent six per cent. on the amount at which the farm-houses, buildings, and cottages are insured. Many farmers have come to grief on the property and have thrown up their farms. Mr. Coverdale says that he made every effort to advertise their farms all over the country, and succeeded in letting 15 of them to Scotch farmers, three to Devonshire men, and two Cheshire men have joined in taking a farm with a view to one of them taking a second if they find it possible to make a living. They will probably go in for cheese-making. These newcomers are all dairy farmers, sending their milk to London. They pay about 18*s.* an acre, tithe free; the tithe amounts to 4*s.* an acre. These men are said to be on the best farms on the estate, possessing more than an average of grass land and well situated as to railway accommodation. The Scotchmen are said in some cases to be doing fairly well, but some have had to succumb to the bad times. Mr. Coverdale said that two had gone, and he feared three others would follow. They employ very little labour, and work hard themselves and their families. They have laid down a good deal of land to grass. Mr. Coverdale took a gloomy view of the position. He said that last year was disastrous to the district. The produce of hay and corn was almost nil. The dairy farmer had to buy food largely. This year, which promised so well in the spring, has proved to be unsatisfactory. Though the produce was large, much above the average, the quality of hay and corn was so indifferent, owing to the constant rain, that very low prices only could be realised. He advocated some form of protection; he thought a reasonable duty, say 10*s.*, should be put on wheat to raise the price to a certain standard, but if the value of corn rose to 40*s.* and upwards per quarter the duty should cease. He also thought the Government should regulate the price of bread if unduly raised. He did not anticipate that the moderate duty he suggested would raise the price of the 4lb. loaf beyond 6*d.* He doubted the possibility of making good grass land out of the Essex clays. He complained much of the high tithe to which Essex is subject. He thought it a great cause of difficulty at the present, as much of the land is not worth more than the tithe and land-tax together.

On Tuesday, Mr. Coverdale drove us over a considerable extent of country to Billericay, Laindon, and Basildon. We called on three of Lord Petre's tenants and met several farmers at each of them. They were mostly Essex men. They were all in the lowest spirits. They thought that the only remedy was a protective duty; they could suggest no other. They were generally arable farmers. Among them we met a very able young Scotchman, Mr. Steel, farming 250 acres, of which 70 only were arable. He intended to reduce this to one half and lay down the residue in temporary grass, a seven years' shift on the Scotch system. He had no complaint to make, and admitted he was doing well.

At Billericay, we met at the house of Dr. Carter, the sanitary officer of the district, several farmers and other gentlemen, including a corn dealer who had lost very heavily in advances to farmers. This gentleman acted as spokesman for the others, and advocated a return to protection as the only possible remedy. He said the district was on the way to certain ruin. Neither he nor the farmers present had any other remedy to suggest. But individually, some of them, in private conversation, admitted that it was hopeless to expect protection.

From Billericay we went on to Laindon Hills, where again we met several farmers and also the coroner of the district, who was said to be well acquainted with the condition of the farmers of the neighbourhood. The farmers were all in the most despondent state and had no suggestions to make other than a return to protection.

On our way to Laindon, we passed numerous farms, of which the great part had gone out of cultivation and had tumbled down into grass, or rather twitch and weeds of the worst possible description. These farms, with few exceptions, were still in occupation, a small part of them being still cultivated, and cattle being turned out on the fields that had fallen out of cultivation to pick up what they could. There was more of old pasture than I expected, most farms having two, three, or more fields. This grass looked extremely well. Some other fields which had been laid down a few years ago also looked fairly well as far as one could judge. The soil of those, it was admitted, was no better than that which had been allowed to tumble down into twitch and weeds.

We passed two farms which had been bought by speculators at very low prices, 5*l.* per acre it was said, and had been laid out in plots of half an acre up to 10 acres, and offered for sale at auctions. The purchase money was spread over a term of years. We were told that persons were tempted to come down from London to these auctions by the offer of free passes and a good luncheon. The auctions took place after luncheon, and under the influence of it many persons were tempted to bid for the plots. They paid the deposit required of a few pounds, and in most cases never paid anything more. The lots were then forfeited and were the subject of further auctions, when the same course was repeated. These two farms, in respect of which these sales took place, were three and four miles from a station, and in most unattractive localities. The roads marked out had not been made. There was no water supply other than what could be collected in tanks from

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Appendix J.

the roofs of any buildings erected there. In spite of all these disadvantages, a certain number of purchasers had erected houses, some of them mere cottages, others of a fairly substantial character with small greenhouses. Some had planted their plots with fruit trees. Dr. Carter said that there were several cases in the union where land had been bought by land jobbers for this purpose, and sold, or attempted to be sold, in the same manner. No one could tell us what class of persons erected and resided in them. They were not persons who went backwards and forwards to London; they were believed to be retired tradesmen, pensioners from the police, and others, attracted by the very low price of land, and with the idea of being small landowners and having fruit and poultry farms. When so much land may be purchased at low prices near to stations, it is difficult to understand why persons should be found to buy their plots so far off and so inaccessible.

Returning from Billericay from Laindon, we went by train to Southend for the night. There we met Mr. Offin, an auctioneer, who also farms largely. He has several farms in different parts of the district, altogether about 2,400 acres. Some of his farms, he said, paid him well, others very badly. He said that there were thousands of acres of land in Essex which were worth no rent at all. He thought that 100,000 acres would go out of cultivation at present prices. Some of the heavy land, he said, would not carry grass. Where it could grow permanent grass money could be made out of. He admitted protection was impossible. He had no remedy to suggest.

The next morning, Wednesday, Mr. Meeson, of Rochford, the Chairman of the board of guardians of the Rochford Union, called for us, and took us a long round through the country. Mr. Meeson has farmed on a great scale for many years, and owns some 500 acres. At one time he farmed nearly 5,000 acres; he has reduced it to 2,300 acres. He made large profits at one time, but said that he had lost considerably in farming during the last 10 years. He is very desponding as to the future and cannot see how farming is to pay at the present prices.

From Southend to Rochford we passed through a country which contains some of the best land in Essex, alluvial soil, easily cultivated. A few years ago it was rented at 40*s.* to 50*s.* an acre. It is now reduced to 20*s.* The land is all cultivated. After passing Rochford we gradually came upon the stiffer clays. At Canewdon, a small hamlet and church overlooking the river Crouch, at a point where Canute is said to have landed with his Danes, we came across the worst land we had seen. From thence for some miles on the higher land on the south of the Crouch the country appeared to be almost uncultivated; the greater part of it has fallen back into the worst possible condition. The farmhouses are untenanted. The roads are deserted. The labourer's cottages are empty. The farms are not actually derelict; they are let for very small rents to persons who turn out a few cattle on them, but who scarcely cultivate any part of them. Near to Canewdon there was a farm of 400 acres, formerly considered a good farm, rented at 30*s.* an acre. It passed out of cultivation 10 years ago. It was recently bought for 5*l.* an acre by a man who deals largely in cattle and sheep, and who turns them out here for a time between buying and selling. He does not cultivate any of the farm, and employs no labourers upon it. A field of old pasture looks well. The remainder of the land is in a deplorable condition.

The new owner is said to have made money by his operations, and finds the farm convenient for his business. There is no sign of its being improved. A few sheep were being fed on cake in part of the former. An adjoining farm of 600 acres is in the same condition, being let to a butcher and dealer in cattle for a nominal rent.

The next farm, of 750 acres, has recently been hired at 50*l.* a year free of tithe, land-tax, and rates, by Mr. ——, who met us there. His wages bill amounts to 25*s.* a week. He grazes a few cattle upon it. He said the greater part of the farm was not worth 1*s.* an acre. The farm fell into its present condition 10 years ago. It appears to have been grossly mismanaged. The mortgagees took possession and refused to reduce the then rent below the interest of their debt. The tenant left; the mortgagees then for four or five years cultivated it after a fashion, selling the proceeds on the ground in lots. It went from bad to worse and finally got into its present condition. Mr. —— thinks that it would not pay to lay it down in grass. It would be necessary to steam plough it, and to give it one or two fallows and then for some years the grass would be inferior. The cost would be 8*l.* per acre. Farm after farm along the route to Rayleigh had histories of the same character. It was the worst district we had seen, and appeared to be in a hopeless condition. Both Mr. Meeson and Mr. —— considered that the high tithe and land tax were great impediments to anything being done for this district.

From Rayleigh we took a look round through the county to Wickford Station, seeing much land out of cultivation, though not quite so bad as that from Canewdon to Rayleigh. From Wickford we went by train to Witham, and thence to Terling Place, Lord Rayleigh's residence.

On Thursday, Mr. E. Strutt, agent to Lord Rayleigh, took us a drive of nearly 50 miles through Baddow, East Hanningfield, Sandon, part of Danbury, Purleigh, Hazeleigh, Woodham Ferris, and Woodham Mortimer. We were accompanied by Mr. E. A. Fitch, a gentleman who farms on a large scale near Maldon. We called at several farms, among others at one held by a Lancashire man, who took 270 acres three years ago at 150*l.* a year. He has five sons, a son-in-law, and two daughters who work for him without pay, and he employs one other labourer. He makes cheese, which he sends to Lancashire for sale. He said that it was distinctly better than that made in Lancashire. He is gradually laying down more land in grass. Some of it he ploughed up and fallowed. Other fields he manured heavily in the hope of improving the grass. Last year, he said, was disastrous. He had little or no hay or grass, and no corn. He was obliged to buy food for his cows. This year he has plenty of produce, but both the hay and corn were damaged by the wet weather. He always buys more food than he sells. He does not therefore desire protection. He is doubtful whether he can make the farm pay. He has hopes. He is evidently a very hard-working man and gets the labour of his family for nothing, and his wife is a very hard-working and capable dairy woman.

We then called at Gibcrack's farm, let to a grazier, at 40*l.* a year for 300 acres. The land is in a deplorable condition and the tenant does nothing to it. He simply treats it as a kind of ranche. The owner, Col. Lovibond, pays tithes, rates, and taxes amounting to more than the rent received. We lunched with Mr. Kerridge, of Woodham Hall, an old man of 82, one of Lord Rayleigh's tenants. Mr. Strutt told us he was one of the hardest working men in the country and an excellent judge of cattle. He farms 120 acres. A few years ago he valued his stock and interest at 1,500*l.*, when he took this larger farm 10 or 12 years ago. It is now reduced to 500*l.*, and the old man is going to give up the land in order to save this residue.

We next called at Flambard's farm of 500 acres, which Mr. Strutt has hired at 10*l.* a year, the tithe being 60*l.* a year. Mr. Strutt said that he had lost 400*l.* by it last year, but this year hoped to make a profit of 100*l.* There are a great number of stacks, and the condition of the hay and corn was said to be good. 120 acres had been laid down to grass which had formerly been arable land, of this 20 acres had been laid down within the last four years, and the rest about 10 years ago.

Our next visit was to —— farm, rented by Mr. ——, a Lancashire man, who holds 200 acres, for which he pays 200*l.* a year under a lease for 14 years made 10 years ago. He has greatly improved it owing to the liberality of Mr. Bashall, his landlord. He makes cheese for the Lancashire market, and said that it is better than the Lancashire-made cheese, and it seemed to us to be of better quality than that we previously had tasted.

Mr. —— has three sons and two daughters, who live with him and receive no wages. His eldest son is aged 24. It is difficult to understand why this young man should be content to stay with his father, receiving nothing, unless he is in hopes that his father will give him capital to take another farm. Mr. —— admitted that he had done well. The best proof is that he has taken another farm in the neighbourhood—a farm which we saw the next day—and which is in a deplorable condition. Mr. —— broke up, 10 years ago, one large field which had tumbled down into grass. It now looks nearly as good as a field of old pasture near to it. Other fields he laid down in grass six years ago. They also look well. He did not plough these up, but has applied manure freely and improved them by feeding; by degrees the grass has improved. Mr. —— evidently works himself with his sons.

Mr. Strutt and Mr. Fitch were evidently much surprised at the condition of the grass on this farm. They had not been there before. The case is interest-

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ing as showing that good cheese can be made in Essex, and that by the liberal application of manure the heavy clay can be made eventually to grow good grass even without ploughing up the land.

How far Mr. ——'s success is due to his having the labour of his family free of charge is a matter which it is difficult to determine, nor must the liberality of his landlord when he first took the farm in supplying manures free of cost be overlooked.

On Friday we went by train to Maldon, and met there Mr. A. C. Freeman, the clerk to the board of guardians, who drove us round the country. Near to Maldon the land seemed to be better and fairly well farmed. We called on a Mr. A., who was said to be an exceptionally good farmer, living very closely, who through practical knowledge and industry had succeeded in keeping things together. He had inherited a farm and capital, and had recently bought another at 8*l.* per acre. He supplies Maldon with milk. Last year he lost heavily, owing to the want of hay and grass. This year he will feed his cows with his own corn instead of selling it and buying maize.

At Purleigh we came to the farm recently taken by Mr. B.; it had been practically abandoned for 15 years, and the land is in a deplorable condition. The tithe of Purleigh is commuted at 1,704*l.* a year, all of which formerly went to the rector with the living, and was attached to the Provostship of Oriel College, Oxford. It was held for 55 years by Dr. Hawkins until his death in 1883, who never came near it, but gave 70*l.* a year to a curate to perform the duties.

Part of Purleigh civil parish has now been added to the Chelmsford Union under the Divided Parishes Act, and the tithe rentcharge on that part is 177*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.* The tithe rentcharge on the civil parish of Purleigh is now as follows: rector, 852*l.*; the Provost of Oriel College, 674*l.* 2*s.* 2*d.*; on the remainder of the ecclesiastical parish now in the Chelmsford Union, 177*l.* 17*s.* 10*d.*; total, 1,704*l.*

A large residence has been recently erected, the money being borrowed from Queen Anne's bounty. Complaint was made that the present incumbent exacts the utmost from the landowners in respect of his tithe, and will listen to no composition, and has actually seized land where the tithe was otherwise recoverable. The tithe is in many cases in his parishes considerably more than the rent, in many cases five or six times, but the provision enabling the reduction of the tithe in such cases under the last Tithe Act has proved a failure.

At —— we called on Mr. C., who farms 320 acres at a rent of 100*l.*, including tithe; 100 acres is in arable, the rest is in a most wretched condition and is worth nothing. It is worse, if possible, than anything we had seen elsewhere. Mr. C. in fact is paying 100*l.* a year for 100 acres of arable. He says that he loses money by it. He retains the farm because it suits his health. He has other funds, without which he could not continue here. The adjoining farm, of about 400 acres, is in a still worse condition if possible. The whole of it has fallen back into twitch. A tenant has been found to pay 100*l.* a year for it, including tithe. On both these farms the scrub is beginning to grow up on the abandoned fields.

These farms went out of cultivation 10 years ago. For some miles the land on both sides of the road appeared to be little better than these, and we did not see a cultivated field, and this in what 20 years ago was a fine wheat-growing district.

We went on to Southminster where we lunched. We made acquaintance with the clergyman; he rather surprised us by making light of the depression in the neighbourhood. He said that he got paid his tithe without trouble. He expected some difficulty in the case of the small plots which had been sold by a land jobber, but not otherwise. He said the population of the village had not decreased.

We called also on Mr. D., an agent for a bank, who lives in the village. He is giving up a farm of 300 acres, regarding farming as hopeless. We also saw here a butcher, Mr. E., who occupies a marsh farm jointly with Mr. D. He stated that he thought the derelict grass lands might be improved by feeding, if artificial food were given, but not otherwise.

Our next visit was to Mr. F., a Scotchman who had bought a farm 14 years ago at 15*l.* an acre. He had laid nearly all of it down in grass. One large field he had sown 10 years ago with lucerne and mowed it for six years, then allowed the grass to grow. It seemed to be fairly good grass, and he considered it the best way of laying down clay land, though the cost of laying down the land exceeded, he thought, the increase in selling value. Some of his land was old pasture and very good, other land had been laid down six years ago, but was not worth much at present.

Our next visit was to Mr. G., another Scotchman. He is said to be very close; his wife and sister have been seen lifting manure into a cart. He appeared to be content with his prospects. He stated that he did not think planting with lucerne was a good way to lay down land, it took so long a time before getting a "bottom." He preferred good sorts of mixed seeds. His brother, who has lived with him has recently taken another farm.

Mr. Fitch, whom we saw again that evening at Maldon, told us that he was losing heavily on his farm of 2,000 acres. He complained very much of the tithe and land-tax.

On Saturday morning we went from Maldon to Braintree, where we were met by Mr. Frederick Smoothy, the clerk of the board of guardians of the district, and Mr. Joseph Smith, who farms 2,000 acres. They drove us round the district; the country looks vastly better than that which we had seen near Rayleigh and Maldon. The value of land, however, has gone down very much. Rents have been greatly reduced. There have been great changes of tenants.

Mr. Smoothy gave us many illustrations of the effect of the high tithe and land-tax.

We returned to London by the 11.30 train from Braintree.

The result of this visit to Essex has been to confirm generally the report of Mr. Hunter Pringle. No one can well conceive who has not seen it the condition to which a large part of the land, which has been allowed to tumble down to grass, has been reduced. A real calamity has fallen upon a wide district. The farmers and labourers have gone. The farms where let have been taken rather as cattle ranches for cattle than for serious cultivation. The farmers who have so far survived have lost heart and seem to think that they are destined to ruin.

What I did not fully understand from Mr. Pringle's report is that the present condition dates from at least 10 years ago. The downward course began in 1875. The bad years of 1879-80—the former the worst ever known in Essex—ruined large numbers of farmers and the continuous fall of wheat prices since has made the old style of farming more and more unprofitable. The condition of farms has been gradually falling back till it is what we now see it.

The district was very prosperous in times when wheat was selling at 55*s.* a quarter. The crops in good years were very large, and in spite of the cost of cultivation large profits could be made. All this was upset when the price fell to 45*s.* or 40*s.* We found it was generally admitted that the heavy clay land arable farms could not be made profitable, even with great economies, where wheat is less than 45*s.* a quarter, still less than, when it is at 30*s.*, 25*s.*, or 20*s.*

In the present year, the bad condition of much of the wheat, and the necessities of the farmers for realising something has forced the price down to 18*s.* Those farmers, therefore, who depend on wheat for their profit —still the staple corn crop in this district—are in a hopeless position. Most of them while desiring protection in some form, admit that it is impossible to expect any such duty as would be of permanent use to them. But they have no other remedy to suggest beyond a mitigation of the tithe, land-tax, and rates, and the cost of marketing produce.

It would seem that some of the landlords in the earlier period of depression did not fully recognise the serious nature of the calamity which was impending, and did not reduce their rents soon enough or sufficiently.

With the exception of Lord Petre, whose land is not in the worst district, there are no large landowners. Much of the land is held by absentees—by corporations such as the Ecclesiastical Commissioners, Guy's Hospital, Saint Bartholomew's, the Charterhouse, &c. The landowners who have farmed their own land have not done better than tenant farmers. The Ecclesiastical Commissioners have the reputation of being hard landlords. All their tenants have gone. Their land is now farmed by a bailiff, who draws what capital he likes. The losses are said to be very great. The land, however, is cultivated.

The land in the heavy clays which fell out of cultivation eight or ten years ago has been continually getting worse, and is now such that it is a grave ques-

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Appendix J.

tion whether it would repay to break it up again for laying down in grass.

Great difference of opinion seems to exist as to the possibility of laying down this land in grass. Where the soil is lighter it is admitted this can be done, and it has been largely done; but in the case of what Mr. Pringle calls the three-horse clays it is doubted whether it can be carried out, owing largely to the water-logged character of the soil. The Essex farmers say that experience shows that the grass will not last, and they do not think profit can be made from temporary grass.

The Scotch farmers who have come into the district appear to be of a different opinion. They may know better how to do it, what seeds to use, and how to manage the land. It may be, however, that the land they have dealt with has not been in the deplorable condition of much that is to be seen. It is obvious that the expense of laying down land which has been cultivated as arable in fairly good condition must be infinitely less than when it has been allowed eight or ten years ago to tumble down into twitch and weeds; and it may be well be that the cost of breaking up and re-sowing this with proper grass-seeds or of gradually bringing it into fair grass by liberal application of manure, or by feeding sheep wfth cake on it is such as to amount to more than the possible value of the land. There is an old saying—

> Break a pasture, make a man,
> Make a pasture, break a man.

Where this last to be effected in the case of land in the condition such as now exists it may well be impossible.

It is certain that the Scotchmen and the Lancashire men who have come into the country farm in a different manner to the Essex farmers They work themselves, and with the help of their children, to a much greater extent than the old Essex type of farmer. The two Lancashire men we saw, who get the labour of their large families for nothing, do not perhaps realise the full cost of cultivation. I presume, however, they live much as many farmers in Lancashire do. It is most desirable that the various methods of laying down grass should be fully tested, and I can only suggest that this should be by the county council or by the Board of Agriculture done on an experimental farm, typical of the worst land in the district I have been in—land which can be purchased at a very low rate.

The Scotch farmers and many others we have met admit that they buy more maize and cake than they sell corn, and the low price of these is of great value to them.

The other questions urged upon us have been the burdens of the rates, the tithe and the land-tax.

It appears that in these unions in Essex the assessment committees in the various unions have not, as the evidence shows has been done elsewhere, reduced the assessment of farms in proportion to the reduction of rent.

I came across many cases where the assessments are 100 per cent. or 50 per cent. more than the actual rent; in some of these cases the tenants have leases with a definite rent for seven or more years. It seems that the tenants in many of these cases are entitled to get a reduction of their assessments, but the assessment committees have found it impossible to take the actual rent, now reduced to a minimum, as the basis of their assessment according to the Act.

The clerks of the boards of guardians we have met have told us that the assessment committees have been practically unable to reduce the assessments, for in many cases they would come to zero, the rent paid by the tenant being less than the tithe paid by the landlord, and it would be difficult to raise the money required in rural districts.

I cannot but think that they are not justified in keeping up the assessments; the effect is to relieve all other property, and especially tithe property, from contributing an increased proportion. I will not deal with the more general question of rates.

With respect to the tithe, loud complaints are everywhere made. It is said that over wide districts the tithe is considerably more than the rent, and in many cases it has swallowed up the whole of the rent. There are many farms where the tenants pay 5*l.* or 10*l.* only more than the tithe, and where consequently the landlords, after paying the land-tax and the cost of repairs, get less than nothing. It is stated that the Act of 1891, which proposed to apply a remedy for such cases, has proved to be worthless. The Act provides that on application to the county court, the tithe may be reduced for the year to two-thirds of the annual value of the land, as assessed under Schedule B. of the Income Tax, which includes actual rent plus tithe.

Suppose, for instance, the rent is 10*l.* and the value of the tithe 30*l.*, the tithe would be subject to a reduction of 10*l.*

But for this the landowner has to apply to the county court, and the cost of the proceedings would probably cost more than the reduction obtained. The judge can only reduce the tithe for the existing year. The tithe-owner cannot bind his successor.

Where the owner cultivates the land himself, the difficulty of getting any relief under the Tithe Act is still greater.

It may be said that the landlord pays the tithe, that it does not fall on the tenant. That is so, but the landlord is naturally unwilling to let the land for less than the tithe and the land tax, consequently the high tithe acts as a screw on the rent. With such high tithes there is nothing left to the landlord to spend on improvements. It would seem that the last Tithe Act has improved the position of the tithe-owner. Before the Act, in bad years the tithe-owner was under strong compulsion to make abatements to the tenants who paid the tithe direct to him. Now that the landlord pays, the tithe-owner exacts the utmost, and the landlord, having to pay the full tithe, naturally objects to make abatement to the tenant for that portion of the rent representing the tithe. The tithe in Essex is higher than in any other county. It was commuted at an average of 5*s.* an acre on the arable land.

This high tithe is obviously a great impediment to the improvement of the land which has tumbled down to grass. It would seem to be only just and right that the last Act should be amended and that some relief should be accorded. The Act has acknowledged the principle of the compulsory reduction of the tithe, while it forms a large proportion of the annual value of the land. Instead of being two-thirds it ought not to be more than one-third of the actual rent charged to the Income Tax under Schedule A.

This will undoubtedly reduce the income *pro tanto* of the clergy or other tithe-owners, but where all the other property of such rural parishes is so seriously diminished, there seems to be no reason why the tithe-owner should not bear his share of the loss.

The question of the land-tax has also been urged upon me. This tax is also higher in Essex than in any other county in England. Where not redeemed it was a few years ago 1*s.* 9*d.* per acre on the average, or about 1*s.* in the £ on the rent. In consequence of the depression and the reduced value of the land, it is now often at the maximum, namely, 4*s.* in the £.

Each parish (or hundred) bears its affixed and definite quota of the tax, and this has to be raised by a poundage rate upon property, where it has been redeemed. If certain farms are reduced in value and their assessments are reduced, other farms have to pay a higher contribution. If some owners fail to pay, other owners must make up the difference.

It seems then that a remedy is much needed both in case of the land tax and the tithe. It is true that both these charges are paid by the landlord, and the relief would immediately go to them and not to the occupiers; but much land in Essex is farmed by its owners, and in other cases the landlord would be better able to give relief to the tenants or to make improvements. The proposal would greatly facilitate the sale of the worst properties, and would promote their cultivation again by attracting fresh capital. The relief in the case of tithe would be of a temporary character, and would cease with a reviving prosperity.

G.S.L.

October 1894.

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APPENDIX K.

TABLES showing the amounts of the PUBLIC RATES raised in the "Rural" portions of the undermentioned unions in the Union, county of Lincoln, during the years 1867-68, 1878-79, and 1893-94, and the aggregate of the average rates in the £ of the rates raised calculated on the Poor Rate valuations in force at the commencement of those years:—

Boston, Horncastle, Louth, Spalding, Stamford.

(Furnished by the Local Government Board.)

BOSTON UNION—"RURAL" PART, *i.e.*, excluding the Borough of Boston.

NOTE.—Rates (if any) raised by Commissioners of Sewers, and Drainage, Embankment, and Conservancy Boards are not included in this Table.

	1867–68.		1878–79.		1893–94.	
	Rateable Value, 177,753*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 183,860*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 145,580*l.*	
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*
Rates raised:—						
County and police rate	2,711		2,590		6,518	
Burial board rate	—		55		144	
Highway rate	9,274		11,152*		8,995	
Church rate	457		—		—	
Lighting and watching rate	—		—		—	
Poor Law purposes	15,770		14,077		9,649	
Rural sanitary rates	—		75		488	
School Board and School Attendance Committee rates.	—		126		1,623	
Total	28,212	3 2	28,075	3 0¾	27,417	3 9¼

* For year 1879-80; it is probable that a small amount raised by waywardens is excluded. The figures for 1878-79 cannot be given.

AREA of UNION (excluding water). Borough of Boston excluded.

Year 1891 (Census) - - - - - 107,311 acres land.

HORNCASTLE UNION—"RURAL" PART, *i.e.*, excluding the Urban Parish of Horncastle.

NOTE.—Rates (if any) raised by Commissioners of Sewers, and Drainage, Embankment and Conservancy Boards are not included in this Table.

	1867–68.		1878–79.		1893–94.	
	Rateable Value, 141,133*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 145,473*l.*†		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 124,854*l.*†	
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*
Rates raised:—						
County and police rate	2,097		2,084		3,746	
Burial board rate	—		—		35	
Highway rate	4,651		6,256*		5,266	
Church rate	628		31		—	
Lighting and watching rate	50		—		—	
Poor Law purposes	9,902		7,593		6,404	
Rural sanitary rate	—		308		368	
School Board and School Attendance Committee rates.	—		392		465	
Total	17,328	2 5⅓	16,664	2 3⅓	16,284	2 7¼

* For year 1879-80. The figures for 1878-79 cannot be given.

AREA of UNION (excluding water). Horncastle Parish excluded.

Year 1861 (Census) - - - - †111,078 acres land.
Year 1891 „ - - - - †115,854 „ „

† A parish with an acreage of 3,701, and a rateable value of 5,098*l.* was added to this Union in 1881.

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Appendix K.

LOUTH UNION—"RURAL" PART, *i.e.*, excluding the Borough of Louth.

NOTE.—Rates (if any) raised by Commissioners of Sewers, and Drainage, Embankment, and Conservancy Boards are not included in this Table.

	1867–68.		1878–79.		1893–94.	
	Rateable Value, 231,309*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 239,357*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 189,243*l.*	
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*
Rates raised:—						
County and police rate	3,358		3,871		5,617	
Burial board rate	—		—		65	
Highway rate	9,749		10,673*		7,087	
Church rate	649		18		—	
Lighting and watching rate	—		--		—	
Poor law purposes	11,619		10,028		8,857	
Rural sanitary rate	—		611		700	
School Board and School Attendance Committee rates.	--		572		364	
Total	25,375	2 2¼	25,768	2 1¾	22,690	2 4¾

* For year 1879–80. The figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

AREA of UNION (excluding water). Parish of Louth excluded.

Year 1861 (Census) - - - - 150,988 acres land.
Year 1891 „ - - - - 156,318 „ „

SPALDING UNION—"RURAL" PART, *i.e.*, excluding the Urban Parish of Spalding.

NOTE.—Rates (if any) raised by Commissioners of Sewers, and Drainage, Embankment, and Conservancy Boards are not included in this Table.

	1867–68.		1878–79.		1893–94.	
	Rateable Value, 136,122*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 144,247*l.*		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1893, 121,147*l.*	
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*
Rates raised:—						
County and police rate	1,664		1,561		1,494	
Burial board rate	4		—		100	
Highway rate	6,056		6,673*		4,276	
Church rate	386		173		—	
Lighting and watching rate	50		51		50	
Poor Law purposes	7,541		5,575		4,894	
Rural sanitary rate	—		176		257	
School Board and School Attendance Committee rates.	--		1,028		1,513	
Total	15,701	2 3¾	15,237	2 1¼	15,584	2 6¾

* For year 1879–80. The figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

AREA of UNION (excluding water). Spalding Parish excluded.

Year 1861 (Census) - - - - - - - - †57,776 acres land.
Year 1891 „ - - - - - - - - †70,944 „ „

† A parish with an acreage of 16,290 was added to this Union in 1862.

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STAMFORD UNION—"RURAL" PART, *i.e.*, excluding the Borough of Stamford.

Appendix K.

NOTE.—Rates (if any) raised by Commissioners of Sewers, and Drainage, Embankment, and Conservancy Boards are not included in this Table.

	1867–68.		1878–79.		1893–94.	
	Rateable Value. 87,196*l.**		Rateable Value at Lady Day, 1878, 93,800*l.*		Rateable Value, at Lady Day, 1893, 93,927*l.*	
	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.	Amount raised.	Rate in the £.
	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*	£	*s. d.*
Rates raised:—						
County and police rate	1,237		1,089		2,652	
Burial board rate	—		—		104	
Highway rate	1,674		3,173†		2,296	
Church rate	468		—		—	
Lighting and watching rate	50		—		—	
Poor Law purposes	7,136		5,841		4,169	
Rural sanitary rate	—		197		296	
School Board and School Attendance Committee rates.	—		399		547	
Total	10,565*	2 5*	10,699	2 3¼	10,064	2 1¾

* Approximate; exact figures cannot be given in respect of one parish.
† For year 1879-80. The figures for 1878–79 cannot be given.

AREA of UNION (excluding water). Borough of Stamford excluded.

Year 1861 (Census) - - - - - 50,940 acres land.
Year 1891 „ - - - - - 53,536 „ „

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